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# Research Papers In Language Teaching and Learning

P A T R A S



## Research Papers in *Language Teaching and Learning*

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## EDITORIAL

In this issue, authors address topics that spread across the EFL and applied linguistics board. There are papers on evaluating teacher education courses, on authors' perspectives about ghost-authoring research papers, on individual differences, learning styles and learner motivation, on the role of emotions in pedagogy and learning. Other papers discuss cultural and intercultural awareness, perspectives about the use of the L1 in the foreign language classroom, writer identities, the impact of corrective feedback on performance, and the strengths of integrating form-focused instruction. The authors refer to contexts in Greece, Cyprus, Iran and China.

Let us have a more careful look at individual papers in the volume. In a paper that attempts to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of teacher education programmes targeted at newly appointed state-school English language teachers in Greece, Kourkouli problematizes the extent to which such courses succeed in engaging participant teachers with key concepts and pedagogies. Her research shows that teachers are not satisfied with these courses—she concludes that the courses should have a more bottom-up and reflective approach, in that they should integrate participant teachers' beliefs, previous experiences and needs.

The interesting phenomenon of ghost authorship (which refers to people, mainly students or junior researchers, substantially contributing to papers by writing large parts of these papers, without their name being added to those of the authors) is the topic of the paper by A. Rahimi and Bigdeli. In their paper, the authors interviewed 20 postgraduate Iranian students and present a convincing argument about the lack of awareness about authorship and, more importantly, about the power relations inherent in student-faculty collaborations in Iran.

In a paper that surveys no less than 1,548 elementary and high school learners living in Thessaloniki, Greece, Vrettou focuses on the motivational patterns of younger versus early-to-middle adolescent learners. The survey establishes that younger learners show stronger motivation to learn English and concludes that teacher education programmes should empower teachers into finding ways to tailor their lessons to the motivational needs of their learners, focusing on their individual differences. In a similar vein, Markopoulou raises the issue of emotions and their relevance in pedagogy and learning. Her research, which involves teachers, (younger and early-adolescent) learners and parents, shows very clear links between learner motivation and anxiety levels, teacher-led strategies (for example, error correction and feedback mechanisms) and parents' expectations about their children's academic achievement. With particular regard to instructional patterns, she concludes that learners are more engaged when teachers create a non-threatening environment in the foreign language classroom and suggests ways in which this can be achieved.

The paper by Tzotzou and Kotsiou discusses the “neglected component” of cultural and intercultural awareness in the Greek state school context. Their study involved 100 teachers and their perspectives of issues related to cultural awareness, with reference to the

curriculum, textbooks and instructional mechanisms. The authors conclude that, despite the increasing emphasis on intercultural training, Greek state-school teachers need much more vigorous training on involving their learners in activities that will help them grow as intercultural communicators. Then, Tsagari and Diakou focus on the different perspectives held by teachers and learners in state secondary schools in Cyprus about the importance of L1 in EFL teaching and learning. Their study shows that, while learners showed a preference for the integration of L1, their teachers shunned it. The authors problematize both perspectives and rightly claim that what is important is not whether the L1 should or should not be used, but rather when and how much it should be used in the FL classroom.

Hsiao-Ling investigates the construction of undergraduate science students' writer identities through their use of personal pronouns. She focuses on the biographical genre and considers three types of biographies, namely, argumentative, descriptive and narrative. What she found was a marked influence of students' L1 sociocultural norms. She highlights the need for instruction in helping learners broaden their self-awareness of autobiographical and discursive selves. M. Rahimi and Sobhani's study looks at the impact of different types of corrective feedback on adult Iranian learners' proficiency levels. Their extensive and in-depth study sheds light on how feedback mechanisms vary according to error types and identifies recasts as the most frequent type of error feedback and self-repair as the one of the key aims of such feedback. Mahdavi-rad presents the benefits of incorporating form-focused guided strategic instruction in college students' oral performance. As her research showed, these students produced oral discourse that was more accurate, complex and fluent when presented with tasks that integrated an awareness of the structural and lexical patterns of a certain type of description. Mehrpour and Ahmadnia Motlagh's extensive study investigates the learning styles of Iranian EFL learners. Their findings show that the styles that are more dominant among these learners are the visual and auditory styles. They conclude that instructional practices should be tailored to these styles, which should motivate learners to participate more actively in the EFL classroom.

Nicos C. Sifakis  
Editor-in-Chief





## **Investigating the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek EFL state induction teacher education courses**

### **Διερεύνηση της αποτελεσματικότητας των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων οι οποίες εφαρμόζονται στα ελληνικά εισαγωγικά προγράμματα επιμόρφωσης των νεοδιόριστων καθηγητών αγγλικής γλώσσας**

**Katerina KOURKOULI**

*This paper focuses on the investigation of the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek state induction teacher education courses for the newly appointed English language teachers. This investigation deals with a rather uncharted area in the Greek context, which makes it a contribution to the established knowledge in its field and responds to the increasing need for enhancing the effectiveness of induction training programmes. In particular, the research is intended to identify the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development in these education courses, the extent to which the novel ideas manage to impact trainees' beliefs and practices and the critical link between them. Results indicate that the induction programmes under investigation, mostly fail to bring about both conceptual change as well as change of teachers' actual classroom practices. In addition, the findings shed light onto the strong and weak points of the procedures employed in these courses so as to qualify as effective. Finally, pedagogical implications are presented and it is suggested that induction teacher education courses should employ specific strategies and training procedures that are likely to create conditions for integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice so as to enhance their effectiveness.*



Το άρθρο εστιάζει στη διερεύνηση της αποτελεσματικότητας των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων οι οποίες εφαρμόζονται στα ελληνικά εισαγωγικά προγράμματα επιμόρφωσης των νεοδιόριστων καθηγητών Αγγλικής γλώσσας. Αυτή η διερεύνηση αποτελεί μια, ως επί το πλείστον, αχαρτογράφητη πτυχή της Ελληνικής πραγματικότητας, συντελώντας ως πηγή γνώσης στον επιστημονικό τομέα και ανταποκρίνεται στην επιτακτική ανάγκη ενίσχυσης της αποτελεσματικότητας των εισαγωγικών επιμορφωτικών προγραμμάτων. Ειδικότερα, η έρευνα αυτή έχει ως στόχο να προσδιορίσει την ύπαρξη επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων στα

εισαγωγικά προγράμματα που συμβάλλουν στην εξέλιξη των καθηγητών, το βαθμό επιρροής των καινοτόμων ιδεών στις απόψεις και πρακτικές των επιμορφούμενων χρησιμοποιώντας και την καθοριστική μεταξύ τους σχέση. Τα αποτελέσματα καταδεικνύουν ότι τα συγκεκριμένα εισαγωγικά προγράμματα, ως επί το πλείστον, δεν επιτυγχάνουν να επιφέρουν αλλαγές τόσο στις αντιλήψεις όσο και στις πρακτικές διδασκαλίας των καθηγητών. Επιπλέον, μπορούμε να διαπιστώσουμε ποιες είναι οι αδυναμίες των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων που εφαρμόζονται στα εισαγωγικά προγράμματα ώστε να εστιάσουμε στον επαναπροσδιορισμό της αποτελεσματικότητάς τους. Τέλος, γίνεται μνεία σε παιδαγωγικές διαπιστώσεις που οδηγούν στη διατύπωση προτάσεων για τα εισαγωγικά επιμορφωτικά προγράμματα. Σκοπός των προτάσεων αυτών είναι η εφαρμογή συγκεκριμένων επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων και δραστηριοτήτων που προάγουν την αποτελεσματικότητα δημιουργώντας τις κατάλληλες συνθήκες για ενσωμάτωση των καινοτόμων ιδεών στην διδακτική πράξη.

**Key words:** Teacher education, teacher training, teacher development, training procedures, teachers' pre-existing belief system, teacher change, reflection, group work, observation, loop-input, microteaching

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## 1. Introduction

The present article deals with the investigation of the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek EFL (English as a foreign language) state induction teacher education courses, which are organized by the Greek Ministry of Education and the Pedagogical Institute and are conducted at Regional Education Centres (R.E.C.s)<sup>1</sup> throughout Greece. More specifically, the paper is intended to cast light on the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development (Freeman, 1989) in these training programmes. In addition, it investigates the extent to which the novel ideas introduced in these courses manage to impact trainees' beliefs and be implemented in their everyday teaching practice.

The article is divided into four sections, which briefly refer to the following issues. Firstly, the theory surrounding this topic is delineated. Secondly, the method, sample and instrument used for the collection of data are discussed. Next, a detailed presentation and critical discussion of the results is attempted. Finally, statistically significant associations between the variables of the research instrument and accompanying implications are presented. The last section of this article focuses on the pedagogical implications of the study and suggestions for changes.

## 2. Theoretical background

Serious doubts exist about the effectiveness of teacher training in affecting the end goal of all types of initiatives, that is, improving teachers' practices in classrooms (Tenti, 1997; Navarro and Verdisco, 2000). Therefore, the investigation of the effectiveness of the aforementioned teacher education course will be grounded on evidence of teachers' conceptual change (Kubanyiova, 2006) as well as evidence of change in teachers' actual classroom practices (Wang, 2008). It will also be examined to what extent the changes result



from the presence of training procedures necessary for increased teacher awareness and integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2005).

In this light, the theory surrounding this topic will be delineated through the discussion of the concepts of teacher education, the conceptualization of teacher change and the exploration of the role beliefs, reflection, and training procedures play in enhancing teacher change.

### **2.1. Teacher education, teacher training and teacher development**

In Freeman's (1989) view, teacher education constitutes a superordinate term that encompasses both teacher training and teacher development as different strategies by which teachers are educated. Training is based on a process of direct intervention, leading to the mastery of specific knowledge and skills and is based on external criteria for assessing teachers' change. On the contrary, teacher development implies an idiosyncratic and individual process of influence encouraging some sort of increase or shift in teachers' awareness, which can be non-evaluative by external criteria. Therefore, any course focusing on the education of teachers should feature elements of both training and development in order to bring about some sort of change in teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices.

#### **2.1.1. Teacher change**

Investigating the extent to which the R.E.C. induction teacher education course manages to bring about language teachers' change is our central focus, as already mentioned. It implies cognitive, affective and behavioural change processes in teachers, whereby they get to alter aspects of their belief systems and practices as a result of a new input (Kubanyiova, 2007).

The alternative normative-reeducative perspective of teacher change (Richardson & Placier, 2001) suggests the evaluation of the impact of teacher education courses in terms of the teachers' understanding of the training content and its value and how this leads to the development of reformed practices. It also focuses on how and to what extent the teachers' practice changes as a result of a teacher education course. This view of teacher change places emphasis on the mental state of teachers and their concepts, since teachers' teaching practice and decision-making is largely informed by them. This, in turn, leads to conceptual change being the first term to define what constitutes teacher change.

#### **2.2.2. The role of beliefs and prior experiences**

Richardson, (1996, 2003) summarizing much of the research about teachers' beliefs shows that participants come to teacher education courses with prior experiences, values and beliefs and with specific expectations about the subject matter they will learn. These beliefs, having been accumulated from a variety of sources including past experiences as students, family background, observations and teaching as well as coursework in their teacher education program (Levin & He, 2008) lead teachers to develop tacitly held images about teaching and learning. Thus, the teachers' pre-existing belief system, or schema, operates as a sort of filter inhibiting or adjusting new information coming in, accounting for Pennington's (1996) cognitive-affective filter to be opened and become permeable to new intake. If trainees manage to analyze and synthesize it into a new understanding, it becomes uptake and can influence the teachers' classroom behaviour, namely, the teaching output (Pennington, 1995), as can be seen in Figure 1.

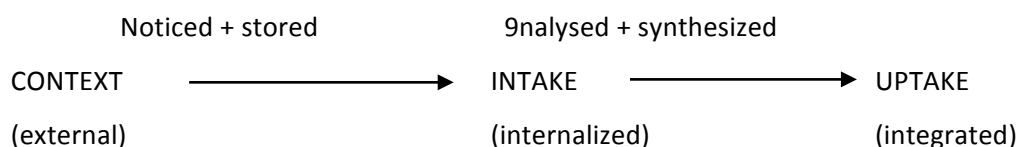


Figure 1. A model of the relationship between context, intake, and uptake in teacher change (adapted from Pennington, 1995).

### 2.2.3. Reflection in teacher education

The role reflection plays in enhancing teacher change is an intrinsic one since teachers cannot develop themselves unless they learn to develop their critical self and be able to reflect critically upon what they do in their classrooms (Liu & Fisher, 2006). This shows that “learning and reflection are interrelated,” as Brandt (2008, p. 42) argues, and that “reflection requires a recapturing of experience in which the person thinks about it, mulls it over, and evaluates it”. In addition, it encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and look for ways of becoming more autonomous professionally.

### 2.2.4. Strategies and training processes for promoting teacher development

In order to bring about significant change in participants’ teaching practice, we need to take into consideration several conditions identified by research on teacher cognition and development when designing and implementing teacher education programmes.

Firstly, consideration of adult learning principles (Kokkos, 1998) seems to be of utmost importance in a teacher training course since adult learning is believed to be experiential and follows learning cycles. Theory and practice integration is another effective teacher development process since a strong theoretical background is valuable but inadequate on its own to lead to effective teaching. Moreover, rather than a single, one-shot event, training must be seen as a continuous process which employs continual monitoring of teachers’ implementation practice along with feedback on their implementation progress (Navarro & Verdisco, 2000) and follow-up support. Finally, the following modes of teaching add to a trainer’s repertoire of training methods and constitute training processes conducive to teacher development (Freeman, 1989): *Groupwork*, *Microteaching*, *Loop-input* (Woodward, 1991), a demonstration procedure, presenting trainees with content not only on their language level but also about the activity they are experiencing, involving them as learners in the procedure and *Observation for development* (Beaumont, 2005). The last one has nothing to do with the evaluation purpose and can take the form of self-observation or peer-observation.

### 3. Method and sample

The inquiry described below, intends to test the hypothesis that state induction teacher education courses though abundant and varied in content, are likely to display a significant lack of training processes necessary so that they can qualify as effective. Quantitative research enabled the use of statistical analytical tools to answer the following research questions.

- a. What strategies and processes were employed during the induction course educational activity?
- b. What are the understandings of Greek English Language teachers regarding the impact of the induction programme on their teaching beliefs and practices?
- c. How much do they consider it enough to change their everyday teaching practice?

Therefore, a questionnaire was constructed, centred on the study of variables that capture common experiences of this group of people. In particular, the use of the Microsoft Excel 2007 data processing programme accounted for the descriptive nature of this research. In addition, “Chi-Square test of independence” which allows us to look at two variables and evaluate the strength of their relationship or association with each other took place with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 228).

The sampling plan for this project involved two stages and yielded a total of fifty questionnaires. In the first, a criterion sampling strategy was adopted, the purpose of which was to target a group of English teachers who had attended the induction teacher education course quite recently at regional centres throughout Greece, through the Ministry of Education. The second stage of this process involved snowballing sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). In this way, these colleagues were asked to recruit subjects from among their acquaintances via e-mail that would also fit the sampling requirements.

#### 3.1. Instrument

Information was elicited through mainly closed-ended item types using factual, behavioural and attitudinal questions. In effect, Part I aims to build a profile of the respondents who participate in this research (see Appendix questions 1-7). Part II focuses on the induction teacher education course itself as well as the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development (see questions 8-17). Finally, Part III seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the induction course itself. This is done through the tracing of teachers’ conceptual change (questions 18 and 20), change of teachers’ actual classroom practices (questions 19, 21 and 22), provision of continuing training support to enhance teachers’ ongoing utilization of knowledge (Stein and Wang, 1988) as well as means of ongoing professional development (questions 23 and 25). In conclusion, question 24 aims at an overall evaluation of the induction course.

### 4. Presentation and discussion of results

In this section, a detailed presentation and critical discussion of results is attempted, following the research method described and the theoretical framework delineated above.

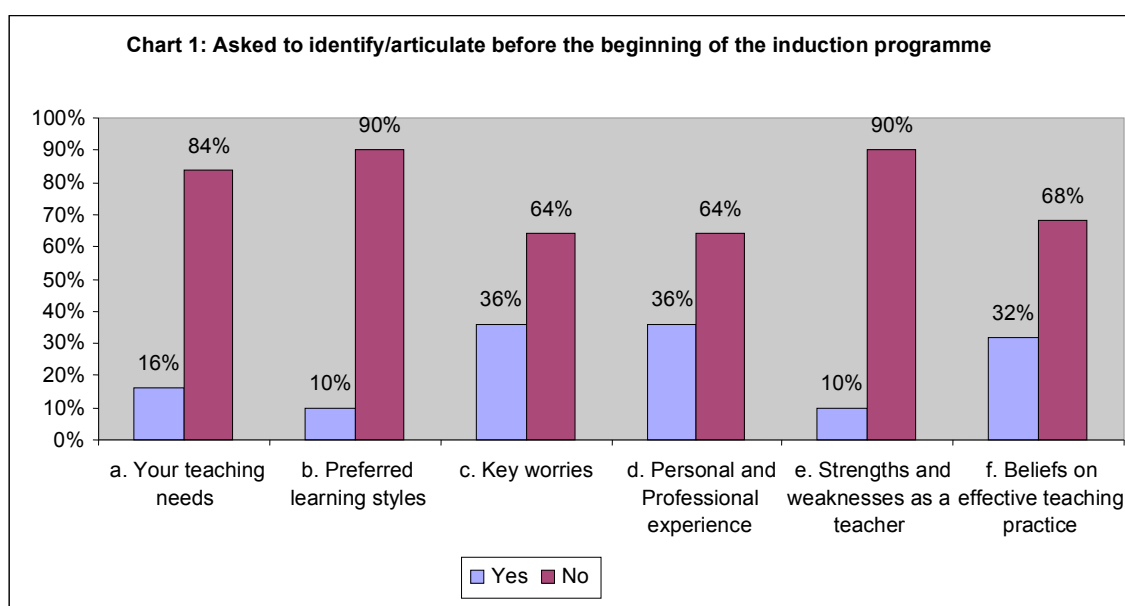
#### 4.1. Personal and professional data

The vast majority of the respondents (80%) are newly-appointed teachers, able to report their recollections of the R.E.C. induction course. Another 18% have been teaching between 6 and 10 years in state schools and only 2% for more than 11 years. As far as the city where their induction programme took place is concerned, 16 regional centres were reported. This further contributes to the quest for achieving a sample who has attended the course at regional centres throughout Greece, ensuring thus, heterogeneity and representativeness. In particular, the big urban centres of Athens (36%), Tripolis (32%), Pirgos (28%) and Heraklion (24%) come first, followed by Pireaus (16%), Chios and Kalamata (12%), Rhodes, Patra, Rethymnon and Zakynthos (8%), among others. Concerning their educational background, 42% hold a post-graduate degree and another 22% are studying for a post-graduate degree.

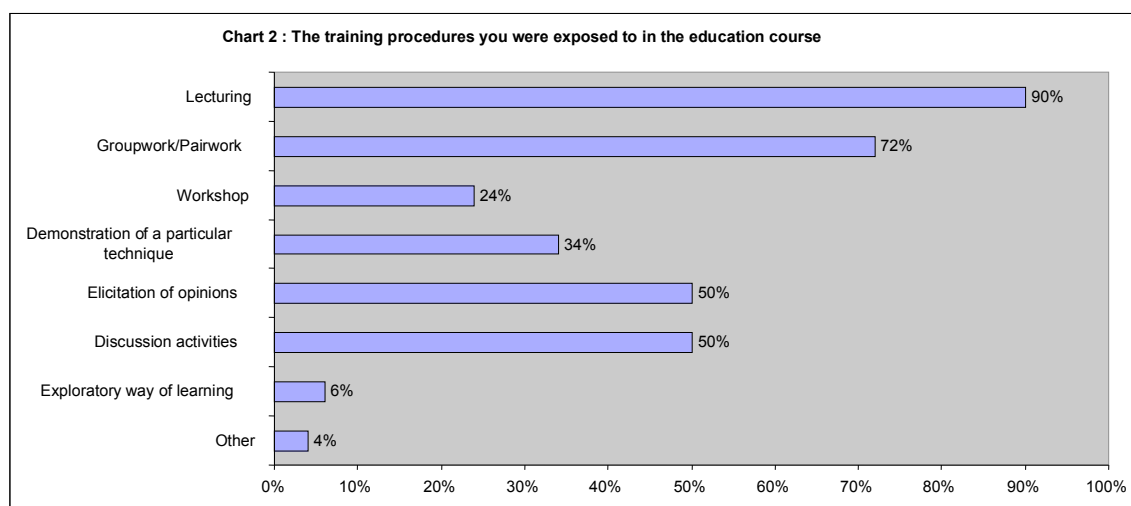
##### 4.1.1. Induction teacher education course strategies and training procedures

The second part of this presentation focuses on the induction teacher education course itself, in terms of the presence or absence of strategies and training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development.

As can be seen in Chart 1 below, the overwhelming majority of participants were not involved in the identification and articulation of their preferred learning styles (90%) as well as their strengths and weaknesses as teachers (90%) and their teaching needs (84%) before the beginning of the induction programme. This is obviously not compatible with adult learning principles and learner-centred approaches. Similarly, 68% stated that they were not asked to express their beliefs and personal practical theories on effective teaching practice, while 64% did not engage in discussion of their worries as well as their personal and professional experiences. It is not surprising then, that a significant 48% of the participants state that the topics covered corresponded to their needs a little. The lack of relevance of the training content is also depicted in a significant 70% who claim that no special distinction was made between teachers of the primary and secondary education. This obviously constitutes an issue to be addressed in these courses.



Concerning the training procedures employed, the methods the trainers used to provide data as well as the presence of experiential elements enhancing the effectiveness of training courses, the situation depicted leaves a lot to be desired too. More specifically, Chart 2 shows that an astonishing 90% of the participants state that lecturing was the main input style, which, as Manolopoulou-Sergi (2005) argues, is a useful mode of disseminating theoretical knowledge but cannot become a role model for trainees.



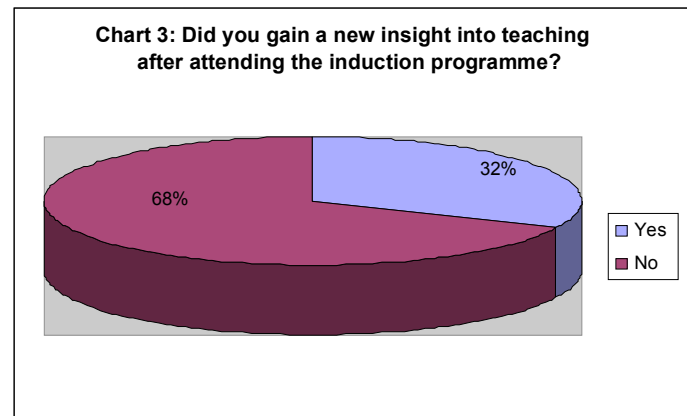
Engagement in groupwork/pairwork is reported by 72% while demonstration of a particular technique or loop-input is reported by only 34%, depriving the majority of the trainees of the opportunity for modelling desired behaviours. In addition, regarding the employment of experiential elements, 48% of this sample state that they were involved in observing experienced teachers teaching real classrooms, only 36% engaged in microteaching and 10% in watching videos with recordings of lessons taught in similar contexts. Furthermore, 26% of the participants clearly stated that they were not involved in any experiential activity whatsoever.

Finally, as far as the issue of theory and practice integration is concerned, 66% of the participants stated that the usual training method was that of the trainer giving a lecture and trainees asking questions at the end. The second most popular method experienced by 20% of the participants, involved presenting trainees with theory and asking them to practise what was taught. From the situation described in this sample, the majority of the courses fail to view theory as coming out of practice (Taylor, 1985) as well as being found in practice, in order to enable trainees to see the rationale behind the experience and lead them towards effective implementation. Moreover, training was followed up by thinking and reflecting about it in 50% of the cases. Reflective strategies (Hussein, 2007) such as thinking questions (34%), collaborative and cooperative environment (24%) and opportunity to stand critically towards the process experienced (24%) helped in this direction. In addition, 52% of the participants stated that opportunities for practice of a new approach were scarce.

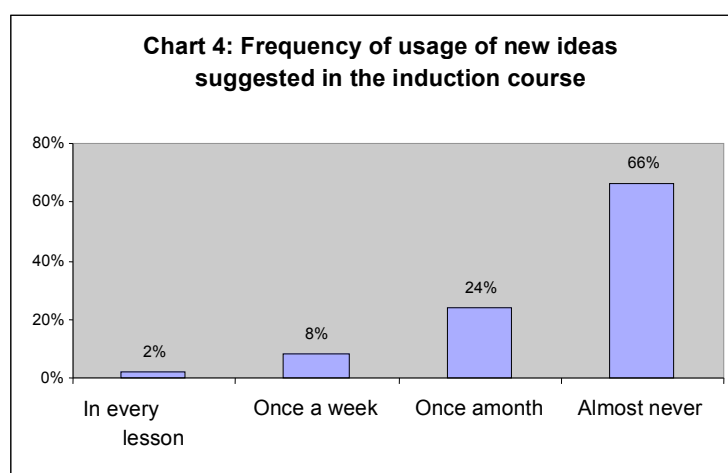
#### 4.1.2. Teachers' attitude and practice

This section centres on a measurement of the trainees' perception of the impact the training course had on their beliefs and everyday practice as well as the trainees' attitude towards the training experience overall.

With reference to the effectiveness of this course in terms of conceptual change, the findings in Chart 3 below show that 68% believe that they did not gain any insights into teaching. In addition, 34% share the view that this programme was a loss of time, while 30% express the opinion that although it helped them raise their awareness, their original beliefs remained in place.



Considering the effectiveness in the light of change of teachers' actual classroom practices, 66% state they never make use of the new ideas suggested followed by another 24% answering once a month (see Chart 4). Moreover, when asked to specify one thing they totally changed in the teaching routine as a result, 46% of them left the space empty, unanswered, followed by another 36% clearly stating that they changed nothing.



Regarding the reasons they provided for the lack of change in practice, a significant 44% admitted needing more follow-up training in order to feel more confident, followed by another 26% stating that they do not know how to put the ideas into practice.

Finally, the findings show that 90% of the participants were not provided with follow-up training on the issues approached with an overwhelming 98% clearly stating that they are in need of continuing training support to enhance their knowledge. Furthermore, 30% are not



sure about the value of the programme whereas 26% clearly state that they would not recommend it to a colleague.

#### 4.1.3. Statistically significant associations

The final part of this presentation and analysis of data is based on a cross-tabulation (Chi-Square) test which allows the researcher to conduct tests of independence between the variables of the research instrument, through the significance of the Pearson Chi-square value (Dörnyei, 2007). In particular, if the p-value of the table is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level, we can claim that the two variables under statistical analysis are not independent but they are statistically and significantly associated. In this light, the statistically significant index ( $p\text{-value} = 0,002 < \alpha = 0.05$ ) of Table 1 below enables us to draw the conclusion that the variables examined in questions 10 and 18 (see Appendix) are not independent, but they are statistically associated. In particular, out of the 18 participants who answered that the topics covered corresponded to their needs to a good extent, 11 (61.1%) stated that they did gain a new insight into teaching after attending the induction programme, as can be seen in Table 2.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,022 <sup>a</sup>	3	,002
Likelihood Ratio	17,003	3	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	13,737	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 4 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,32.

Table 1

Question 18				
Question 10		Yes	No	Total
	A great deal	1	0	1
	Up to some extent	11 (61,1%)	7	18
	A little	4	20	24
	Not at all	0	7	7
	Total	16	34	50

Table 2 (Cross-tabulation/ Chi-Square test of independence between questions 10 and 18)

This bit of information seems to be in accordance with Bax's (1995) argument that content addressing the trainees' needs maximizes the relevance and interest factors. These are considered to be indispensable for the training content not to be put aside as irrelevant and valueless (Tillema, 1995) and facilitate change of attitudes and beliefs. This suggestion is further corroborated by the test of independence depicted in Table 3 below, which establishes an association between the relevance of the topics covered and reported change in the actual classroom practice.

Question 19						
Question 10		In every single lesson	Once a week	Once a month	Almost never	Total
	A great deal	0	1	0	0	1
	Up to some extent	0	2	10(55,6%)	6	18
	A little	1	1	2	20(83,3%)	24
	Not at all	0	0	0	7	7
	Total	1	4	12	33	50

Table 3 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 10 and 19)

From the table above, we can conclude that participants, who stated that the topics covered actually corresponded to a good extent to their needs, tend to answer that they use the ideas suggested more often in their classrooms (55.6%) than those who were not satisfied with the relevance of the topics. In contrast, 83.3% of the trainees whose needs were only a little addressed in this course clearly stated that they do not make use of the ideas suggested. In addition, raising of awareness and critical consideration of the teaching practices is reported by 38.9% and 55.6% respectively of the participants who were satisfied by the topics covered. In contrast, 41.6% of those who answered that the topics corresponded to their needs only a little clearly stated that it was a loss of time.

As far as the training procedures employed are concerned, groupwork and pairwork tend to be effective in leading to conceptual change (38.9%) and raising of awareness (33.3%), according to Table 4. In contrast, 64.3% of the participants who were not involved in either groupwork or pairwork tend to answer that the whole experience was a loss of time.

Question 20						
	Not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested	It was loss of time	Although it helped...my original beliefs remained in place	It helped me a lot to think about my teaching practices ...	My pre-training beliefs changed...	Total
Yes	1	8	12(33,3%)	14(38,9%)	1	36
No	2	9(64,3%)	3	0	0	14
Total	3	17	15	14	1	50

Table 4 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 11\_2 and 20)

Similarly, involvement in workshops seems to be associated with knowledge restructuring, a prerequisite for conceptual change and real teacher development (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2005). In this light, 58.3% of the participants support that they did gain a new insight. Demonstration of a particular technique in the form of loop-input also seems to enhance the effectiveness of the training course at a percentage of 58.8%, as depicted in Table 5.

Question 11_4	Question 18			
		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	10(58,8%)	7	17
	No	6	27(81,8%)	33
	Total	16	34	50

Table 5 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 11\_4 and 18)

In addition, involvement of trainees in a context-sensitive teacher education course built on trainees' needs (Atay, 2008) also seems to be closely related to knowledge restructuring. In particular, the participants for whom no special provisions were made in terms of level of working context tended to be negative in reporting gaining of a new insight at a rate of 77%.

Regarding the relationship between the presence of experiential elements in the training course and the enhancement of effectiveness, the findings stated below also seem to be in line with the relevant literature on the issue (Bax, 1995). In particular, 50% of those who were involved in microteaching report raising of awareness about their teaching practices. Observation of other teachers also seems to constitute an awareness-raising practice, as an invaluable tool for trainees to gain insights into other teachers' perceptions of effective lessons, while initiating reflection on their own techniques and practices (Beaumont, 2005). In this light, 50% of the trainees who were provided with the opportunity of observing other teachers, report gaining of a new insight.

It is also remarkable that out of the 13 participants who report not taking part in any of the experiential activities mentioned in the questionnaire (see Appendix), all of them answered not gaining a new insight into teaching.

As it can be seen from Table 6 below, 69,2% of the trainees who were not involved in experiential practices express the belief that the whole induction programme was a loss of time, a percentage not to be ignored by course designers. On the contrary, statistically significant percentages of trainees who were involved in some kind of experiential activity indicate awareness-raising (35,1%) and critical reflection of teaching practices (32,4%).

Question 20						
	Not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested	It was loss of time	Although it helped...my original beliefs remained in place	It helped me a lot to think about my teaching prices ...	My pre-training beliefs changed...	Total
No	0	9(69,2%)	2	2	0	13
Yes	3	8	13(35,1%)	12(32,4%)	1	37
Total	3	17	15	14	1	50

Table 6 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 14e and 20)

Furthermore, lack of theory and practice integration as a result of the lecture mode, seems to fail in bringing about some kind of knowledge and belief restructuring at a percentage of 78.8%. Similarly, a significant 48% of the trainees who were involved in some kind of reflection after each training experience, maintain that they gained a new insight into teaching.

Finally, data suggests the dependency between teachers' conceptual change and change of their classroom practices as well as between continuing training support and their attitude towards the course after its completion. In particular, Table 7 shows that out of the 16 participants who reported gaining of a new insight into teaching, the majority (9) answered that they actually integrate new ideas in their teaching practice once a month, followed by another 18,8% responding once a week. In other words, the vast majority of those claiming some kind of knowledge and belief restructuring tended to report implementation of new knowledge more often than those who stated that no gaining took place.

Question 18	Question 19					
		In every single lesson	Once a week	Once a month	Almost never	Total
	Yes	1	3(18,8%)	9	3	16
	No	0	1	3	30	34
	Total	1	4	12	33	50

Table 7 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 18 and 19)

In a similar vein, the majority of the trainees who reported knowledge restructuring tended to be more positive in their attitude and evaluation of the induction course. More specifically 68.8% of them state that it helped them to reconsider their teaching practices. Accordingly, 87.5% of the trainees reporting gaining of insight into teaching, tend to be more positive in evaluating it, as they clearly state that it partly deserves attending and recommending. In contrast, participants responding negatively in knowledge gaining are not so sure about recommending it (41.2%).

Additionally, data shows that out of the 17 participants who admitted implementing the new ideas in their classroom practice, 15 of them tend to be more positive in their attitude towards the course. Finally, dependency between provision of follow-up training on the issues touched upon and general attitude towards the induction course seems to be established from the results. In fact, out of the 5 participants provided with follow-up support, 3 (60%) report raising of teaching awareness. The remaining 2 admitted being helped to reconsider their teaching practices and that their pre-training beliefs underwent substantial change.

## 5. Implications and suggestions

The findings of this study leave no doubt that in order to enhance the effectiveness of induction teacher education, there seems to be a need for teacher development courses to bring about conceptual, generative, significant and worthwhile change in trainees. This is not only reflected in new conceptual understanding of teaching but, above all, in classroom practices which are transformed by the new understanding and lead to improved conditions

for learning. In this light, a number of principles for the design, organization and implementation of the R.E.C. induction teacher education course for English teachers emerge.

*Enhancing the relevance of topics* is associated with both conceptual change and change in the actual classroom practice. In particular, deriving content from trainees themselves so as to involve them in a context-sensitive teacher education course built on their personal needs, seems to be conducive to teacher development as shown in Chart 1 above. In addition, an exploration of teachers' personal practical theories and beliefs (Levin, 2008) at the pre-training stage helps to induce dissonance by finding ways to destabilize teachers' established beliefs and knowledge base, and should be incorporated in every course of this kind (Tables 2 & 3).

*The evaluation of the impact of a teacher education course must be informed by the teachers' understanding of the training content and value as well as by how it leads to development of reformed practices* (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Dependency was found between teachers' conceptual change and change of actual classroom practices as well as between conceptual change and positive course evaluation but also between implementation of novel ideas and general attitude towards the course (p. 20 above). In this light, the employment of specific strategies and training procedures is suggested when designing and conducting teacher education programmes. Procedures such as more restricted use of the lecture mode for presenting new information and theory and practice integration can foster effective teacher development (p. 19 par.1).

In addition, *experiential elements such as micro-teaching, self and peer-observation as well as demonstration techniques such as loop-input, clearly contribute to gaining a new insight* (Table 5). In fact, course designers and teacher educators should see to the exploitation of cooperative learning through groupwork and pairwork as well as exploratory way of learning through workshops, which facilitate knowledge restructuring, raising of awareness and critical reflection of teaching practices (Tables 4, & 6). Moreover, they should incorporate various presentation techniques in training courses such as video recordings and modelling of desired behaviours which help to enhance their effectiveness as depicted in Table 5. Furthermore, micro-teaching and observation of other teachers' teaching constitute awareness-raising practices which facilitate conceptual change (p. 17 par 2).

Finally, *dependency was found between continuing training (through follow-up meetings and e-mail exchanges) and teachers' general course appraisal*. Combined with the overwhelming demand of this sample for their training to be followed up in a more consistent way, it makes implications for the role these courses should play as a characteristic of effective professional development (p. 20 par. 4)

## 6. Conclusion

The present article has attempted to investigate whether Greek EFL state induction teacher education courses manage to have an impact on teachers' beliefs and actual teaching practice as a result of the presence of training procedures necessary for increased teacher awareness and integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice. The analysis and discussion of data that was collected shed more light on the strong and weak points of the procedures employed in these teacher education courses. It further illuminated the fact that they mostly fail to bring about both conceptual change as well as change of teachers' actual classroom practices. Therefore, a number of suggestions for the improvement of the current

situation have been made in terms of the employment of specific strategies and processes that are likely to enhance the effectiveness of teacher education courses.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the conclusions drawn from this research necessitate further investigation of the issue in question. Usage of bigger samples and a “mixed methods” design as well as examination of a more holistic picture of variables that play a role in the process, should be addressed in future projects.

Finally, it is strongly believed that the investigation of effectiveness of induction teacher education courses necessitates both the undivided attention and unreserved support of teacher education policy makers, teacher trainers and teacher trainees themselves. Provided that this input is given proper attention and is examined in a more constructive way, it can lead to the design of more effective induction teacher education courses and contribute to the upgrading of both teaching and learning processes respectively.

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## Notes

1. R.E.C.(s) is the acronym for Regional Education Centres and is used throughout the dissertation referring to the compulsory induction training programmes.

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## Appendix

## Questionnaire

## Part I. Personal and Professional data

1.	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Current position of work	Primary school <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High school <input type="checkbox"/> Senior High school <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Vocation school <input type="checkbox"/> Second Chance school <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify .....)
3.	a. Teaching experience in state schools	0 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Teaching experience prior to your appointment	0 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	How many years have passed since you attended your induction programme?	0 – 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	In which city did the induction programme take place?	..... .....
6.	Do you hold a post-graduate degree?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Studies in progress <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Have you attended any special training courses on didactics?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> One-day seminars only <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

## Part II. Induction Teacher Education course

8.	Which of the following topics did you cover during your induction course? (PEK) (You may tick more than one box)	Current instructional methods <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's role <input type="checkbox"/> Management of students' individual characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Principles underlying didactics <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of other teachers' instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Utilization of educational technology <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion of problematic issues in classrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify .....)
9.	Were you asked to identify/articulate the following parameters <b>before the beginning of the induction programme?</b> a. your teaching needs? b. preferred learning styles?	a. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> b. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

	c. key worries? d. personal and professional experience? e. strengths and weaknesses as a teacher? f. beliefs on effective teaching practice? (e.g. forms of giving feedback, meaningful and motivational activities, learner autonomy)	c. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> d. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> e. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> f. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	To what extent did the topics covered actually correspond to your needs?	A great deal <input type="checkbox"/> Up to some extent <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Which of the following training procedures were you exposed to in this education course? (You may tick more than one box)	Lecturing <input type="checkbox"/> Groupwork/Pairwork <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration of a particular technique <input type="checkbox"/> Elicitation of opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion activities <input type="checkbox"/> Exploratory way of learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify ..... )
12.	Which of the following ways of providing data did your trainer use? (You may tick more than one box)	Video recordings of actual lessons <input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts of lessons <input type="checkbox"/> Journal articles <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans and outlines <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of students' written work <input type="checkbox"/> ELT textbook materials <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify ..... )
13.	Were special provisions made for teachers of different school grades? (primary and secondary education)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Were you involved in any of the following experiences? (You may tick more than on box)	a. designing and presenting mini-lessons to peers <input type="checkbox"/> b. observing experienced teachers teaching real classrooms <input type="checkbox"/> c. Watching videos with recordings of lessons taught in similar contexts <input type="checkbox"/> d. being demonstrated teaching techniques using yourselves as participants/learners <input type="checkbox"/> e. No <input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Which of the following statements best summarizes <b>the usual method</b> the course employed? (Please tick one box only)	. The trainer gave a lecture and trainees asked questions at the end <input type="checkbox"/> . The trainer presented trainees with theory and asked them to practise what was taught <input type="checkbox"/>

		. The trainees were asked to perform various activities according to the prevalent methodology <input type="checkbox"/> . The trainees experienced an activity as participants (learners) themselves and were presented with the theoretical principles underlying the activity later <input type="checkbox"/>
16.	a. Was each training experience accompanied with thinking and reflecting about it?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If your answer is positive please answer the following question b. What kind of help were you provided with so as to guide you towards your reflection? (You may tick more than one box)	. opportunity for detailed description of the events experienced <input type="checkbox"/> . thinking questions <input type="checkbox"/> . keeping journals <input type="checkbox"/> . reflective lesson plans <input type="checkbox"/> . ample time for reflection <input type="checkbox"/> . collaborative and cooperative environment <input type="checkbox"/> . opportunity to stand critically towards the process experienced <input type="checkbox"/> . opportunity to stand critically towards your own practice <input type="checkbox"/>
17.	To what extent were you provided with opportunities for practice of a new approach?	A great deal <input type="checkbox"/> Up to some extent <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>

### Part III – Teacher's attitude and practice

18.	Did you gain a new insight into teaching after attending the induction programme?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
19.	How often do you use the new ideas suggested in the induction course used?	In every single lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month <input type="checkbox"/> Almost never <input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Read through the statements below and tick <b>one</b> box which best represents your attitude towards the induction course after its completion.	I was not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested. <input type="checkbox"/> It was a loss of time <input type="checkbox"/> Although it helped me raise my awareness, my original beliefs remained in place <input type="checkbox"/> It helped me a lot to think about my teaching practice and the main approaches to teaching <input type="checkbox"/> My pre-training beliefs underwent substantial change after the induction course <input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Can you specify one thing you totally changed in	.....

	your teaching routine as a result of the induction programme?	..... .....
22.	If new ideas are not used, this is because.....	. It is nice in theory but I don't know how to put it in practice. <input type="checkbox"/> . It does not work for my classes <input type="checkbox"/> . I feel uncomfortable experimenting with new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> . I need more follow-up training so as to feel confident about it <input type="checkbox"/> . I do not like them <input type="checkbox"/>
23.	a. Were you provided with follow-up training on the issues approached <b>after the completion of the induction programme?</b> (follow-up meetings, e-mail exchanges, peer-directed meetings etc.)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Would it be useful for your training to be followed up in a more consistent way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Would you recommend a colleague attending this training programme if it were not obligatory?	Yes, by all means <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, some of its parts <input type="checkbox"/> I am not so sure <input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely no <input type="checkbox"/>
25.	Which ways of professional development do you usually employ at present? (You may tick more than one box)	My daily teaching practice <input type="checkbox"/> Observing other teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Studying <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping updated in my field reading journals <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting classroom research <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with other teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Attending training courses <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify ..... )

**Thank you for your time!**

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## Student authorship in applied linguistics: a case of ghost authors

Ali RAHIMI and Rouhollah Askari BIGDELI

*Scientific paper authorship has been considered as a form of academic currency that can be regarded as evidence of an individual's intellectual efforts that accordingly can result in professional reputation, academic appointment and rewards, and other tenure decisions. However, pressure to publish within academia has led to various unethical authorship practices including ghost authorship. Ghost authors refer to the individuals who have made substantial contribution to a research project while their names are not added as authors or acknowledged. This study involving 20 Iranian MA students of TEFL who were exploited as ghost authors aimed to explore the reasons that accounted for the students' vulnerability to being exploited as ghost authors. Individual semi-structured interviews with the participants were used to gather the data. Three major themes including a) power relation inherent in student-faculty collaboration, b) lack of knowledge about authorship, and c) lack of rules and regulations emerged that, according to the participants, precipitated their vulnerability to being exploited as ghost authors.*

**Key words:** authorship, ghost authorship, applied linguistics, TEFL

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Authorship

Authorship is seen as the coin of the realm in academia (Louis et al., 2008). Scientific paper authorship has been considered as a form of academic currency that can be regarded as evidence of an individual's intellectual efforts that accordingly can lead to professional reputation, academic appointment, and promotion (Bennett & Taylor, 2003). In fact, publications are indication of research and academic productivity of an individual and seen as objective benchmarks for tenure decisions such as entering to professional bodies and offering academic appointment (Rennie & Flanagan, 1994). However, pressure to publish within academia has increased various unethical authorship practices (Bennett & Taylor,



2003). Lawrence (2002) argued that the current culture of scientific reward, based on the number of papers, impact factors of the journals, the position in the author list, and the number of citations the papers receive, has precipitated authorship misuse.

As Bosch (2011) and Flanagin et al. (1998) pointed out, misappropriation of authorship such as changing, omitting or adding names to bylines, which is incongruous with ethical responsibilities in scientific publication, can diminish the integrity of authorship system. Consequentially, under such circumstances, offering academic promotions or grants can be on the basis of false authorship (Lacasse & Leo, 2010) and has led to two main abuses of authorship including honorary authorship and ghost authorship (Bennett & Taylor, 2003). As a matter of fact, problematic practices including honorary authorship and ghost authorship have challenged the concept of authorship in a wide range of fields (e.g., Claxton, 2005; Manton & English, 2008).

### **1.2. Honorary authorship**

According to Flanagin et al. (1998), honorary authors are those who have not met authorship criteria. This inappropriate assignment of authorship is bestowed to the individuals who are engaged in "trading" authorship rights or providing funding or lab space. Huth (1986) held that honorary authors are not capable of defending the content because they are not engaged in the doing research, writing and editing the paper.

There are a number of reasons that account for the occurrence of honorary authorship. The common reasons uncovered by Bhopal et al. (1997) include a) pressure to publish, b) enhancing chances of publication, c) repaying favours, d) motivating a team and encouraging collaboration, and e) maintaining good relationships. The most common reason is pressure to publish. That is to say, junior researchers include senior colleagues of national or international stature as the author in the hope of enhancing the likelihood of their paper being published. Bennett and Taylor (2003) argued that the practice of honorary authorship is an unwarranted credit and seen as an ethical transgression because it diminishes credit for those who substantially contributed to the project.

### **1.3. Ghost authorship**

Ghost authorship, another unacceptable and unethical research practice that violates the integrity and ethical principles of scientific research (Bosch, 2011; Gasparyan et al, 2013; Liesegang et al., 2008; Liesegang et al., 2010), is almost the reverse of honorary authorship and refers to the individuals who have made substantive contribution to the manuscript while their names are omitted and not credited as authors (Castillo, 2009; Flanagin et al., 1998; Hwang et al., 2003). Some consider ghost authorship almost equivalent to the act of plagiarism, as there is a practice of authorship misappropriation (Anekwe, 2010). According to Castillo (2009), ghost authorship is a phenomenon commonly occurring in large-scale projects in which some individuals are paid to carry out data collection and data analysis without being acknowledged in the main manuscript. Investigating 809 articles published in peer-reviewed medical journals, Flanagin et al (1998) found that 11% of the papers indicated the evidence of ghost authorship. In another study, Gøtzsche et al. (2007) found the evidence of ghost authorship in reports of industry-initiated clinical trials approved by Danish ethics committees between 1994 and 1995.

Graduate students are among the population within research community who are likely to be treated and exploited as ghost authors (Gasparyan et al., 2013). They may provide

contributions in the form of doing observations, collecting data, and analyzing data while they may easily be under-acknowledged by their professors or the principal investigators. The situation is aggravated for the graduate students whose disadvantaged power position in research process enhances their vulnerability to exploitation (Oberlander & Spencer, 2006). In the academic world, professional and financial rewards amassed through the number of publications can give rise to unethical authorship assignments within faculty-student collaborations (Sandler & Russell 2005). As a matter of fact, the power difference rooted in the student-faculty relationship, and students' relative inexperience in the research facilitates misappropriation of authorship and the possibility for exploitation (Costa & Gatz, 1992; Oberlander & Spencer, 2006). As long as this unequal power relationship is exercised and the students are dependent on faculty for mentoring and supervising, as pointed out by Rose and Fischer (1998), the graduate students may not be able to assert themselves when assigning authorship to a manuscript.

Fine and Kurdek (1993) held that the assignment of authorship should be based on relative scholarly contributions of the collaborators and both the faculty and the students should be involved in authorship decision-making process. In the same vein, Arthur et al. (2004) arguing against student exploitation by the faculty members underlined that the faculty members and the students should be informed about ethical issues as well as they should openly negotiate contributions and the assignment of authorship credit.

In the light of these considerations, it appears that graduate students are likely to be relegated to labors including, but not limited to, data collection, observation, calculation, and data analysis with no academic rewards. They are vulnerable to exploitation as ghost authors at the mercy of other privileged authors. The present study was an attempt to explore the reasons accounted for the Iranian MA students of TEFL being exploited as ghost authors within their faculty-student research collaboration.

## 2. Method

A sample of 20 MA graduate students of TEFL actively involved in research and publication activities and reported themselves being exploited as ghosts were chosen to take part in the study. All of the students were doing their last semester of MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and had at least one published paper at the time of the study.

Before completing a thesis as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art, the Iranian students of TEFL are involved in research activities required for the course completion during their MA program. Such activities must result in research papers submitted to the professors as a part of the course completion requirements. As a rule of thumb, the area of investigation is specified by the professors and the students are involved in the procedures including studying and collecting relevant stuff, doing observation or recording, conducting interviews, developing checklists or questionnaires, carrying out pilot-testing, gathering and analyzing data, and writing the drafts of the research paper.

### 2.1. Data collection and analysis

The data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews. The participants were interviewed individually lasting from 30 to 40 minutes in length. All interviews were conducted in English, audio taped and transcribed verbatim. All transcripts were analysed by means of pattern coding to reduce the "large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). As a matter of fact, the

data analysis started by examining and coding all the participants' responses to the interview questions. The transcripts were carefully read and key ideas or topics from the texts that seemed to encompass key thoughts or concepts were highlighted and labelled by marginal notes. Once all transcripts were read and coded, the researchers examined all data within codes across the texts in order to group them into themes.

### 3. Findings

Three central themes emerged in the process of reading and rereading the data that accounted for the reasons the Iranian MA students of TEFL were exploited as ghost authors by their professors. The reasons encompass a) power relation, b) the students' lack of knowledge about authorship, and c) lack of rules and regulations addressing the authorship issue in the departments. Before explicating the above-mentioned reasons, it is worth noting that the students' involvement in research papers, as revealed in the interviews, included collecting data, designing instruments, conducting interviews and observations, recording and videotaping, analysing the data and interpreting the results, and writing the drafts of the research paper submitted as the course requirements.

#### 3.1. Power relation

The inadvertent use of power by the professors in the realm of authorship was the dominant reason most of the MA students pointed out in the interviews. As a matter of fact, authorship credit and assignment was not based on the contribution; rather there was an automatic assignment imposed by the professors that was an indication of power difference inherent in study-faculty relationship. One of the students stated that

[w]e MA students are powerless and have to obey the professors and meet their expectations. Professors think that it is only they who must decide about the authorship and they believe that the students' job is only to do the job of collecting and analysing the data and finally to write the research paper for them. We do not know what is happening to the research papers we give as the course requirement. We cannot pursue the paper when we pass the course and later when the professors want to send the paper to a journal for publication, they will not include our names as the author.

It is apparent that the students' intellectual contribution to the research papers, when it is submitted for publication, is simply overlooked and not considered by their professors. This brings about on the part of the students "feelings of powerlessness, bitterness, and disenchantment with the scientific process" (Oberlander & Spencer, 2006, p. 218). Also, the students believed that power granted to the professors and their freedom in making decisions from one hand and the perception that the students lack competence and expertise in research from the other hand have made the students consider themselves to be in positions of lesser power and conversely made the professors autonomous in authorship awarding process. One of the students asserted that "the communication is dictatorial because they are professors and we are labelled as students who have to listen and obey". Believing that an atmosphere of openness in regard to authorship was not facilitated by the professors, another student stated that "the atmosphere is not open enough to discuss things and this is because of power". In fact, the students pointed out that the boundaries within the area of authorship were arbitrarily established by the professors and the students' power and influence was limited. As one of the students stated, "bringing up these issues needs courage and power that we do not have for the time being".

Not seeing themselves in the position to raise the issues associated with authorship and discuss them with their professor was transparent in the interviews. The students asserted that there was lack of communication about authorship with the professors and they were afraid of the aftermath because if they asserted themselves, as Schneider (1987) pointed out, they were likely to undergo the unpleasant experiences of isolation and distress. One of the students asserted that "when I predict the outcome of talk about authorship matters I am afraid to talk because I am still a student and may return to this professor later on when I am doing my thesis and I may get isolated then". The unfair and inequitable distribution of the power in student-faculty relationship increases the likelihood of exploitation and makes the students less courageous to assert themselves (Costa & Gatz, 1992; Rose & Fischer, 1998). As one of the students, who was involved in writing three research papers without his name being added as the author, stated, "we cannot talk and communicate with professors about authorship. I am afraid to talk because it may have a bad result". As explicitly asserted because of the uneven power relationship, the students were afraid to enter into open discussions with the professors about the issue of authorship because the talks might leave them with adverse aftermath.

However, from the point of view of a few numbers of students, discussing the case of authorship was not morally worthwhile. In fact they refrained from bringing the authorship issues because they were in the belief that they morally owed the professors for the support and encouragement they offered to the students. As one of the students asserted, "personally I gained a lot since I have started working and taking courses with my professors. They are inspiring me and helping me with valuable advice and I feel myself responsible to work for them". In fact, they believed that their academic development mainly initiated and promoted by their professors is irreplaceable and cannot be compared to what they are doing, such as writing research paper, collecting and analysing the data. One of the students believed that "collecting and analysing data, reporting the results and things like that are what I pay for the encouragement and support I get from my professors and if they add or do not add my name, it is not too much important for me". That is to say, although the students' names might not be mentioned or acknowledged by their professors as authors in the research papers or projects, some students viewed their job as a moral response to their professors.

### **3.2. Lack of knowledge about authorship**

Students' unfamiliarity with the culture of authorship was believed to precipitate the vulnerability of the students to exploitation and being treated as ghost authors. Due to their lack of experience and knowledge in issues associated with authorship, the students were treated as labourers doing work for their professors without getting academic rewards. As one of the students stated:

We are neither familiar with nor educated for the matters related to authorship. Our professors never explain to us. This way we don't know about our rights and cannot claim anything if our names are omitted from the research papers. I think the professors want this lack of awareness to continue because they benefit from it.

It is obvious that the students were not educated about the process of publication. In consequence, hardly ever did they know about the correct rights and responsibilities rest on them and their professors in regard with authorship. This makes the students unsure about their own rights to claim authorship of the research papers and, as Branstetter and

Handelsman (2000) held, lack of knowledge in this area paved the way for unethical behaviours.

The students were unknowingly overestimating professors' authorship rights and conversely underestimating their own authorship credit. In this vein, one of the students asserted that:

the professors have more knowledge about research and authorship than we have. What we are doing like writing, searching for literature, and collecting data is not as important as what the professors are doing, like giving us information about research stages and academic comments.

The students unknowingly attached authorship credits to their professors and underestimated the importance of their own practical or intellectual contributions including, but not limited to, data collection, analyses, interpretation and reporting. This may be due to the fact that they were not informed by their professors about the issues pertaining to authorship and this further made them not consider themselves as authors in the research papers submitted to their professors as the course requirement. As some of the students asserted in the interviews, the professors were in the belief that if students have ample knowledge and awareness related to authorship rights, they might feel autonomous and accordingly refrain from participating in research in which all decisions are for the most part made by the professors. One of the students stated,

You know the professors are comfortable with this way and they do not bother themselves to tell the students what the rights of the students are in doing research. They would rather hide it because it may be against their wishes if they let the students be aware of their rights.

Although some of the students revealed that they were rather aware of the authorship rights and believed that authorship must be awarded on the basis of contribution, they still continued to be treated as ghost authors because they thought that bringing up the case of authorship and discussing it could be a serious risk. Being dependent on the professors in the process of doing thesis and the fear of experiencing isolation were the main concern that prevented the students from defending their authorship rights in research papers or projects that were independent of their thesis. One of the students asserted that

I did huge amounts of studying, collecting and analysing only as the course requirement and although I know that what I did had the potential for publishing with my name as the author, I did not bring it up because I may be dependent on this professor when doing my thesis.

On the whole, it is apparent that lack of knowledge on the part of the students about authorship together with the professors' disinclination toward informing the students about their authorship rights in research papers or projects was the second major factor that increased the likelihood of student exploitation as ghost authors.

### **3.3. Lack of rules and regulations**

The last theme that emerged and was, according to the students, among the factors that accounted for the vulnerability of the students to exploitation was the fact that there remained a paucity of explicit and detailed guidelines addressing authorship in the departments. The students asserted that no clear-cut rules and regulations were set by the

departments about the publication of the research papers. One of the students acknowledged that

[t]he English department at my university has no rules regulated and determined for the authorship. The criteria for excluding and including names in the research papers are totally personal. I did a lot of things such as collecting data, data analysis, finding literature review, and writing the drafts. I did all these only as the course requirements and not as the author. This is too sad.

This shows that the professors continue to apply their own personal criteria when assigning authorship to the students who made contributions to the research papers. The students agreed that written documents were not available in their departments to identify their roles in the research papers and warrant their authorship. The absence of clear guidelines related to authorship credit on faculty-student collaborative research papers or projects resulted in disagreements and exploitation and because the power relation between faculty and their students was inherently unequal, the students were not awarded appropriate authorship credit. One of the students asserted that "the department should develop guidelines that can protect our authorship rights and of course there are some guidelines available". While lack of authorship rules and regulations in the departments can give rise to arbitrary practices and decisions by the professors, formulating guidelines can inform the students about the authorship rights and responsibilities they and their professors are supposed to have in research papers or projects. In this regard, Universities can formulate regulations regarding authorship credit and further include them in faculty handbooks and student orientation manuals (Arthur et al., 2004; Oberlander & Spencer, 2006). One of the students stated:

if a part of our research course in the first semester of MA program was allocated to the rules about students' authorship and their responsibilities, the professors at least would have to add the students' name to the research papers or mention them in acknowledgment.

The students were not usually listed as the authors because, as revealed in the interviews, the research paper ideas were owned by their professors and the job of the students was to submit the paper as the course requirement and not claim authorship credit. In fact, many of the students believed that more they did including gathering data, developing checklists, conducting interviews, analysing the data, and reporting than they were assumed to do for course requirements and their rights to claim authorship was silent in the university regulations.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The study indicated that, although, the MA students made substantial contributions to the research papers written as the course requirements, they were not acknowledged or mentioned in the byline. It is doubtless that publishing these papers without adding the students' names as authors or acknowledging their contribution is equivalent to treating the them as "cheap labour" (Conn, 1995). Owing to the power disparity inherent in the faculty–student research context and because of the fear of possible damage to this relationship or retribution (Murray, 2002), the students refrain from discussing authorship issues with their professors. As asserted by Oberlander and Spencer (2006, p. 226), "students are forever linked professionally to advisors and may be fearful of real or imagined consequences of questioning authorship practices". This calls for open discussion between the students and



the professors about the issues germane to the student-faculty research collaborations including authorship credit (Oddi & Oddi, 2000).

Lack of knowledge about authorship as well as lack of guidelines that can inform the students about the issues, rights, and responsibilities related to authorship is another cause of the ghost authorship phenomenon. Fine and Kurdek (1993) argued that when students lack experience and sufficient knowledge in research, they are vulnerable to exploitation by their professors. In the same vein, helping the student to gain knowledge by means of introducing clear rules and guidelines about authorship is argued to be essential to avert the exploitation of the students (Arthur et al., 2004; Bartle et al., 2000).

As far as the results of the present study are concerned, there appears to be a nexus of authorship credit, power relation, lack of knowledge about authorship, and lack of guidelines that needs to be explored to fully understand how to deconstruct power relation and enhance the students' knowledge in the realm of authorship. The justification for exercising power in the area of authorship need to be provided by the professors and as Chomsky (2002, p. 201) pointed out "the burden of proof for any exercise of authority is always on the person exercising it". In the case that the exercise of power is not legitimate, it has no reason to perpetuate and should be eliminated. Exploiting the students and treating them as the ghost authors is the act of research misconduct and deserves more attention. Since the academic rewards, promotion and other tenure decisions are largely dependent on the number of publications and from the other hand the act of ghost authorship encompasses fabrication and falsification of credentials, it is vital that more studies in different contexts need carrying out to investigate ghost authorship.

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**Strategic age- and motivation- related preferences  
in Greek state elementary and junior high schools**  
**Στρατηγικές προτιμήσεις αναφορικά με τους παράγοντες  
ηλικίας και κινήτρων μάθησης σε ελληνικά δημόσια  
Δημοτικά και Γυμνάσια σχολεία»**

**Athina VRETTOU**

*Research has been occupied with a variety of individual difference variables implicated in language learning strategy use. Among them, age has been rather neglected while motivation seems to be particularly powerful. The strong impact of the aforementioned factors on learners' strategic behavior is shown in a large-scale study conducted with 1,548 EFL students in state elementary and junior high schools in the city of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. Along with a background questionnaire, recording demographics and measuring motivation, an adapted form of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was employed so as to suit the learners' young age. A picture of age and motivational differences in the strategy preference of elementary and junior high school students is depicted with older learners displaying less, albeit still high, motivation in comparison to younger ones. Based on the results, implications for future research and the English language classroom are suggested.*

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Έρευνες έχουν ασχοληθεί με ποικίλες μεταβλητές ατομικών διαφορών που εμπλέκονται στη χρήση γλωσσικών στρατηγικών μάθησης. Ανάμεσά τους, η ηλικία έχει μάλλον παραμεληθεί ενώ τα κίνητρα μάθησης φαίνονται να είναι ιδιαιτέρως ισχυρά. Η σταθερή επίδραση των προαναφερθέντων παραγόντων στη στρατηγική συμπεριφορά μαθητών διαφαίνεται σε μια μεγάλης έκτασης έρευνα που διεξήχθη με 1.548 μαθητές της αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας σε δημόσια Δημοτικά και Γυμνάσια σχολεία στην πόλη της Θεσσαλονίκης στη Βόρεια Ελλάδα. Μαζί με ένα συνοδευτικό ερωτηματολόγιο για καταγραφή δημογραφικών στοιχείων και μέτρηση των κινήτρων μάθησης, χρησιμοποιήθηκε μία προσαρμοσμένη μορφή του "Ερωτηματολογίου Στρατηγικών για Γλωσσική Εκμάθηση" (SILL) της Oxford (1990) ώστε να είναι κατάλληλο για τη νεαρή ηλικία των μαθητών. Απεικονίζονται οι διαφορές ως προς την ηλικία και τα κίνητρα μάθησης στις στρατηγικές προτιμήσεις των μαθητών Δημοτικών και Γυμνασίων με τους μεγαλύτερους ηλικιακά μαθητές να επιδεικνύουν χαμηλότερα, μολονότι επίσης υψηλά, κίνητρα μάθησης σε σχέση με τους μικρότερους ηλικιακά μαθητές.

*Με βάση τα αποτελέσματα, γίνονται προτάσεις για μελλοντικές έρευνες καθώς και για τη διδασκαλία της αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας.*

**Key words:** Language learning strategies; age; motivation; primary educational level; secondary educational level

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## 1. Introduction

Language learning strategies are generally regarded as physical actions, behaviors, or internal mental processes involving emotions and consciousness for the facilitation of language input selection, organization, integration, and use in linguistic production (Psaltou-Joycey, 2010). Strategies lead to enhancement of learning, which can be made easier, faster, and more pleasurable, towards autonomy or self-regulation or self-management (Cohen, 2007).

Based on research and the existing literature, Oxford's (1990) strategy classification seems to be "the most comprehensive" (Ellis, 1994, p. 539) including six categories: memory strategies, which help the retention of new information in long-term memory; cognitive strategies for the processing and use of the language; compensatory strategies in order to make up for missing information in oral speech and in writing; metacognitive strategies, which regulate learning through planning, organizing, and evaluating; affective strategies for lowering one's anxiety; and the social set for seeking assistance and cooperation.

Language learning strategies have been explored with regard to a large number of factors, especially achievement in a second or foreign language (L2). Both situational and learner variables can be conducive to strategy selection and degree of utilization (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995) with those internal to the learner more extensively researched, such as language proficiency level, motivation, age, learning styles, gender, beliefs, or career orientation. In general, motivation has shown strong correlations with language learning strategy use from an early age (Psaltou-Joycey, 2010) while age has attracted only "a handful of studies" (Takeuchi et al., 2007, p. 70). Most studies have inquired into adults (Mochizuki, 1999; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Peacock and Ho, 2003; Sheorey, 1999; Wharton, 2000), especially in the Greek socio-educational context (Kazamia, 2003; Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou, 2009), utilizing the original or adapted versions of Oxford's (1990) well-tested Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

The small volume of research into the strategy use of Greek-speaking young learners (Papanis, 2008; Psaltou-Joycey and Sougari, 2010) and adolescents stimulated a study for a doctoral thesis at primary educational level (Vrettou, 2011) and a similar study undertaken simultaneously at secondary level (Vrettou, 2009) in the year 2008 according to a number of variables. All the data bases were unified so that they could be explored with regard to the age and motivation factors adding to the students' profile at the two levels.

## 2. Research background

### 2.1. Strategies and age

In contrast to other variables influencing strategy deployment, comparing age groups has given rise to studies with considerably “mixed findings” (Takeuchi et al., 2007, p. 70). Age did not have a significant main effect on the strategy preference – as reported in Oxford’s (1990) SILL – of adults in Griffiths (2003) or Psaltou-Joycey (2008) while Kazamia (2003) found significant positive correlations between age and two memory strategies of the same inventory. When Lee and Oxford (2008) examined 1,110 EFL learners from one middle school, three high schools, and two universities in Korea employing the SILL, education level, and, by extension, age, had a statistically significant positive main effect as well as an interaction effect (together with gender) on overall strategy use. Linear were also the findings by Peacock and Ho (2003), who discovered that their mature 112 students (aged 23 and over) used four of Oxford’s strategy categories (i.e. memory, metacognitive, affective, and social) as well as twenty strategies (mostly belonging to those categories) more than their 894 younger students (aged 18-22) in a Hong Kong university.

Tracking the strategy use of 300 EFL Muslim students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade of elementary school in Greece, Papanis (2008) found that the 5<sup>th</sup>-graders used socio-affective strategies significantly more than the 4<sup>th</sup>- and the 6<sup>th</sup>-graders. Adding to curvilinear results, Psaltou-Joycey and Sougari (2010) found that their young learners (262 6<sup>th</sup>-graders in elementary school) used five of their strategy categories (the compensatory category not included) as well as 20 out of the 30 items on an adapted SILL significantly more than their older informants (254 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders in junior high school), who exceeded only in the use of 3 strategies. Furthermore, in another study of 93 undergraduate EFL Iranian students by Kashefian-Naeeni et al. (2011), the younger group (aged below 20) significantly outperformed the group aged 20 to 23 only in the use of metacognitive strategies on the SILL.

In the Spanish context, Victori and Tragant (2003) undertook a study of 766 EFL students forming three age groups (10-, 14-, and 17-year-olds) that had received a different amount of English instruction. A strategy questionnaire written in Catalan was employed with open-ended questions. According to the results, as students’ age and hours of instruction progressed, more cognitively complex strategies for vocabulary learning were deployed more frequently.

In order to isolate the effect of age from that of language proficiency, Tragant and Victori (2006) conducted another study with three age groups of 703 students (having started learning English at the ages of 8, 11, and over 18) after 200, 416, and 726 hours of English instruction for each group. The analysis showed that developmental changes in strategy use occur as age increases irrespective of proficiency level or hours of instruction with older learners displaying more complex and elaborate strategies than younger ones. These changes are not always systematic or linear for all types of strategies or all kinds of learners.

In a subsequent study of 412 bilingual secondary school students in Spain, forming three age groups (namely, ages 12-13, 14-15, and 16-17) and four proficiency levels according to their course grades, Tragant and Victori (2012) found a general tendency for students attaining higher grades to reportedly use more strategies of most types across the three age levels. Nevertheless, significant strategic differentiation tended to diminish as students grew older, leading the researchers to conclude that with the advancement of age, less variation of

strategy use might be expected. As far as task-related strategies are concerned, Pinter (2006) compared ten pairs of elementary school children and five pairs of college EFL learners in Hungary to conclude that although children used a great many strategies, adults used those in a more effective, consistent, extensive, and systematic way.

In conclusion, language learning strategies change as age advances with increasing complexity and sophistication (Psaltou-Joycey, 2010), at least for some learners, as one might add. None the less, lack of systematicity or linearity for some types of strategies may have to do with methodological considerations such as the number and age difference of the subjects selected, or the questionnaire employed for strategy elicitation. Individual factors such as the proficiency level of the participants, their aptitude, beliefs, or motivation could also be of great importance. Situational factors such as the English classroom or the influence of the cultural context could additionally play a vital role in strategy development. Thus, the present study aimed to shed some light on age- and motivation-related strategic preferences of a large number of elementary and junior high school students as far as the Greek context is concerned through the use of a well-validated questionnaire with pedagogical implications for the teaching of these specific students.

## **2.2. Strategies and L2 motivation**

L2 learning motivation, or L2 motivation, is the desire to learn another language (Oxford, 2003). Originating from the Latin word “movere” (= “to move”), motivation represents the condition of one being moved into action with a particular motive, intention, or goal. L2 motivation has an overriding impact upon strategy deployment, as clearly deduced by one of the pioneering studies in the field, that by Oxford and Nyikos (1989).

In a few studies, as motivation level rises, strategy use becomes more frequent being accompanied by higher proficiency (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Oxford et al., 1993; Vrettou, 2011). In quite a lot of research, there are positive statistically significant relations between motivation and strategy use. Most studies examine adults (Chang, 2011; Kafipour et al., 2011; McIntosh and Noels, 2004; Mochizuki, 1999; Okada et al., 1996; Psaltou-Joycey, 2003; Schmidt and Watanabe, 2001; Wharton, 2000). Lee and Oxford’s (2008) study involves middle schoolers, high school and university students. In one study by Lan and Oxford (2003) there is participation of elementary students. Employment of cluster analysis has shown that high motivation levels seem to be linked to high achievement, high overall or selective strategy deployment, and metacognitive awareness of strategic use (Kantaridou, 2004; Yamamori et al., 2003).

Most of the aforementioned research has used the SILL for assessment of strategy use. As for motivation, a diversity of instruments was employed ranging from “importance of language learning” (in Mochizuki, 1999; Psaltou-Joycey, 2003; and Wharton, 2000) or “liking of English” (in Chang, 2011 and Lan and Oxford, 2003) to self-determination indexes (in McIntosh and Noels, 2004) or Gardner’s Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (in Kafipour et al., 2011).

## **2.3. Age and L2 motivation**

Research has shown that young learners have largely positive attitudes - displaying liking to learn foreign languages - in a variety of contexts (Donato et al., 2000; Lamb, 2004; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000). However, early zest seems to flag around the middle of adolescence. Thus, favorable attitudes towards learning English and interest in foreign languages tended



to decrease from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> year of age in an intensive summer language program in Spain (Masgoret et al., 2001). Similarly, students aged 10 surpassed in both motivation and attitudes those aged 13 and 16 in the Basque country (Cenoz, 2003).

At secondary level, there was also a drop of motivation to learn an L2 from the first to the second grade of junior high school in a French late immersion program in Canada (MacIntyre et al., 2002) as well as from the first to the third year in the South-west of England (Williams et al., 2002). A decrease of motivation to learn Arabic as a second language also occurred for senior high school students in the ninth and tenth years as compared to those in the seventh and eighth years in Ghenghesh (2010).

Unlike all the above studies which confirm lessening of motivation from elementary to high school, Tragant (2006) found that all the highest scores in liking English were obtained in the last year of high school for all her three age groups (having started English at 8, 11, and over 18 years) tracked longitudinally. That might have to do with the particular sample and the cohorts' interpretation of motivation. It might also imply some possibility for a motivational peak towards the end of adolescence when learners get more mature and goals may become crystallized into a definite plan of action.

It appears that motivational rise might extend in time. In Hungary, Kormos and Csizér (2008) found significant differences in the "reasonably high" language learning attitudes and motivated behavior (in terms of effort and persistence) between high school students (with a median age of 16.5), university students (average age 21.5 years), and adult language learners (median age 33.7 years), with scores becoming higher for each age group.

In sum, most of the above researchers converge in the direction of attributing the diminution of motivation in mid puberty to cognitive, psychological, and situational factors. Early enthusiasm about a foreign or second language generally seems to be followed by age-related negative attitudes towards the school subjects and the educational system in general (Cenoz, 2003; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2002). As well as that, lack of continuity and more traditional methodology in later years fall short of high expectations adding to disillusionment and disheartening of the learners (Alexiou and Mattheoudakis, 2013; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000).

The current study sought to sketch the situation in Greece by tracking down changes in the motivational profiles of students in primary and lower secondary education, thus adding to the implications for their teaching.

### 3. Aim and research questions of the study

The following research questions were formulated for the present study:

- Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of overall strategy use?
- Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of the strategy categories?
- Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of particular strategies?



## 4. Method and general design

Two descriptive studies, one addressing young learners (Vrettou, 2011) and one addressing adolescents (Vrettou, 2009), were held being similar in instrumentation and examined the influence of a number of variables (namely, language proficiency level, motivation, and gender) on strategic use. They took place in western, central, and eastern Thessaloniki from late January till mid April 2008. The collection of the quantitative data was performed through the method of cluster sampling whereby a specific number of schools is selected and all of the students of those schools are tested (Cohen et al., 2000). All the above data were unified and analyzed from a different perspective in order to examine the impact of the age together with the motivation factors in relation to the strategy use of the students.

### 4.1. Instruments

Strategy use was recorded through an adapted and subsequently translated-into-Greek form of Oxford's (1990) self-report SILL, which uses five-point Likert scaling. To be more specific, the widely used 7.0 50-item version (for mainly adult speakers of other languages learning English) of the SILL underwent adaptation (Vrettou, 2011) so that it could be more comprehensible to younger learners. The adapted form was categorized into six strategy groups – memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social sets. In general, all the items were made more specific and correspond to the items in the original instrument except for No 12, replaced by the use of a dictionary for unknown words (a strategy included in Oxford's theory but not on her SILL).

The students were additionally administered a background questionnaire for reporting demographic facts and motivation to learn English. As far as motivation was concerned, it was elicited through the average of five-point Likert scale responses to three questions concerning a) liking English (i.e. "Do you like English?"), b) desire to learn the language (i.e. "Do you want to learn English?"), and expended effort (i.e. "How much effort do you put into learning English?"), following Gardner's (2001) well-researched socio-educational model of second language acquisition. The above aspect of motivation appeared to be primarily responsible for achievement among other attitudinal and motivation variables in a large meta-analysis of studies on attitudes and motivation held by Gardner and colleagues (Masgoret and Gardner 2003<sup>1</sup>).

In the analysis, categories of motivation were drawn in accordance with Oxford's (1990) division of mean scores ranging on a scale from 1 to 5 (1.0-2.4, low use; 2.5-3.4, medium use; 3.5-5.0, high use). Since a large number of the informants exhibited high motivation, the above researcher's additional distinction into high (3.5-4.4) and very high use (4.5-5.0) was adopted for the sake of further comparison of the motivation sets.

### 4.2. Participants

Twenty-seven state elementary schools participated with 763 12-year-old 6<sup>th</sup>-graders (386 girls and 377 boys). Sixteen state junior high schools also took part with 785 15-year-olds in the third grade (475 females and 310 males). Overall, a total sample of 1548 was investigated for the purposes of the current study. As regards age, the sample was fairly balanced (49.3% at primary and 50.7% at secondary level) and representative, too. As reported in official data held by the local Bureaus of Education, the primary level students constituted 10% of the total number of the 6<sup>th</sup>-graders in the city of Thessaloniki for the school year 2007-8 (7,621 in total out of 44,742 elementary school students); on the other

hand, the secondary level students constituted 9.7% of the overall number of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders in the city for the same year (8,069 in all out of 22,574 junior high school students).

#### **4.3. Data collection**

The background and strategy questionnaires were given in an hour of English by the researcher of the present study herself so that elucidation could be provided where necessary. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary with the majority being eager to take part. However, 170 questionnaires were rejected from any analysis due to learning difficulties that students had in the Greek language according to their Greek language teachers' reports, or due to provision of the same answers on the strategy questionnaire, especially in instances in junior high school.

#### **4.4. Statistical procedures**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 was used for descriptive and inferential statistics. Reliability analysis was applied through computation of Cronbach's alpha. Concurrent validity was estimated through Pearson correlation coefficient, which produced correlations between scale variables. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the scale variables of overall strategy use, the six strategy categories, and the fifty strategy items. Frequencies were analyzed and categorized for the categorical variables of age (elementary and junior high school) and motivation (low, medium, high, and very high). The chi-square test of independence was applied to investigate the relation between the variables of age and motivation to learn English. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tested the presence of significant differences in overall strategy use according to the independent variables of age and motivation. A two-way multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed when more than one dependent variables were considered (that is, the six strategy categories and the fifty strategies) together with the above independent variables. The Tukey-HSD post hoc test followed both ANOVA and MANOVA to find the location of the significant differences made by motivation.

### **5. Results and discussion**

The overall internal consistency or reliability of the adapted strategy questionnaire for the entire sample was high with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.898. Reliability of the SILL is calculated overall rather than with its six subscales (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 6). The concurrent validity of the strategy instrument was also supported for both elementary students ( $r(735) = 0.182$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; Vrettou, 2011) and junior high school students ( $r(710) = 0.137$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; Vrettou 2009) through the positive correlations of the students' overall strategy mean scores with their scores on the Quick Placement Test (UCLES, 2001), a standardized proficiency measure, which had also been taken by all the informants.

A cross-tabulation of age and motivation was conducted in order to assess any dependence between the two independent qualitative variables. As shown in Table 1, significance arose with medium-motivated junior high school students (26.2%) outperforming their elementary school counterparts (11.1%). On the other hand, it appears that the majority of the primary level students are highly- and very highly-motivated (86.7%) whereas the respective percentage of highly- and very highly-motivated secondary level students is a lot lower (69%). The evident diminution of motivation to learn English in adolescence accords with a number of studies into motivation and age (Cenoz, 2003; Ghenghesh, 2010; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Masgoret et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2002).

Motivation to learn English	Age		Total
	Elementary	Junior High	
Low motivation	17	38	55
	2.2%	4.8%	3.6%
Medium Motivation	85	206	291
	11.1%	26.2%	18.8%
High motivation	308	389	697
	40.4%	49.6%	45.0%
Very high motivation	353	152	505
	46.3%	19.4%	32.6%
Total	763	785	1548
	100%	100%	100%

$$\chi^2 (3) = 147.463 \quad p = 0.000 < 0.001$$

Table 1. Motivation to learn English by age

The research question results and ensuing discussion follow.

### 5.1. Research Question 1: Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of overall strategy use?

Two-way ANOVA results in Table 2 indicate that age did not have a significant main effect on overall strategy use. The main effect of motivation was significant demonstrating the major influence of this factor. Following post hoc results revealed that very highly-motivated respondents made higher strategy use than highly-motivated ones, who used strategies to a larger degree than medium-motivated learners, who were well ahead of their low-motivated peers in strategic deployment. The significant impact of motivation on overall use of strategies was found in other studies as well (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995; Lan and Oxford, 2003; Psaltou-Joycey, 2003; Wharton, 2000). No significant interaction effects between age and motivation were detected showing the distinctness of the factors as far as the total average strategy score is concerned.

### 5.2. Research Question 2: Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of the strategy categories?

A two-way MANOVA was conducted with strategy categories as the dependent variables and age and motivation to learn English as the independent variables (Appendix, Table 3). Age had a significant influence on memory, compensation, affective and social strategy categories. More specifically, junior high school students reportedly deployed memory strategies to a lesser extent than elementary school students. It is likely that as learners' cognition develops and matures, they tend to utilize more complicated and intellectually stimulating strategies rather than mnemonics for retention of vocabulary.

The use of the compensatory strategy category was also higher for the junior school learners since making up for gaps in communication requires a fairly large amount of knowledge and experience of the language. Affective strategies were used less frequently by the adolescents of the study compared to the young learners. As the advancement of age may bring about cognitive together with emotional maturity, management of emotions, which is indispensable at the early stages of learning, might not be a priority.

Main & interaction effects	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Tukey-HSD post hoc test results
Age	74.060	1	24.687	0.619	0.431 n.s.	
Motivation to learn English	0.112	3	.112	136.923	0.000***	LM< MM< HM< VH
Age X Motivation	1.063	3	.354	1.966	0.117 n.s.	

## Notes

- Dependent variable: Overall strategy use
- Significance: \*\*\*=  $p < 0.001$
- LM= low motivation, MM= medium motivation, HM= high motivation, VH= very high motivation
- Means and standard deviations for motivation: LM: 2.36 (SD= 0.49), MM: 2.75 (SD= 0.51), HM: 3.09 (SD= 0.46), VH: 3.40 (SD= 0.43)

*Table 2. Two-way ANOVA results with overall strategy use as the dependent variable and age and motivation to learn English as the independent variables*

The fact that social strategies were also used significantly less by the older participants of the study probably has to do with the educational context of junior high schools in Greece. Although the New Greek Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education (2003) favors and promotes group and cooperative work, individual learning is still dominant in every day classroom practices.

As to motivation to learn English, it made a significant difference in all the six strategy categories, verifying its great importance in strategic choice. In fact, the higher the motivation of the respondents, the greater their use of all the strategy sets was. Motivation had a significant impact on all strategy categories in other studies as well (for example, Chang, 2011; Lan and Oxford, 2003; Mochizuki, 1999; Schmidt and Watanabe, 2001).

An interaction of age and motivation to learn English occurred only for memory strategies. Although the increase of mnemonic strategy use is linear regarding motivation in elementary school students, older learners' mean scores in memory strategies go up less and less strongly from medium to high and very high motivation levels. Thus, more mature and motivated learners seem to be eclectic favoring other strategies rather than memory ones.

### **5.3. Research Question 3: Are there any statistically significant differences by age and/or motivation to learn English in respect of particular strategies?**

Table 4 (Appendix) includes the two-way MANOVA results with the fifty strategies on the adapted SILL as the dependent variables, and age and motivation to learn English as the independent variables.

### 5.3.1. Age differences

Age had a significant main effect on a total of 25 strategies. There were significant negative associations of age and 16 strategies from most categories. In other words, older students made lower use than their younger counterparts concerning the following 16 strategies: “using new English words in a sentence which one makes up” (No 2), “connecting the sound of a new English word with a picture of the word in one’s mind” (No 3), “using rhymes” (No 5), “miming” (No 7), “reviewing” (No 8), “saying or writing new English words many times” (No 10), “writing known English words in many different sentences” (No 13), “trying to find grammatical rules” (No 20), “making new English words from Greek” (No 26), “noticing one’s English mistakes and using that information” (No 31), “planning one’s schedule to have enough time to study English” (No 34), “giving oneself a reward or treat for doing well in English” (No 41), “writing down one’s feelings in a diary” (No 43), “talking to somebody else about one’s feelings” (No 44), “asking for help from English speakers” (No 48), and “trying to learn about the culture of English speakers” (No 50).

There were significant positive associations of age and 9 strategies. Specifically, high school students made more frequent use of a dictionary (No 12), practiced the skills of reading more (No 16 and 27) and the skills of writing and listening to a larger extent (strategies No 17 and 32 respectively), avoided word-for-word translation (No 22), and used more compensatory strategies, particularly guessing from context (No 24), moving one’s hands (No 25), and using a synonym or circumlocution (No 29). Moreover, there was a marginally significant positive effect on trying to use the language as much as possible (No 30,  $p=0.052$ ).

Obviously, as age and, by consequence, proficiency increases, learners come into contact with more demanding language and more systematic practice of the language skills, need to use resources, and use the language for communication as much as possible. As learners mature, they appear to be in need for more meaningful and holistic learning without great concern for grammar or mistakes. They also downplay memory and some affective strategies, plan studying less, and rely more on themselves asking for help less frequently.

### 5.3.2. Motivation to learn English effects

Motivation to learn English had a significant main effect on the use of a remarkable number of 43 of the 50 strategies on the questionnaire. There was a negative difference only in the use of two compensatory strategies, namely, moving one’s hands (No 25) and making up new words from Greek (No 26), which do not seem to work in a cognitively demanding English classroom. Motivation made a significant and consistently positive difference in the use of 41 strategies: six memory ones (No 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8), twelve cognitive ones (No 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23), three compensatory ones (No 24, 28, 29), all the metacognitive strategies (No 30-38), all of the affective strategies except one (No 39, 40, 41, 42, 44), and all of the social set (No 45-50). Notably, many of the above strategies are connected to the four language skills, that is, listening (No 15, 32), speaking (No 11), reading (No 16, 18), and writing (No 17, 23) with strategy No 30 emphasizing the use of the foreign language learned.

The sweeping influence of motivation was obvious in other studies, too; for instance, in Oxford and Nyikos (1989), in Wharton (2000), and in Lan and Oxford (2003), where “liking of English” had a significant impact on 60% of the Taiwanese Children’s SILL.

#### 5.3.4. Interaction effects

There were 9 strategies that displayed interactions between age and motivation to learn English (namely, No 1, 2, 10, 11, 20, 23, 32, 45, 46) indicating that the two factors sometimes work in unison as regards individual strategies.

### 6. Conclusions and implications

As learners in middle adolescence in the Greek context mature cognitively and emotionally, they deploy remarkably fewer memory and affective strategies, and strive to communicate using more compensatory strategies than younger learners. The former also rely more on themselves using fewer social strategies such as asking for help less frequently, make higher use of resources, read and write more extensively, listen more carefully, plan less, and avoid verbatim translation.

It is vitally important that teachers comprehend their students' age-differentiated learning behavior in order that a better rapport is established between them. As far as the Greek adolescents are concerned, aside from offering a wide range of activities for meaningful communication, which can satisfy students' need for use of the language, it appears that teachers need not overemphasize memorization strategies and opt for more elaborate language activities for vocabulary retention and retrieval. What is more, they should continually encourage their students' endeavors and seeking assistance; they should also engage them in less individualized work providing them with more opportunities for peer collaboration.

Overall, as the effects of age might blend with those of language proficiency, deeper and more detailed investigation of age in the future could involve learners of a wider age range (including adults) having the same linguistic level and probably the same amount of instruction in cross-sectional and longitudinal research yielding more robust results.

Besides age, motivation to learn English proved to be even more influential on the vast majority of the strategies despite its significant decline in junior high school. Consequently, gearing teaching towards bolstering up students' motivation, especially at secondary educational level, seems to be mandatory so that they can utilize a wide repertoire of all strategic categories. That could lead to practicing all the four linguistic skills to a great extent, managing their emotions and being socially active while planning, organizing, and assessing their learning in an effort to employ the language for communication in as many ways as possible. In other words, reinforcement of students' zeal for the target language could essentially contribute to furtherance of their overall linguistic accomplishment, which is a primary goal in L2 acquisition.

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#### Note

1. The term "second language acquisition" in Gardner's model signifies reference to a language other than a learner's first one. Besides, the majority of the research related to the model was conducted in Canada exploring learning of French as a foreign rather than a second language as far as availability of the language is concerned (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003).
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## Appendix

Table 3. Two-way MANOVA results with strategy categories as the dependent variables and age and motivation to learn English as the independent variables

Main and interaction effects	Strategy categories	Type III Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Age	Memory	7.066	1	7.066	22.999	0.000***
	Cognitive	0.194	1	0.194	0.706	0.401 n.s.
	Compensation	9.190	1	9.190	22.175	0.000***
	Metacognitive	0.056	1	0.056	0.159	0.690 n.s.
	Affective	2.475	1	2.475	5.224	0.022*
	Social	2.437	1	2.437	5.511	0.019*
Motivation to learn English	Memory	33.535	3	11.178	36.385	0.000***
	Cognitive	96.699	3	32.233	117.583	0.000***
	Compensation	6.435	3	2.145	5.176	0.001**
	Metacognitive	240.142	3	80.047	229.140	0.000***
	Affective	45.513	3	15.171	32.019	0.000***
	Social	92.679	3	30.893	69.859	0.000***
Age X Motivation	Memory	3.188	3	1.063	3.459	0.016*
	Cognitive	1.330	3	0.443	1.617	0.183
	Compensation	0.402	3	0.134	0.323	0.809
	Metacognitive	1.274	3	0.425	1.216	0.302
	Affective	0.941	3	0.314	0.662	0.576
	Social	0.661	3	0.220	0.498	0.684

Strategy category	Age				Comparisons of significant findings
	E		J		
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Memory	2.79	0.61	2.47	0.54	E> J
Cognitive	3.20	0.61	3.03	0.55	
Compensation	2.78	0.68	3.00	0.61	J> E
Metacognitive	3.63	0.72	3.30	0.71	
Affective	3.12	0.71	2.87	0.71	E> J
Social	3.50	0.73	3.18	0.69	E> J

Strategy category	Motivation to learn English								Tukey-HSD post hoc test results
	LM		MM		HM		VHM		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Memory	2.06	0.48	2.39	0.56	2.60	0.55	2.85	0.59	LM<MM<HM<VH
Cognitive	2.41	0.58	2.75	0.53	3.09	0.51	3.42	0.54	LM<MM<HM<VH

Compensation	2.68	0.83	2.89	0.66	2.89	0.63	2.91	0.66	LM< MM, HM,VH
Metacognitive	2.36	0.74	2.86	0.60	3.43	0.61	3.96	0.55	LM<MM< HM<VH
Affective	2.41	0.78	2.76	0.67	2.96	0.67	3.24	0.73	LM<MM, HM<VH
Social	2.59	0.67	2.98	0.70	3.31	0.67	3.68	0.64	LM<MM< HM<VH

Memory strategy mean scores for Age X Motivation									
Age	Motivation to learn English								Comparisons of significant findings
	LM		MM		HM		VHM		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Elementary School	2.22	0.52	2.47	0.63	2.72	0.56	2.97	0.59	LMJ<LME<MMJ, MME
Junior High School	1.99	0.45	2.36	0.53	2.52	0.53	2.59	0.51	<HMJ<VHJ<HME<VHE

## Notes

- Significance: \*=  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*=  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*=  $p < 0.001$
- E= elementary school, J= junior high school
- LM= low motivation, MM= medium motivation, HM= high motivation, VH= very high motivation



Table 4. Two-way MANOVA results with strategies as the dependent variables and age and motivation to learn English as the independent variables

Strategy items	Significant differences	Comparisons of significant findings
1. I try to think of relationships between new English words and old ones	Motivation*** Age X Motivation**	LM< MM< HM, VH LMJ, LME< MME, MMJ< HMJ,HME, VHJ <VHE
2. I use new English words in a sentence which I make up so I can remember them	Age** Motivation*** Age X Motivation**	E< J LM, MM< HM< VH LMJ<MMJ<LME, MME, HMJ, VHJ< HME< VHE
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and a picture of the word in my mind to help me remember the word	Age* Motivation***	E> J LM< MM, HM< VH
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of the situation in which I heard or saw the word (in a dialogue, story, or song etc)	Motivation***	LM< MM, HM, VH
5. I use rhymes to	Age**	E> J

remember new English words	Motivation*	LM< MM, HM, VH
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words	n. s.	
7. I mime words to remember them	Age*	E> J
8. I review English words and grammar often	Age** Motivation***	E> J LM< MM< HM< VH
9. I remember a new English word by remembering its location on the page, on the board, or on a shop sign	n. s.	
10. I say or write new English words many times to learn them	Age*** Motivation*** Age X Motivation*	E> J LM< MM< HM< VH LMJ<LME, MMJ< HMJ, VHJ< HME< VHE
11. I try to talk like native English speakers	Motivation*** Age X Motivation*	LM< MM< HM< VH LME< LMJ< MME, MMJ< HME, HMJ< VHE, VHJ
12. I use a dictionary to look up unknown words	Age* Motivation***	E< J LM< MM< HM, VH
13. I alone write the English words I know in many different sentences so I can remember the words better	Age* Motivation**	E> J LM< MM, HM< VH
14. I start conversations in English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
15. I watch English language TV shows or listen to tapes or CDs or go to movies to practice in English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM, VH
16. I read books or magazines in English	Age** Motivation***	E< J LM< MM< HM< VH
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English (in class or on my own)	Age** Motivation**	E< J LM< MM< HM< VH
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully	Motivation**	LM< MM< HM, VH
19. I look for words in the Greek language that are similar to new words in English	n. s.	
20. I try to find grammatical rules in	Age*** Motivation***	E< J LM< MM< HM< VH

English	Age X Motivation*	LMJ<MME, MMJ< LME, HMJ< HME, VHJ< VHE
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	Motivation***	MM, LM, HM< VH
22. I avoid translating word-for-word	Age***	E< J
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English (either in my mind or in the margins of the text)	Motivation*** Age X Motivation*	LM, MM, HM< VH LME< MME< LMJ, MMJ, HMJ< HME< VHJ< VHE
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses from context	Age*** Motivation***	E< J LM< HM, MM, VH
25. When I think of a word during a conversation in English, I move my hands	Age** Motivation*	E< J VH, MM, HM < LM
26. I make up new words from Greek (with English sounds or ending) if I do not know the right ones in English	Age** Motivation***	E> J VH, HM< MM, LM
27. I read English texts without looking up every new word	Age***	E< J
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English	Motivation***	LM< MM, HM, VH
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means almost the same thing	Age*** Motivation***	E< J LM< MM< HM, VH
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	Age*** Motivation***	E> J LM< MM< HM< VH
32. I pay attention when somebody is speaking English	Age** Motivation*** Age X Motivation**	E< J LM< MM< HM< VH LME< LMJ< MME, MMJ< HMJ, HME< VHJ, VHE
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	Motivation***	LM<MM<HM<VH
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough	Age** Motivation***	E> J LM< MM< HM< VH

time to study English		
35. I look for people I can talk to in English	Motivation***	LM, MM< HM< VH
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
38. I think about my progress in learning English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	Motivation***	LM< MM, HM< VH
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	Age* Motivation**	E> J LM< MM, HM< VH
42. I notice if I am nervous when I am studying or using English	Motivation***	LM< MM, HM, VH
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary	Age***	LM< MM, HM, VH E> J
44. I talk to somebody else about how I feel when I am learning English	Age** Motivation*	E> J LM, MM, HM< VH
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	Motivation*** Age X Motivation*	LM<MM<HM, VH LME<LMJ, MME<MMJ, HMJ, VHJ, HME< VHE
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk	Motivation*** Age X Motivation*	LM< MM< HM, VH LME<LMJ<MME, MMJ, HMJ, VHJ< HME< VHE
47. I practice English with my fellow students	Motivation***	LM< MM, HM< VH
48. I ask for help from English speakers	Age* Motivation***	E> J LM, MM< HM, VH
49. I ask questions in English	Motivation***	LM< MM< HM< VH
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers	Age*** Motivation***	E> J LM, MM< HM< VH

## Notes

- Significance: \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$
- E = elementary school, J = Junior high school
- LM = low motivation, MM = medium motivation, HM = high motivation, VH = very high motivation



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## **The importance of human emotions in the learning context viewed from an ecosystemic perspective**

### **Η σπουδαιότητα των ανθρώπινων συναισθημάτων στο μαθησιακό περιβάλλον μέσα από την οικοσυστημική προσέγγιση**

**Dina MARKOPOULOU**

*This paper investigates the importance attributed to emotions by teachers, parents and learners. The study further aims at gauging whether teachers realize how influential their behaviour may be in learner self-esteem. On their part, children testify their own experience with regard to those aspects of teacher behaviour they consider encouraging or debilitating. The inclusion of parents as interviewees was deemed necessary since, according to the ecosystemic approach, they indisputably play a role in supporting a child's education, as this paper's research consolidates. The findings of our research pinpoint that positive emotions are deemed indispensable in a learning environment, with all parties (in their own way each) acknowledging the importance of learners' emotional welfare. The study also reveals the impact of negative emotions on learners and the types of teacher behaviour that are liable for it. Furthermore, associations are made between parent and teacher behaviour, the aim being to find the overlapping areas which have triggered corresponding behaviour patterns by the children.*



*Η παρούσα εργασία διερευνά τη σπουδαιότητα που αποδίδουν στα συναισθήματα οι εκπαιδευτικοί, οι γονείς και οι μαθητές. Σκοπό έχει επίσης να εκτιμήσει αν οι εκπαιδευτικοί αντιλαμβάνονται πόσο μπορεί η συμπεριφορά τους να επηρεάσει την αυτοεκτίμηση των μαθητών. Τα παιδιά, από την πλευρά τους, καταθέτουν τη δική τους εμπειρία σχετικά με τις εκφάνσεις εκείνες της συμπεριφοράς των εκπαιδευτικών που θεωρούν ενθαρρυντικές ή αποκαρδιωτικές. Η συμμετοχή των γονέων στις συνεντεύξεις κρίθηκε απαραίτητη καθώς, σύμφωνα με την οικοσυστημική προσέγγιση, ο ρόλος τους είναι αναμφίβολος στην υποστήριξη της εκπαίδευσης του παιδιού, όπως θεμελιώνεται μέσα από την έρευνα της παρούσας εργασίας. Τα ευρήματα της έρευνάς μας καταδεικνύουν ότι τα θετικά συναισθήματα θεωρούνται απολύτως απαραίτητα σε ένα μαθησιακό περιβάλλον, καθώς όλες οι πλευρές (η καθεμία με το δικό της τρόπο) αναγνωρίζουν τη σπουδαιότητα της συναισθηματικής ευημερίας των μαθητών. Η έρευνα αποκαλύπτει ακόμα τον αντίκτυπο*

*των αρνητικών συναισθημάτων στους μαθητές καθώς και τα είδη της συμπεριφοράς των εκπαιδευτικών που ευθύνονται για αυτό. Επιπλέον, γίνονται συσχετισμοί μεταξύ της συμπεριφοράς των γονέων και των εκπαιδευτικών με στόχο να βρεθούν οι συγκλίνουσες περιοχές που προκαλούν ανάλογα μοτίβα συμπεριφορών από την πλευρά των παιδιών.*

**Key words:** emotions, teacher behaviour, empathy, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, hierarchy of needs, self-actualization, ecosystemic approach, error correction, self-fulfilling prophecy, praise, reinforcement, motivation

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## 1. Introduction

The recent trend in educational practice has placed great emphasis on the humane dimension of education (Μαλικιώση-Λοϊζου, 2001, p.18). The issues that are raised in this context are pertinent to the role of educators and their liability to the development of a healthy and non-threatening learning environment. Despite their significance, research has shown that human emotions are often considered substandard compared to human cognition, thus being emphasised less in educational documents (Allodi, 2010, p.94). Recent language teaching approaches, however, have emphasised the necessity of creating learning situations in which inhibition is lowered and anything that might threaten the 'self' avoided (Arnold and Brown, 1999, p.10). Hence, humanistic theories have currently come to the forefront and redeemed their place in education. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow seem to be in the limelight even though their theories were expressed in the distant past. Concurrently, we will also review the ecosystemic approach, a more recent perspective that emphasizes the importance of the social environment in triggering emotions and behaviour; based on this theoretical background, we will attempt to demonstrate in what ways the ecosystem of teachers, learners and parents interacts.

## 2. The ecosystemic approach: valuing the individual

The ecosystemic approach has been linked to humanistic theories through Carl Rogers' empathetic understanding. According to Rogers (1967, p.287), significant learning is likely to take place if the teacher accepts the idiosyncrasies and uniqueness of the learners and understands their feelings, as well. Empathetic understanding thus is the key feature that helps teachers to analyze the experience of schooling from a learner's viewpoint (Papatheodorou, 2005, p.87). The notion of an ecosystem in psychology actually focuses on the quality of relationships that constitute the social matrix an individual is part of. Psychologists contend that human behaviour can be interpreted more accurately if considered from a perspective of complex contextual, personal and interpersonal variables (Cameron, 2006, p.293). The focus being on interaction, the ecosystemic approach is valid in our case since the purpose of this research is to delve into the intricate relationships between teachers and learners, and to the role of parents, as well. As constituents of a class system, both teachers and learners are influenced by the relationships shaped in a given classroom setting (Molnar and Lindquist, 1999, p.32); parents, on the other hand, have their own contribution to the system as children tend to be emotionally stable when they are treated in a consistent way by the significant adults in their life (Fontana, 1996a, p.273). Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs could be contemporized to highlight how important

it is to satisfy an individual's basic needs, such as physical comfort, prior to considering psychosocial needs (Gillen et al., 2011, p.75).

Needless to say that catering for the learners' basic needs is the responsibility of the parent and not the teacher; its lack, however, accounts for the learners' failure to meet their psychological needs, which in turn impairs their emotional state. Supposing learners' basic needs are not satisfied, teachers can attempt to bridge the gap between the first two levels of the pyramid by offering learners a positive learning experience. This would be feasible if teachers could reinforce learners' positive emotions and value as human beings (Μαλικιώση-Λοϊζου, 2001, p.72), by forging bonds with them so that the learners verge on self-actualization. Learners need to be revered by teachers as valuable human beings who are struggling to discover themselves and the others.

The ecosystemic approach therefore lends itself to redefining behaviour problems by interpreting a particular situation (Papatheodorou, 2005, p.86). The teacher's role in the ecosystem could be to promote any necessary changes at a systemic level, shifting the balance between the subsystems; namely by attempting to reconstruct the behaviour of all parties in terms that are meaningful to learners, teachers and family members (Cooper and Upton, 1992, p.72). In a similar vein, a change in parents' behaviour may also influence children's reactions, thus reshaping the entire ecosystem.

### **2.1. Defining some aspects of teacher and parent behaviour**

With emphasis placed on empathy and the need for change in perception, the ecosystemic approach endorses a collaborative venture of all stakeholders in order for change in behaviour to occur. We shall first discuss which aspects of teacher behaviour may affect children's behaviour and to what extent. Since the term 'behaviour' is by definition inclusive, it will be narrowed to cover areas such as *politeness, praise and reinforcement, error correction* and *teacher perceptions about learner potential*. Concomitantly, the role of the parents will also be reviewed in terms of the degree of their participation in the learning process and the expectations they have of children and teachers, as well.

#### **2.1.1. Politeness and internal congruence**

As 'significant adults', teachers are role models for learners to emulate. Not only should teachers be highly regarded for their management skills, but they should also be exemplars of politeness (Παπαδόπουλος, 2011, p.94). This precondition defines the role of the teacher in the sense that his or her behaviour ought to be consistent with the corresponding behaviour expected of learners. In other words, scolding a child for being disrespectful and then responding back impolitely in front of an audience is an irrational, not to mention ineffective, policy (Fontana, 1996b, p.188).

The concept of politeness therefore encompasses the notion of quality interaction, which is the cornerstone of all healthy relationships. Recent findings in the field of educational psychology point to the need for basic motivational conditions that can be realised by establishing a good teacher-student rapport (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008, p.58); quality teacher-learner interaction is dependent on the degree to which learners feel that the teacher can provide assistance and genuine interest in their achievements (Zedan, 2010, p.80). This kind of teacher behaviour ensures that the learners will experience low levels of anxiety, at least to a certain extent, since they will feel accepted and thus more self-confident.

### *2.1.2. Praise and reinforcement and their importance in an educational context*

A very significant constituent of teacher-learner interaction is praise and, in effect, the degree of reinforcement attained through it. According to Brophy's definition (1981, p.5), the purpose of praise is "to commend the worth of or to express approval or admiration". Understandably, praise is a prerequisite for encouraging learners to insist on working harder; educators who tend to express their admiration of learners enhance their emotional welfare, simultaneously, enabling them to achieve higher learning objectives (Μαλικιώση-Λοϊζου, 2001, p.74).

The more learners achieve their learning objectives, the more prone they are to reach success in school. Considering the emotional dimension of school success, special attention should be cast on the frequency of praise and the extent to which a teacher accepts learners' feelings and ideas. These incidences of interaction are closely interwoven with the genuine interest and respect a teacher should first and foremost have towards his or her learners, as already stated. Research has shown that to maximize its effectiveness, praise should directly ensue successful performance, be realistic, and given by a person that learners like and admire (Fontana, 1996b, p.106-107).

It is true that most teachers find no difficulty in perceiving and praising instances of successful performance. However, Eken (1999, p.240) has contended that teachers are often carried away by the technicalities of what they do and fail to notice the psychological processes occurring throughout the lesson. One of these psychological processes is praising academic behaviour at the expense of social behaviour (Beaman and Wheldall, 2000, p.442). Some teachers may be caught in bureaucratic organizations that define the educational mission in a narrow sense, focusing only on academic standards (Allodi, 2010, p.96). Since the focus of this paper is human emotions, we cannot refrain from addressing the issue of social behaviour and its importance in an educational context.

### *2.1.3. Error correction: teacher response and learner reaction*

By definition, error correction is anticipated to be anxiety-provoking since it entails the possibility of failure, at least in a specific task. For learners, especially young ones, an unsuccessful instance could be internalized as a form of punishment (Fontana, 1996b, p.112) inflicted by the teacher. Moreover, if a teacher resorts to harsh error correction, ridicule and untactful handling of mistakes in front of the class, learners are most likely to feel anxious (Oxford, 1999, p.65-66), not to mention demotivated. This kind of 'debilitating anxiety' is harmful to children since it challenges their self-worth (Oxford, 1999, p.60) as learners, and, by extension, as individuals.

It can be inferred from the above that teacher reaction to error is of critical importance for the learners. Errors, however, should not be regarded as an instance of failure; on the contrary, they should be viewed as an indispensable part of the learning process. The ultimate goal of error correction should be to equip learners with a range of strategies to cope with errors and learn from them (Fontana, 1996a, p.270). Teachers should also consider the anxiety factor and its debilitating effects on learner and, as von Worde (2003, n.p.) contends, opt for gentle error correction or even model the correct response. The teacher who can empathize with the feeling of fear and discouragement will be more acceptant to error, thus setting the grounds for the conditions for learning (Rogers, 1967, p.287).

#### *2.1.4. Teacher perceptions about learner potential*

Though quite implicit, teacher perceptions about learner potential are another aspect of teacher behaviour that may determine the outcome of a learning process. Back in 1948, Robert Merton coined the term 'self-fulfilling prophecy' to explain how a belief or expectation, whether correct or incorrect, affects the way an individual behaves. In a classroom context, a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when a teacher has an erroneous expectation about a learner, which causes the learner to behave in such a way as to confirm the originally false assumption (Jussim et al., 2009, p.349).

The self-fulfilling prophecy may be either positive or negative, namely a teacher may have high or low expectations about a learner. Whatever the case may be, the sheer truth is that this subconscious mechanism activates a series of reactions by the learners that determines the outcome of their performance. In a sense, holding erroneous expectations, whether positive or negative is incongruent with Maslow's notion of actualization; since actualization involves finding one's true potential, teachers should not impose their own expectations on learners.

#### *2.1.5. Parent expectations about children and teachers*

From an ecosystemic perspective, the quality of the interaction among teachers, learners and parents is of paramount importance; from a mere psychological aspect, it has been acknowledged that parent behaviour influences the child's personality development in three main patterns (Pervin and John, 1997, p.46-47):

- parents provide examples of their own behaviour that incurs a certain child behavior;
- they are role models to emulate;
- they reinforce behaviour selectively.

Apparently, all three factors are imbued with expectations that parents hold about their children's life. With regard to school life, parent expectations and their beliefs about children's potential seem to have an impact on their self-image and pursuit of accomplishment (Κωσταρίδου-Ευκλείδη, 1995, p.144). At this point, it is worth noticing that children as learners are the recipients of both teacher and parent expectations, which mean that the burden they have to lift may be unbearable, especially if such expectations, are not congruent. In this case, the children are susceptible to emotional instability, since they are confounded as to which 'ideal self' they should pursue. This is the reason why the ecosystemic approach calls for close collaboration among all parties involved, namely to counteract the effects of any diverse messages a child may receive.

### **3. Research design**

#### **3.1. Purpose and procedure**

The purpose of the research being to explore the personal meaning attributed to emotions, a triadic interview pattern was followed; since we have discussed the interactive process the ecosystemic approach boasts, our subjects were learners, their parents and teachers. The aim being to examine the role of emotions from a multi-faceted perspective, we opted for a qualitative method as subjective experience would be mirrored through the actual emotions of the participants. (Long et al., 2010, p.5). In this respect, the instruments used were interviews and observation.

Regarding interviews, the format adopted was a structured one, as this would allow for comparability across participants (Dörnyei, 2007, p.135), which is the end result of the triple interview pattern. Furthermore, being classified as a qualitative method, interviewing was opted for since the rationale behind its use is that it values subjective experience by mirroring an individual's experience of the world (Long et al., 2010 p.5). With the research focusing on the importance of emotions, the interpretation of the emotions arisen thereof constitutes this qualitative method most appropriate for analysing subjective experience. As Dörnyei (2007, p.38) asserts, it is only participants themselves who can divulge the meaning of their experiences, hence deriving their interpretations from an insider perspective. This insider perspective is exactly what enables the researcher to access the inner world of the participants and observe emotions, thoughts or intentions (Ohata, 2005, p.140) that cannot be perceived otherwise, namely through an indirect quantitative method such as using questionnaires.

On the other hand, there is an element of risk that interviews entail. The subjective value that is attributed to them is self-contradictory. However valuable subjectivity may be for the participants' disclosure of their feelings and thoughts, the very same individual experience of reality may prove problematic for researchers themselves. Personal biases may not allow room for objective interpretations, which is required in order to render valid results. Qualitative research thereby is fundamentally interpretive, with the researcher's subjectivity held accountable for data interpretation (Dörnyei, 2007, p.38). Another risk factor pinpointed by Dörnyei (2007, p.141) is that participants may enter the interview session with preconceived ideas of what kind of responses would be preferred or dispreferred, thus self-censoring themselves and, in effect, rendering invalid results. Bearing in mind the constraints posed by the use of interviews as the sole method of research, we have also applied an observation scheme in order to confirm or disconfirm our original findings.

### **3.2. Sampling and constraints**

With reference to the learner age group, we interviewed children from 9 to 11 years old since our aim was to investigate how beneficial or detrimental teacher behaviour might be in the early school years before learners' transition to secondary school. Upon choosing the learners we proceeded with addressing our request to their parents and teachers. As far as gender is concerned, inclusion of both genders was ensured across the entire sampling range. Regarding the setting, our research was conducted in southern Athens, Greece. A total of fifteen participants were interviewed, five from each category. Understandably, since all three groups are interrelated, there were a number of questions that were identical or overlapping, hence allowing for comparability among the three subject groups.

Concerning the constraints of the actual research, the teacher sample featured something particular; the original concept was to approach the principal of a primary school in southern Athens and acquaint him with the content of our research. Our plans, however, fell through since force majeure prevented us from consummating the research in that school. To be more specific, we managed to obtain data from the teachers only, since it was not feasible to arrange an interview schedule with the parents and learners. To overcome this hurdle, we appealed to the parents from the private language school where the researcher works, who agreed to be recorded and gave their consent to record their children as well. At the same time, we requested assistance from two English teachers working at the same language school, who also agreed to be interviewed. Conditioning the sampling in this way established the interrelation among the respondents that would have otherwise been rather disconnected since the teachers interviewed were not from the same school, as opposed to



the learners and parents. Originally, this was a setback since it disturbed the triadic pattern, which seemed to lack interrelation. To be more specific, three among the teachers worked at a public primary school whereas the other two worked at the private language school where the same learners studied. Initially, this discrepancy seemed problematic; however, according to Dörnyei (2007, p.128), variation within the respondents lends itself for exploration and could be valid if such pattern persists across the sampled diversity.

Having therefore ensured the contribution of all participants, the interviews were piloted to one representative from each group. Upon detecting one or two questions that required clarification, the research was eventually initiated. We first interviewed the teachers from the primary school in November 2011 and early in December 2011 we interviewed the teachers from the language school. By the end of December we had obtained interviews from the learners and their parents and in February 2012 the actual observation task was completed. The reason why observation was conducted much later than the interviews was that the time that had elapsed would make it nearly impossible for the teachers to remember their statements and act accordingly in a real classroom setting. Consequently, the findings would be more valid if the course of action was spontaneous and not predefined in advance by any claims made during the interviews. It can be deduced that we observed the two teachers from the language school, as we could not be granted permission to observe the teachers from the state school. The ideal research conditions would have been to have at least one representative teacher from the primary school, as this would provide an all-embracing picture of the situation. Given the constraints, we had no other choice but to compromise and consider these limitations when decoding the data we eventually managed to obtain.

### **3.3 Instruments: interviews and observation**

#### **3.3.1. School performance versus school success**

We began our interviews by collecting some demographic data, which were necessary in order to shape the interviewees' profile. The first question we asked teachers was what school success entails. In the same vein, parents were asked what school performance encompasses. In this way, we triggered the parents to talk about behaviour, whereas the teachers were expected to mention the affective variable since allegedly they are more aware of the parameters beyond cognition that success in school comprises. Parents were additionally asked to mention some of the ways by which they monitor their children's school performance, since it has been attested that families' involvement in children's education is crucial to children's school success (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2009, p.176).

The next question was addressed to all three groups but worded differently to children so that they could understand it more easily. The participants were presented with a number of parameters, which they had to rank in terms of their significance for school success. When piloting the interviews, it was noticed that this list was required as a complementary follow-up to the first question since some of the teachers and parents were at a loss for words when presented with it. The list included both cognitive and affective factors, the purpose being to research which was considered more important, or whether there should be some kind of balance between the two.; to quote Epstein (2005, p.viii), successful learning and development are defined not only by achievement test scores, but also by a number of social and emotional skills and behaviours that learners develop. With regard to the learners, the objective was to investigate their attitudes towards school, since Epstein (2005, p.viii-ix) further contends that student attitudes about school were not so much correlated

with test scores and report card grades as they were with student participation in class. This contention depicts that active engagement on the students' behalf culminated in commitment to learning over the years. From the same list, parents were also asked to gauge what their offspring regarded as most important in schooling. Following their response, parents were further asked to give their own definition about school success; this time we aimed at cross-checking if they remained consistent with what they had answered in ranking the school performance factors earlier. The underlying principle was that if education is to be prioritized, the definition of learning should be expanded to include social and emotional learning, which are the cornerstones of academic success (Christenson et al., 2005, p.21).

### 3.3.2. *Teacher-learner interrelation*

After the rather general questions concerning school life, we proceeded with the more specific ones, those that centred on the role of the teachers and their behaviour. Teachers were required to define their relationship with learners; for this reason, they were given four options to choose from, namely collaborative, motherly/fatherly, strict, friendly or tender. Upon defining the kind of relationship with learners, teachers were asked if they would modify it on the assumption that it was ineffective. They then had to choose an alternative kind of relationship or a combined pattern. In practice, teachers are generally expected to demonstrate a wide range of interpersonal behaviour in order to interact with learners and arouse their interest (Yua and Zhub, 2011, p.313). Needless to say that each of the above types of relationships features some limits which when exceeded can be harmful for learners. In this respect, flexibility is a feature that was researched through this question, as readiness to adapt one's behaviour is among the qualities a teacher should have.

Simultaneously, teachers further elaborated on their behaviour towards learners by being asked if they have certain expectations about learner potential, whether positive or negative. As Orton (1996, n.p.) suggests, the relationship between teacher beliefs and student learning is based on the respect for people; hence, in a moral sense, the teacher is held responsible for creating the lion's share of the classroom events that lead to student learning. This refers us back to Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy. Once again, teacher beliefs and disbeliefs were tested in an attempt to consider how influential they might be within a learning context.

Regarding learners, they were in turn asked to define what the qualities of a 'good' teacher are. By doing this, learners provided their own insight into the notion of a good teacher and concurrently the ideal relationship with him or her. In the same vein, the issue of learner anxiety was raised; learners were asked to think of any instances during the lesson when they feel distressed. Krashen (1985, in von Worde, 2003 n.p.) has asserted that if anxiety impairs cognitive function, anxious students may learn less and may not be able to demonstrate their knowledge, which results in even more failure and further increases anxiety.

Since anxiety is debilitating, both parents and teachers were asked to speculate on the reasons why children may be inflicted with anxiety. Two perspectives were at the forefront, the subject-content difficulty and the interpersonal perspective. Studied from a subject-content perspective, teaching is analysed in terms of the subject matter and the incomprehensibility it may entail, whereas from an interpersonal perspective, once again effective teaching is contingent upon the relationship between teachers and learners (den Brok et al., 2004, p.409-410).

Another issue pertinent to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and learners is the degree of empathy teachers display towards learners. Learners were therefore asked if their teachers could empathize with them and sense their anxiety. This question is valuable because teachers are expected to reduce the level of anxiety learners experience and do their best not to adopt an attitude that is laden with distress for their learners. Authentically professional teachers should possess the ability to have warm and genuine relationships with their students so that the latter perceive the classroom environment in a more positive way (Allodi, 2010, p.96; Burnett, 2002, p.13).

### *3.3.3. Researching the use of praise and error correction*

A positive classroom climate can be established on condition that there is no hostility among its participants. In this respect, we asked teachers how they use praise and reinforcement in order to confirm that a warm and supportive learning environment fosters high self-esteem and improves cognitive ability (Zedan, 2010, p.76). Likewise, we also asked teachers to state how they correct errors; our intent was to investigate if they use process feedback, which involves focusing on what can be learnt from mistakes through self-correction, as well as from the process of producing the correct answer (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008, p.64).

These two questions about praise and error correction were also addressed to learners who were required to testify about their teachers' attitude towards positive and negative feedback. According to Gray (1990, in Lipnevich, 2007, p.34), positive affect often following praise should increase individual's optimism concerning performance, thus causing an increase in effort and persistence. Evidently, too much negative feedback may have the opposite outcomes. The two sets of responses were subsequently cross-validated to detect the degree of correlation between them, namely if teacher beliefs about feedback were consistent with learner response to it.

### *3.3.4. Perceptions of the ideal teacher*

The interviews were consummated by raising the issue of the 'ideal' teacher; learners and their parents were requested to list some of the qualities an individual should have in order to qualify for a teacher. The objective of this question was to confirm if learners appreciate those teachers who have good managerial skills and are understanding. Concerning the parents, they were additionally asked to express their preference for a teacher who is well-acquainted with his or her subject matter over one who would rather foster an interpersonal relationship with the children at both an emotional and social level. The polarization made here aimed at providing supporting evidence to the recent affirmation that affective and behavioural indicators of the effects of schooling might be more important than cognitive indicators (Fitz-Gibbon, 2006, p.303). With regard to the teachers, the corresponding question they had to answer was whether cognitive or emotional development was more important for learners, and which of the two variables teachers would find it difficult to contribute to. This last question is the key point of the present paper; over the years, schools have always assumed they could contribute to the affective and social development of their learners but comparatively little is known about how successful they are and how far they can go to achieve this development (Kong, 2008, p.112).

### *3.3.5. Observing the teachers*

To confirm or disconfirm the findings derived from the interviews, an observation plan was designed, as explained earlier. Participant observation was conducted which, in our case,

was considered most appropriate for naturally occurring behaviours in their usual contexts (Woods, 2006, n.p.). For reasons beyond our power, as already stated, the only permission for class observation that we could obtain was from the private language school. Based on the responses the two English teachers had given, we drafted a tentative checklist for each observe, which was more of a guideline rather than a strict plan. We opted for a more open-ended plan, whereby certain instances of teacher-learner interaction were isolated and juxtaposed with the answers given to the interview questions. The two teachers were observed once each, since the observation outcome was satisfactory, that is, the findings were considered valid enough for our research design

## **4. Presentation and interpretation of findings**

### **4.1. Distress factors**

The actual research scheme, as already mentioned, focused on the kernel of our endeavour which is the importance of human emotion in a learning context and more specifically the significance of a healthy ecosystem among teachers, learners and their parents. In a nutshell, the findings revealed that there are instances of teacher behaviour that may make learners inhibited. Error correction, for instance may be a quite stressful factor for learners especially if the teacher does not display the corresponding degree of politeness and tactfulness when correcting. This was profound when the teachers were observed, as there seemed to be a discrepancy between their statements and the actual practice. For instance, even though the opposite was attested, time for a second chance was not sufficiently allocated, whereas one of the teachers was rather disheartening towards the children by reprimanding them whenever they said something wrong. An attitude as such depicts that the teacher may lack internal congruence and politeness, which should be a prerequisite for becoming a teacher. From a mere psychological perspective, if the teachers persist in being too harsh on learners for failing to perform well, the latter are likely to be discouraged, let alone disappointed. What is more it seems that teachers are often unaware of the effect of their behaviour on learners.

Learners are further burdened with anxiety if their significant adults hold self-fulfilling prophecies for them. All teachers admitted that they had held high or low expectations of their learners. They unanimously agreed that learners can sense such beliefs as anything that the teacher conveys either verbally or non-verbally is perceptible; another piece of evidence to uphold that teachers are liable for learner anxiety. On their part, parents have their own share of responsibility in hindering their offspring's emotional blooming; owing to their self-fulfilling prophecies, parents may be discouraging or with high demands regarding their children's school performance, which is a contributory factor to learner distress. This is confirmed by one parent who maintained that her son's anxiety permeates his family life, as well; a finding that winds up our discussion about the cardinal role of the ecosystemic approach.

### **4.2. The soothing role of praise and reinforcement**

On the other side of the coin, it is praise and reinforcement which trigger positive emotions, thus boosting learners' self-esteem. Concerning the degree of praise and reinforcement they receive, children replied that they like being praised when performing well. Consequently, our findings consolidate that positive reinforcement a very powerful way of managing children's behaviour since it emphasizes new and positive work habits (Long et al., 2010, p.18), thus motivating children to sustain efforts in learning. Regarding the teachers, the

issue of praise was considered to be of utmost importance. They claimed that they invariably use praise throughout their lessons in order to boost their learners' self-confidence. At this point, it is worth mentioning that the causes for the lack of self-confidence among learners inevitably triggered the heated debate of teacher or parent liability. Two of the teachers shifted the blame to the parents, which corroborates our findings about the pivotal role of a healthy ecosystem.

### **4.3. Valuing humanism in education**

The research also revealed that both parents and learners overrated teachers' humane profile and considered it conducive to better cognitive outcomes. Most parents claimed that they would opt for a teacher that would meet the affective needs of their children. In essence, these parents have taken into consideration that inhibition and ego barriers should be lowered (Arnold and Brown, 1999, p.10). The data obtained from the children about the same question more or less, converged to two points: the teacher should be polite and not reprimand the children in the event of error. The children also expressed the desire for a teacher who would 'understand them', in other words empathize with them in the Rogerian sense. They also noted that a teacher should be able to transfer knowledge and make it comprehensible to them, thus stressing the significance of the cognitive aspect as well.

We can thereby conclude that the learners would opt for a teacher who is first and foremost a person, not a sterile pipe through which knowledge is passed on (Rogers, 1967, p.287). In a similar vein, teachers were required to deem whether cognition or emotional welfare is more important for a child's development; upon responding to this question, they were asked to rate which area is the most demanding for a teacher to enact on. Two of the teachers believed that cognitive development is most important and hence more difficult for a teacher to contribute to because it is contingent upon learners' personal work and studying. However, the other three teachers prioritized emotional welfare since the emotional stability gained in the early years would accompany the child in adulthood as well.

## **5. Conclusion**

Given the limited number of participants, understandably the outcomes may not be representative enough for the educational and scientific community in general. However, our endeavour might lend itself to future studies, which are likely to render significant results for the field. A potential research scheme would be to broaden the range of participants or even to conduct research for a much longer period of time. In this way, the findings would be more valid not to mention that more aspects of teacher behaviour could be researched. Additionally, contrary to the heterogeneity of the teacher group, a more homogenous group of participants could be selected, focusing either on teachers of the same discipline or from the same school. In this case, the findings might be further corroborated since they would feature a higher degree of interrelation. Our findings suggest that emotions are indeed considered to be of paramount importance in a learning context; there seems to be a consensus that most participants have reached with regard to the 'ideal' teacher behaviour. Without defying the importance of cognitive outcomes, our data has depicted that learners feel at ease and therefore are more motivated to learn if the teacher is affectionate and understanding. What is more, it can be inferred that the teachers themselves sustain efforts to create a non-threatening environment; however, teachers may not always perceive that, despite their good intent, some aspects of their behaviour, such as error correction and self-fulfilling prophecies may be quite discouraging for learners.

Negative emotions are a hindrance in school life, for which not only teachers but also parents bear the responsibility. In essence, this research has shown that parents value the emotional intelligence of a teacher, which means that they primarily rank teachers in order of personality qualities and not typical qualifications. As a result, positive emotions are desirable in education and, in this respect, it is at the discretion of both parents and teachers to collaborate systemically in order to cater for children's emotional needs and welfare.

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## **Exploring the position of target culture awareness in the EFL classroom of the Greek state school**

### **Διερεύνηση της πολιτισμικής επίγνωσης της γλώσσας-στόχου στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας της αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας του ελληνικού δημόσιου σχολείου**

**Maria TZOTZOU & Vassiliki KOTSIUO**

*Language reflects culture and it is influenced and shaped by culture. Consequently, teaching English is inseparable from teaching its culture and cultural awareness is of great importance in EFL learning. It contributes to the effectiveness and appropriateness of English discourse. Only with the communication of language competence and cultural awareness can a language learner be successful in communication. In this respect, the intent of this paper is to examine to what extent target culture awareness is a neglected component or not in the EFL classroom at the Greek state school. Findings reveal how often teachers integrate culture into EFL learning, to what extent school textbooks and curriculum help to enhance learners' target culture awareness and which school factors may be constraints. Teachers are challenged to consciously reflect on their own target culture awareness—possible former training and immersion in the target culture—and to express their attitude towards language and culture integration by specific reference to its learning benefits. It also discusses implications for enhancing both teachers' and learners' target culture and intercultural awareness, and finally provides suggestions for future action.*



*Η γλώσσα αντανακλά τον πολιτισμό καθώς επίσης επηρεάζεται και διαμορφώνεται από τον πολιτισμό. Επομένως, η διδασκαλία της αγγλικής γλώσσας δεν πρέπει να διαχωρίζεται από τη διδασκαλία του πολιτισμού της. Η πολιτισμική επίγνωση έχει καθοριστική σημασία για την εκμάθηση της αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας γιατί συμβάλλει στην αποτελεσματικότητα και καταλληλότητα του παραγόμενου λόγου. Μόνο μέσω της διασύνδεσης της γλωσσικής ικανότητας με την πολιτισμική επίγνωση μπορεί ο μαθητής να αναπτύξει επιτυχώς την επικοινωνιακή του δεξιότητα. Σκοπός αυτής της μελέτης είναι να διερευνήσει το βαθμό στον οποίο η πολιτισμική επίγνωση της γλώσσας-στόχου αποτελεί παραμελημένη συνιστώσα ή όχι στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας της αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας στο ελληνικό δημόσιο σχολείο. Τα αποτελέσματα της παρούσας έρευνας αποτυπώνουν τη συχνότητα με την οποία οι εκπαιδευτικοί ενσωματώνουν πολιτισμικά στοιχεία στην εκμάθηση της*

αγγλικής, το βαθμό στον οποίο τα σχολικά εγχειρίδια και το αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα σπουδών ενισχύουν την πολιτισμική επίγνωση των μαθητών καθώς επίσης τους σχολικούς παράγοντες που θέτουν περιορισμούς. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί της έρευνας καλούνται να αναστοχαστούν ενσυνείδητα τη δική τους πολιτισμική επίγνωση – είτε μέσω πιθανής προηγούμενης επιμόρφωσης είτε μέσω προσωπικής ενασχόλησης με τον πολιτισμό της γλώσσας-στόχου – και να εκφράσουν τη στάση και τις αντιλήψεις τους για τη διασύνδεση γλώσσας και πολιτισμού με ειδική αναφορά στα μαθησιακά οφέλη που απορρέουν από αυτή. Επιπλέον, εκφράζονται απόψεις που αφορούν την ενδυνάμωση της πολιτισμικής επίγνωσης της γλώσσας-στόχου τόσο των εκπαιδευτικών όσο και των μαθητών και διατυπώνονται προτάσεις για μελλοντική δράση.

**Key words:** target culture, cultural awareness, intercultural awareness, school factors, constraints, communicative competence, curriculum, textbooks

## 1. Introduction

The need to integrate culture into teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is not a new debate and has long been highlighted in countless studies (Byram, 1989; Cakir, 2006; Kramsch, 1983). Societal values, attitudes and cultural elements are integrated with the communicative approach to enhance the effectiveness of foreign language (FL) learning. On the one hand, language is the keystone of culture and some social scientists and philosophers maintain that culture would not be possible without language (Adorno, 1993; Chomsky, 1968; Davidson, 1999; Foucault, 1994; Wittgenstein, 1999). On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture (Brown, 2007). In the broad sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking in a way that they can interact with each other (Brown, 2007; Sapir, 1985). A popular theory – the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (SWH) – has explained the interrelations between language and culture by assuming that language influences and determines our thinking and cognition, and that the relative distinctions in one language may not be available in another language (Sapir, 1985; Whorf, 1956).

Therefore, FL teaching and learning cannot be reduced to the direct teaching of linguistic skills like phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax. The contemporary models of communicative competence show that there is much more to learning a language, and they include the vital component of cultural knowledge and awareness (Bachman 1990; Council of Europe 2001). Communication that lacks appropriate cultural content often results in humorous incidents, or worse, is the source of serious communication breakdowns and misunderstandings. In a similar vein, Abolghasem (2010) points out that cultural awareness and understanding of a FL is enhanced through culture teaching in FL classes. Some language theorists have maintained that teaching a FL without teaching its culture is quite impossible (Byram, 1997; Byram & Fleming 1998; Valdes 1995). In light of the above, it is certainly challenging and pedagogically interesting to explore the position of target culture awareness in the EFL classroom in the Greek state school by simply seeking to answer the question: ‘Is it a neglected component or not?’

## **2. Definition of key terms**

### **2.1. What is 'culture'?**

Culture is a very broad concept. In particular, it seems useful to make a distinction between the so-called "big-C culture" and "small-c culture" (Atkinson, 2004). The big-C part of a given culture constitutes factual knowledge about the fine arts such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre, and film. Small-c culture, on the other hand, comprises a wide variety of aspects, many of which are inter-connected, including attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, customs, celebrations, rituals, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, and the use of physical space and body language.

Language is part of what we call culture, and it also reflects and interprets culture. Some of the small-c cultural aspects are directly observable and hence easy to grasp and learn (e.g., celebrations and rituals). However, many aspects of a given culture are hidden from the eye as is the case with the small-c cultural elements that are deeply internalized or subconscious and are often noticed only in contrast with another culture. It is mainly these non-tangible cultural aspects which determine the expectations and interpretations of other people's linguistic/non-linguistic behaviour. A person who encounters an unfamiliar culture will lack knowledge of such behaviours, which may lead to humorous situations, and even conflict, due to miscommunication. This happens because these aspects of culture constitute unspoken rules created by a community. On the grounds that these cultural rules are full of meaning, they often acquire a moral rigidity and righteousness that may engender stereotypes and even prejudices (Kramsch, 1995).

### **2.2. What is 'cultural awareness'?**

Tomlinson (2001) holds that cultural awareness involves a gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people's cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ (cited in Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004). Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) claim that an increased cultural awareness helps learners broaden the mind, increase tolerance and achieve cultural empathy and sensitivity. According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), cultural awareness encompasses three qualities: awareness of one's own culturally-induced behaviour, awareness of the culturally-induced behaviour of others and ability to explain one's own cultural standpoint.

## **3. Rationale of the current study**

### **3.1. Theoretical review**

Target culture awareness has become an important focus of FL education since the 1980s, which reflects a greater awareness of the inseparability of language and culture (Byram, Morgan & Colleagues, 1994) and the need to prepare learners for intercultural communication. Pulverness (2000) asserts that due to the undeniable growth of English as an international language, cultural content as anything other than contextual background began to be included in language teaching programs. Hadley (1993) holds that cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that learners are sensitive to other cultures and live more harmoniously in the target language community. That is to say, the distinction of language and culture may be harmful and culture teaching should familiarize

learners with the target culture (Kramsch, 1998). This is why Damen (1987, cited in Graves, 1996) calls culture the fifth dimension of language teaching.

This attempt to familiarize learners with the target culture should be implemented from very early stages in order to ensure that learners go through the cultural information again each year. Therefore, cultural information provided in a classroom should consist of various content and materials related to the target culture, such as newspapers, electronic media, magazines, literature and advertisements. Moreover, a language curriculum should be organized 'around the notion of cultural literacy' so that learners can learn structures with the aim of placing them in the cultural context (Kramsch, 1983). In light of the above, the present study seeks to explore the position of target culture awareness in the Greek state school context by taking into consideration a number of parameters such as the teacher's role, Greek school learners' profile, culture-related materials and activities which are essentially associated with culture and language integration in the EFL classroom.

### **3.2. Teachers' role**

Duff and Uchida (1997) maintain that language teachers are very much involved in the transmission of culture, and each selection of videos, activities and so on has social, cultural, and educational significance. As Graves (1996) points out, a teacher who views culture as an integral part of a syllabus should incorporate into the instructional materials two more elements in addition to the target culture knowledge: the development of awareness of the role culture plays in human interaction and the development of skills in behaving and responding in culturally appropriate ways. Moreover, as Cakir (2006) notes, teachers should be sensitive to the learners' attitudes and values so as not to cause them to lose their motivation. Kılıçkaya (2004) states that teachers' role is to teach learners the target culture and the reasons why particular events take place in different cultures. The aim is not to make the learners adopt the habit of thinking or acting like a foreigner or think that one culture is superior to the other. The main objective is to make them realize that there exist different cultures. On the whole, teachers should include target culture awareness activities in a FL course because in this way, according to Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), they not only increase the educational value of the course but also facilitate FL acquisition.

### **3.3. Greek school learners' profile**

In the Greek state school, learners are usually monolingual and they learn English while living in their own country. They have little access to the target culture and therefore limited ability to become culturally competent. Importantly, their aim for learning English is not only to communicate with native speakers of English but also with non-native speakers of English, which is why Greek learners are typically learners of English as an International Language (EIL). By learning English, Greek learners are enabling themselves to become users of international, or rather intercultural, communication. In other words, the target language becomes a tool to be used in interaction with people from all over the world, where communication in English takes place in fields such as science, technology, business, entertainment and tourism. It is obvious then, that in order to successfully function in a culturally diverse environment, Greek learners need to develop target culture awareness first and intercultural communicative competence as well (Alptekin 2002). The true complexity of what it means to know a FL is also revealed in the useful list of learner competencies produced by the Council of Europe (2001) according to which, besides the grammatical competence, a culturally competent learner must possess sociolinguistic

competence, pragmatic competence, sociocultural knowledge in the FL, and consequently intercultural awareness as well.

### **3.4. Culture-related materials**

According to Cullen & Sato (2000), there is a variety of possible sources of information for teaching culture: video, CDs, readings, internet, stories, songs, newspapers, realia, literature etc. Smith (1997) recommends the use of Virtual Realia, which he defines as digitized items from the target culture, which are brought into the classroom to stimulate oral or written language production. Textbooks are tools that can also aid culture teaching. Textbooks are important resources, which students can easily and frequently access. Risager (1991), as cited in Cunningsworth (1995), points out that FL textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of FL pedagogy in a narrow sense, but they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission with the educational system and in the rest of society. Music is also crucial in terms of reflecting culture and can serve pedagogical purposes. Cultural values such as Christmas, Santa Claus and Easter can be enhanced through the teaching of children's songs such as Christmas songs and Easter songs.

### **3.5. School factors**

Ho (2009) maintains that the development of the cultural awareness in EFL classes may be influenced by a number of constraints, namely the teacher's cultural knowledge, the availability of native English speakers, time allowance for culture teaching in each lesson or even the system of education itself. The teacher has been considered the "expert knower of the language" (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996) and his/her own cultural knowledge thus seems to be the main source for learners to learn about it. With the booming of information technology and the effects of globalization that make many countries dependent on each other, Greek learners are now able to have access to many cultural resources and explore the target culture themselves under their teachers' guidance. The availability of native English speakers as a rich cultural resource is also an important issue for consideration. Time allowance for culture teaching is also a serious issue for teachers as lessons are already overloaded. However, if teachers know how to skillfully incorporate language and culture in language teaching in a flexible way, they will solve the problem easily and make their lessons even more interesting and effective (Ho, 2009).

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Aim and research questions**

The aim of this quantitative study was to find out the position of target culture awareness in the EFL classroom in the Greek state school by examining teachers' views, teaching options and attitudes towards language and culture integration, and by investigating school factors that may be constraints. To this end, the following four research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent are EFL teachers aware of the target culture?
2. How often do teachers use materials and activities related to the target culture in their EFL classes?
3. What school factors affect the frequency of culture-related activities or may be constraints, which hinder language and culture integration?
4. What do EFL teachers think about the importance of integrating culture into FL learning and its benefits?

#### **4.2. The research tool: a questionnaire**

The questionnaire was written in English, developed upon the main aim and the four research questions of this study and divided into four main sections accordingly (see the appendix).

Section A consisted of three questions, asking teachers to rate the extent to which they have developed their own target culture awareness so far and whether they think they need to develop it further. The degree was measured by the adjective phrases 'not at all aware', 'slightly aware', 'somewhat aware', 'moderately aware' and 'extremely aware', and by the adverbial phrases 'not at all', 'slightly', 'moderately', 'much' and 'to a great extent'.

Section B consisted of five questions to explore the extent to which culture is integrated into the EFL classroom by the school teachers, the curriculum and textbooks or hindered by any school factors. The respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their teaching options related to the target culture by choosing from the adverbs 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'always'. They were also asked to rate the degree to which school factors enhance or hinder language and culture integration. The adverbial phrases used were 'not at all', 'slightly', 'moderately', 'much' and 'to a great extent'. In this section, there was also a straightforward 'key' question to the topic of the present study by asking the participating teachers directly whether culture is a neglected component in the EFL classroom at school. It was measured by the adjective phrases 'not at all neglected', 'slightly neglected', 'somewhat neglected', 'very neglected' and 'extremely neglected'.

Section C included three questions investigating teachers' attitude towards the importance and benefits of language and culture integration by asking them a 'yes-no' question, a question of degree measured by the adjective phrases 'not at all important', 'slightly important', 'somewhat important', 'very important' and 'extremely important' and another question of degree measuring culture and language integration benefits. Finally, in section D there were background questions about the respondents' gender, age, professional qualifications, current teaching situation and years of teaching experience.

#### **4.3. Participants of the study**

The respondents were in-service teachers of English in public education at primary and secondary level. Altogether 100 questionnaires were collected either by e-mail or by contact, in seminars organized by the school advisor. In this sense, it was convenience sampling. At the same time, even if it was beyond the scope of this project to survey what is officially called a representative sample of the population mainly for practical reasons, it seems that a varied sample in terms of age, qualifications, years of teaching experience and current teaching situation eventually contributed to the research.

More specifically, the sample consisted of 90 female and 10 male teachers of English reflecting more or less the percentage of in-service school English teachers regarding gender. Concerning age, there were 32 teachers aged between 22-30 years old, 47 aged between 31-40, 14 respondents 41-50 years old and only 7 participants over 50 years old. Only 13 out of 100 hold a Master's in TESOL/TEFL/Applied Linguistics, while 7 out of 100 hold other Master's degrees (in translation, literature, etc). As for their current teaching situation, 61 participants work in Primary Education and 39 in Secondary Education. The respondents' years of teaching experience vary significantly as 28 out of 100 have taught



English for 0-5 years, 35 for 6-10 years, 16 for 11-15 years and 21 out of 100 for over 16 years.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. EFL teachers' cultural awareness

79 out of 100 teachers have got specific cultural experiences of the target culture, either by travelling or studying abroad, joining Erasmus exchange programs or communicating with native English speakers, reading books, etc. The most popular answer to the relevant question was tourism/travelling (69 references) and studies abroad (19 references). However, 21 teachers state that they lack any target culture experience. Moreover, only 13 teachers feel extremely aware of the target culture whereas 53 out of 100 feel moderately aware, 27 somewhat aware and 7 slightly aware of the target culture. When asked if they think they need to develop further awareness of the target culture, 16 participants answer to a great extent, 33 out of 100 much, 40 moderately and 11 slightly.

### 5.2. Integrating culture into the EFL classroom at school

According to the survey findings (Table 1), 47 out of 100 participating teachers claim that they sometimes use authentic reading texts related to British literature/poetry/magazines and about 40% of the respondents sometimes use authentic audiovisual material or projects on target culture topics (traditions, art, food, habits, etc). 94% of the respondents have never organized any cultural trip to Britain, 87% have never joined intercultural exchanges with schools abroad through European programs, 88% have never invited native speakers and only 26% have rarely encouraged learners' e-mail correspondence with native English speakers. 39% often use culture-related activities in their classroom such as watching foreign films, role play, simulation tasks, etc and only 15% often use internet technology to collect target culture information. Finally, only 13% of the participating teachers *always* decorate their classrooms with culture- related posters, photos, maps, etc.

In addition, according to the findings (see questions 5 & 6), 52 out of 100 teachers answer that the EFL curriculum moderately helps to enhance learners' target culture awareness and 23 participants answer slightly. Similarly, 55 respondents answer that school EFL textbooks moderately help enhance learners' target culture awareness but 24 teachers answer much.

Regarding constraints due to specific school factors which may hinder language and culture integration (Table 2), the majority of respondents (35%) consider that time allowance for culture teaching in the EFL classroom is a constraint to a great extent, 33% consider that the existing audiovisual material at schools is another constraint to a great extent and 72% consider that the system of EFL education at state schools itself restricts much-to a great extent language and culture integration, while 36% choose much regarding the factor of teachers' target culture knowledge.

Finally, 41 teachers consider that culture is very neglected and 50 out of 100 answer that culture is somewhat neglected in the EFL classroom (question 8).



### 5.3. EFL teachers' attitude towards language and culture integration

53% of the respondents consider that culture and language integration is very important and 37% answer that it is extremely important to integrate culture into EFL learning. Moreover, almost all respondents (96%) believe that target culture awareness can enhance EFL learning. In particular, as regards language and culture integration benefits (Table 3), 52% of the respondents think that language and culture integration can help promote intercultural awareness, understanding, respect and tolerance to a great extent. 39% consider that another benefit is that it can help improve learners' communication skills to a great extent while at the same time 36% believe that it can also increase learners' EFL learning motivation to a great extent.

<i>Teaching options</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
Authentic audiovisual material (e.g. British music / songs / dancing / films)	1	12	41	35	11
Authentic reading texts (e.g. British literature / poetry / newspaper / magazine articles / tourist guide leaflets)	4	27	47	18	4
Projects on target culture topics (e.g. British traditions / lifestyle / geography / history / art / food / clothing / climate / festivals / family life / leisure activities)	11	15	40	27	7
Organizing cultural excursions / trips to the target country (e.g. Comenius program)	94	3	2	1	0
Culture-based activities (e.g. extensive reading, listening to foreign music, watching foreign films, role-play/simulation tasks, games / story telling)	4	12	39	39	6
Decorating classrooms with cultural images of the target culture (e.g. posters, photos, maps, cards, etc)	8	25	32	22	13
Intercultural exchanges with schools abroad (e.g. e-twinning, comenius program)	87	9	4	0	0
Inviting guest native speakers of English to your school	88	8	4	0	0
Using Internet technology in the classroom (e.g. surfing into target cultural sites to collect information)	22	36	24	15	3
Learners' e-mail correspondence with native English speakers	66	26	3	5	0
TOTAL NUMBER	100 Respondents				

Table 1: "How often do you use the following teaching options in order to integrate culture into your ELT practice?"

<i>School factors</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Much</i>	<i>To a great extent</i>
Time allowance for culture teaching in each lesson	5	12	16	32	35
The existent audiovisual material at your school (e.g. available DVDs, CDs, etc)	5	14	11	37	33
School equipment (e.g. CD/DVD players, computers, library, internet access, labs)	2	19	19	32	28
The system of EFL education itself at state schools	5	8	15	42	30
The availability of native English speakers	11	21	17	29	22
EFL teachers' target culture knowledge	5	23	28	36	8
TOTAL NUMBER	100 Respondents				

*Table 2: To what extent do you think the following school factors may be constraints which hinder language and culture integration in the EFL classroom?*

<i>Culture &amp; Language Integration Benefits</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Much</i>	<i>To a great extent</i>
Understanding the linguistic patterns of the target culture at a more conscious level	0	4	23	44	29
Understanding the behavioural patterns of the native culture at a more conscious level	1	6	27	48	18
Improving learners' EFL communication skills	0	4	12	45	39
Increasing learners' EFL learning motivation	0	3	14	47	36
Developing awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension and communication	0	8	26	37	29
Promoting intercultural awareness, understanding, respect and tolerance	0	4	7	37	52
TOTAL NUMBER	100 Respondents				

*Table 3: "To what extent do you think culture and language integration in the EFL classroom can produce the following benefits?"*

## 6. Discussion and implications

Although culture constitutes an integrative part of language and teaching culture is clearly stressed as significant by the majority of participating teachers, EFL teachers seem to be inadequately aware of the target culture, that is why a considerable number of them feel that they need to further develop their target culture awareness. In other words, clearly, teachers view themselves as cultural mediators who need to pay attention to intercultural awareness by developing in their learners unbiased attitudes towards their own culture and the target culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Additionally, it seems that target culture teaching remains insubstantial and sporadic in the Greek state school according to the survey findings above. This is also the case in other countries as recorded in prior researches carried out in China, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Mao (2009) argues that the fifth skill of intercultural awareness is not at all mentioned at any EFL classes in Chinese schools. Culture is taught purposefully only at places of higher education like Chinese colleges and universities (Mao, 2009). Mohammad's study (2004) reveals that the place of culture in the Iranian EFL high school levels is limited not only in depth of cultural information, but also in the range of the culture depicted. While Mekheimer (2011) underlines the fact that the current state of EFL learning practices promote the subjective resistance to the target language culture in Saudi Arabia by refusing to teach many of the interconnected socio-cultural features of English'.

More specifically, the present study shows that the majority of teachers rarely incorporate activities with a cultural focus (cultural excursions, intercultural exchanges, role-play, etc) or use culture-related materials (authentic readings, music, literature, etc) in their classroom in the Greek state school. School factors which seem to be constraints are invariably the lack of time, the inadequate audiovisual material or equipment, the imperfect target culture knowledge of EFL teachers and the system of EFL education itself in state schools as well (Mao, 2009; Mekheimer, 2011). Moreover, it seems that the school curriculum and textbooks overlook the conclusions drawn in relevant studies and neglect the essential information about the target culture that could help learners reach a cultural understanding to accompany and expand their linguistic knowledge (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Similar deficiencies are also reported by Reimann (2009) in his survey about the cultural content of EFL learning in Japanese schools where there is a tendency to focus primarily on language structures and avoid the inclusion of any target culture context or cultural information.

However, it can be stated that there was explicit agreement among the participants as to the usefulness and general educational value of target culture awareness through culture and language integration in EFL learning. The majority of them recognize a great deal of benefits associated with language and culture integration such as understanding the linguistic and behavioural patterns of the target culture at a more conscious level, improving learners' communication skills, increasing learners' learning motivation, promoting intercultural awareness, etc. Referring to the Turkish context, Önalán (2005) also reports teachers' positive attitudes towards incorporating cultural information in their instruction by highlighting that in FL learning learners need cultural information for better communication.

As becomes apparent, a major implication here is that it is essential to provide Greek learners with a thorough and systematic intercultural training starting from the culture of the main English-speaking countries first (United Kingdom, United States of America). EFL learners will benefit by gaining solid knowledge of the different world cultures. They will also develop the ability to compare Greek culture to the target culture or other cultures, to

evaluate critically and interpret the results of such comparisons, and to apply this knowledge successfully in both verbal and non-verbal communication, for both transactional and interactional purposes (Citron, 1995; Hadley, 1993). In other words, as Byram (1989) puts forward, it is essential to create in the Greek learners' empathy toward the culture of the target language community, which will help an appreciation of other cultures as well. Robinson (1985) was also one of the first in the field of FL education to argue that target culture should be viewed as a process, a way of perceiving, interpreting, feeling, understanding. This perspective views culture as part of the process of living and being in the world, the part that is necessary for making and understanding meaning.

Moreover, as Ho (2009) maintains, systematic intercultural training is a pre-condition for educating a new generation of young people who will not only tolerate, but also understand, accept, and respect people from different world cultures, will communicate with them successfully, and will learn from them through that communication. Intercultural training is emphatically stated in both the Unified Curriculum for the Foreign Languages (EPS-XG Curriculum) and the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Modern Foreign Languages which aim to develop Greek learners' awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity/pluralism (multilingualism and multiculturalism). Therefore, the impact of Byram's model of the intercultural communication theory on the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which serves as the basis for FL education today, is non-negligible (Byram, 2009).

## **7. Suggestions for future action**

Survey findings show that despite the growing emphasis on EFL learning in Greece over the last two decades, there is still a long way to go into the very core of teaching cultural knowledge in the Greek state schools.

In particular, despite the fact that culture is widely accepted to be such an important element for EFL classrooms by the respondents, most language teachers have never received any formal input or education as to how to teach culture and how to increase their learners' awareness of the target culture in their lessons. This fact obviously reveals a weakness of the English language university departments that could be eliminated by offering compulsory or elective target culture courses to the EFL teacher candidates. In other words, language teachers' awareness of how to be culturally responsive must be increased during their university education. Without the knowledge of the target language culture, one cannot fully make use of that particular language for communicative purposes. In order to teach foreign cultures, as Dai (2011) points out, FL teachers should use a variety of methods, activities and materials (stories, pictures, films and songs) after being appropriately and adequately educated first. To this end, additionally, EFL teachers' in-service training could include seminars about how to use different methods to help learners to overcome the difficulties in language learning as well as culture learning. In order to educate interculturally-competent EFL teachers provided with sufficient amount of cultural knowledge, culture should be addressed much more extensively in in-service teacher education programs (Karabinar & Guler, 2012). This is also supported by Richards, Tung and Ng's (1992) study, according to which language teachers mostly benefit from attending seminars and best teachers are believed to be the ones who attend professional training on a regular basis. Therefore, teachers' professional confidence and empowerment need to be fostered as it is not easy to teach culture knowledge.

A future survey could also elicit ways or suggestions focusing on how to apply culture in an EFL classroom in the Greek state school. For instance, the use of culture-reflecting technology in EFL classes and other effective teaching materials and practices related to the target language culture through appropriate in-class activities and outside class assignments could help towards creating a beneficial language and culture integration context (Chisholm & Wetzel, 1997; Collis, Vingerhoets & Moonen, 1997). For example, web-based instruction through e-mail correspondence, WWW links and resources related to the cultural themes taught in class can prove to be useful pedagogical tools towards raising learners' target culture awareness. Similarly, Berwald (1986) points out that the use of mass-media in classroom environment is advantageous in terms of creating cultural awareness and a wide range of available topics and vocabulary.

In addition, a systematic evaluation of the existing textbooks towards a more target culture-related curriculum development by syllabus designers could also lead to a more culture-oriented decision-making approach regarding FL education in order to strengthen the input and guidance of cultural awareness (Zhao, 2010). According to Ur (1996), learners should be able to cope with the same kinds of reading that are encountered by native speakers of the target language. Therefore, the cultural impact and pedagogical use of authentic materials is considered to be of paramount importance and should be included in the materials taught or recommended by the Ministry of Education.

Last but not least, joining European programs and intercultural exchanges should be further encouraged and emphasized as it could help induce positive attitudes towards the FL and its native speakers. For example, in Turkey, language teachers' main strategy is to integrate culture teaching into their language classes by encouraging their learners to attend international exchange programs, such as Erasmus (Karabinar & Guler, 2012). To this effect, more opportunities for teachers to travel and study abroad such as teacher mobility programs should also be regularly provided and further promoted.

## **8. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the position of target culture awareness in the EFL classroom in the Greek state school based on the assumption that teaching English well means more than merely teaching Greek learners its vocabulary, structures and grammar. It also means teaching them how to slip into the English culture without their foreignness exposed. Learners should be informed about how native speakers of English see the world and how the English language reflects the ideas, customs, and behaviour of their society. In other words, only with the combination of language competence and cultural awareness can language achieve its communicative function. Findings show that the participating teachers have realized the great impact target culture has on language and the inevitability of culture in teaching methodology. Thus, it is necessary that target culture awareness should be given more attention in the Greek state school in order to help Greek learners communicate with target language speakers and other foreigners efficiently. Last but not least, a shift from a traditional to intercultural stance in EFL learning can enhance learners' awareness of the inextricable and interdependent relationship between language and culture. It can also help to develop teachers' intercultural perspectives that may have an impact on their language teaching methodology and course design. This shift is a challenge that EFL teachers and Greek learners have to deal with to meet the goals of FL education in our modern and globalized world.

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## Appendix

### The questionnaire: The position of target culture awareness in the EFL classroom

#### A) EFL Teachers' Cultural Awareness:

1. Have you got any specific cultural experiences of the target culture?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
If yes, put a <b>X</b> to those of the following experiences which are true for you:				
Studies abroad <input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism/Travelling <input type="checkbox"/>	Erasmus Programs <input type="checkbox"/>	Exchange <input type="checkbox"/>	Other. Please, specify: <input type="checkbox"/> .....
2. To what extent do you think you have developed awareness of the target culture?				
Not at all aware <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly aware <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat aware <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately aware <input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely aware <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you think you need to develop further awareness of the target culture?				
Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately <input type="checkbox"/>	Much <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/>

#### B) Integrating Culture into EFL Classroom at School:

4. How often do you use the following teaching options in order to integrate culture into your ELT practice? Put the appropriate number which is true for you in the degree column according to the relevant scale:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

	TEACHING OPTIONS	Degree		
1	Authentic audiovisual material (e.g. British music / songs / dancing / films)			
2	Authentic reading texts (e.g. British literature / poetry / newspaper / magazine articles / tourist guide leaflets)			
3	Projects on target culture issues (e.g. British traditions / lifestyle / geography / history / art / food / clothing / climate / festivals / family life / leisure activities)			
4	Organizing cultural excursions / trips to the target country (e.g. Comenius program)			
5	Culture-based activities (e.g. extensive reading, listening to foreign music, watching foreign films, role-play /simulation tasks, games / story telling)			
6	Decorating classrooms with cultural images of the target culture (e.g. posters, maps, photos, cards, etc)			
7	Intercultural exchanges with schools abroad (e.g. e-twinning, Comenius)			
8	Inviting guest native speakers of English to your school			
9	Using Internet technology in the classroom (e.g. surfing into target cultural sites to collect information)			
10	Learners' e-mail correspondence with native English speakers			
5. To what extent does EFL curriculum help to enhance learners' target culture awareness at school?				
Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately <input type="checkbox"/>	Much <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/>

				<input type="checkbox"/>
6. To what extent do school EFL textbooks help to enhance learners' target culture awareness?				
Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately <input type="checkbox"/>	Much <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/>

7. To what extent do you think the following school factors may be constraints which hinder language and culture integration in the EFL classroom? Put the appropriate number which is true for you in the degree column according to the relevant scale:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
 Not at all   Slightly   Moderately   Much   To a great extent

	SCHOOL FACTORS	Degree
1	Time allowance for culture teaching in each lesson	
2	The existent audiovisual material at your school (e.g. available DVDs, CDs, etc)	
3	School equipment (e.g. CD/DVD players, computers, library, internet access, labs)	
4	The system of EFL education itself at state schools	
5	The availability of native English speakers	
6	EFL teachers' target culture knowledge	

8. To what extent do you think culture is a neglected component in the EFL classroom at school?

Not at all neglected <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly neglected <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat neglected <input type="checkbox"/>	Very neglected <input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely neglected <input type="checkbox"/>
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### C) EFL Teachers' Attitude towards Language & Culture Integration:

9. To what extent do you think it is important to integrate culture into EFL learning?

Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly important <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	---	--

10. Do you think that learners' cultural awareness can enhance EFL learning?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. To what extent do you think culture and language integration in the EFL classroom may produce the following benefits? Put the number you will choose in the degree column according to the relevant scale:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
 Not at all   Slightly   Moderately   Much   To a great extent

	Culture & Language Integration Benefits	Degree
1	Understanding the linguistic patterns of the target culture at a more conscious level	
2	Understanding the behavioural patterns of the native culture at a more conscious level	
3	Improving learners' EFL communication skills	

4	Increasing learners' EFL learning motivation	
5	Developing awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension and communication	
6	Promoting intercultural awareness, understanding, respect and tolerance	

**D) Personal Data:****Gender**

Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
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**Age**

22-30 <input type="checkbox"/>	31-40 <input type="checkbox"/>	41-50 <input type="checkbox"/>	Over 50 <input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------

**Professional Qualifications**

BA in English Language & Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	MA in TESOL/TEFL/Applied Linguistics <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please, specify: .....	

**Current Teaching Situation**

Primary Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary Education <input type="checkbox"/>
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**Years of Teaching Experience**

0-5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6-10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11-15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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## **Students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of the first language in the EFL State School Classrooms**

### **Στάσεις των μαθητών και εκπαιδευτικών απέναντι στη χρήση της πρώτης γλώσσας στις τάξεις των Αγγλικών ως Ξένη Γλώσσα στην Δημόσια Εκπαίδευση**

**Dina TSAGARI & Constantina DIAKOU**

*The role of mother tongue (L1) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been the subject of much debate and controversy in the last decades. An increasing number of researchers and practitioners (e.g. Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2005) stress that L1 can positively affect L2 performance and development and emphasize the growing methodological need for systematic and judicious use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. However, other researchers (e.g. Duff & Polio, 1990; Ellis, 1984) take a different view on the issue and support that only L2 maximization can enhance the learning process. This paper looks more closely at the L1/L2 debate by examining the classroom practices, beliefs and attitudes of EFL students and teachers in two public secondary schools in Cyprus towards the use of students' L1. Questionnaires were distributed to 96 EFL students and interviews were conducted with three EFL secondary school teachers. The results of the study showed that while the majority of students believe that their L1 has a place in the EFL classroom, e.g. it makes them feel comfortable expressing themselves and helps them understand difficult concepts, teachers' beliefs towards the use of the L1 varied. Two of the teachers shared negative attitudes towards it, whereas one of them stressed the importance of L1 in the L2 classroom. The most important factors that seemed to influence teachers' decisions about 'when' and 'how' to use the L1 relate to students' level of proficiency and needs. The findings of this study have important implications for second educational policy and future research in state schools.*

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*Ο ρόλος της μητρικής γλώσσας (L1) στο χώρο της Απόκτησης της Δεύτερης Γλώσσας (SLA) έχει αποτελέσει αντικείμενο μεγάλης συζήτησης και αντιπαράθεσης κατά τις τελευταίες*

δεκαετίες. Ένας μεγάλος αριθμός ερευνητών και εκπαιδευτικών (π.χ. Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2005) πιστεύουν ότι η χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας μπορεί να επηρεάσει θετικά την απόδοση και την ανάπτυξη της εκμάθησης της δεύτερης γλώσσας και τονίζουν την αυξανόμενη μεθοδολογική ανάγκη για συστηματική και ορθολογική χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας. Ωστόσο, άλλοι ερευνητές (π.χ. Duff & Polio, 1990; Ellis, 1984) έχουν διαφορετική άποψη για το θέμα και υποστηρίζουν ότι η αύξηση της χρήσης της δεύτερης γλώσσας βοηθά στην μάθησή της. Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει πιο προσεκτικά το θέμα της αντιπαράθεσης της μητρικής και δεύτερης γλώσσας εξετάζοντας τις πρακτικές, τις πεποιθήσεις και τις στάσεις των μαθητών και καθηγητών Αγγλικής ως ξένη γλώσσα (EFL) σε δύο δημόσια σχολεία της δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Κύπρο όσον αφορά τη χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας των μαθητών (L1). Τα ερωτηματολόγια διανεμήθηκαν σε 96 μαθητές και διεξήχθησαν συνεντεύξεις με τρεις καθηγητές Αγγλικής. Τα αποτελέσματα της μελέτης δείχνουν ότι η πλειοψηφία των μαθητών πιστεύει ότι η μητρική τους γλώσσα έχει θέση στην τάξη των Αγγλικών, καθώς τους κάνει να αισθάνονται άνετα να εκφραστούν και τους βοηθά να κατανοήσουν δύσκολες έννοιες. Οι πεποιθήσεις των εκπαιδευτικών για τη χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας είναι ποικίλες. Δύο από τους διδάσκοντες είχαν αρνητική στάση ως προς την χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας, ενώ ένας από αυτούς υπογράμμισε τη σημασία της μητρικής γλώσσας ως εργαλείο στην τάξη. Οι πιο σημαντικοί παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν τους εκπαιδευτικούς σχετικά με το 'πότε' και το 'πώς' να χρησιμοποιούν την μητρική γλώσσα αφορούν το επίπεδο επάρκειας και τις ανάγκες των μαθητών. Τα ευρήματα της μελέτης αυτής έχουν σημαντικές συνέπειες για την ξενόγλωσση εκπαιδευτική πολιτική καθώς και για την μελλοντική έρευνα στη δημόσια εκπαίδευση.

**Key words:** mother tongue (L1), second language (L2), target language (TL), student questionnaires, teacher interviews, state schools, EFL classroom practices, beliefs and attitudes

## 1. Introduction

The issue of whether first language (L1) use should be excluded or constitute an aiding "resource" (Cook, 2001) in second or foreign language classrooms is a controversial issue that has been discussed and investigated in SLA theory and literature as well as in various EFL contexts over the last decades. However, we know little about the use of the L1 in the language learning context of Cyprus where learning English is of particular importance.

This study examines the reported classroom practices, beliefs and attitudes of students and teachers in two public secondary schools in Cyprus, concerning the use of the students' first language via questionnaires and interviews.

## 2. Literature review

The view of L2 exclusivity in the EFL classroom has been strong in much of the SLA literature. Promoters of the ban of L1 suggest that input in the L2 provides a necessary and sufficient condition for language acquisition (Krashen, 1981; Krashen & Teller, 1983; Duff & Polio, 1990). Similarly, Chaudron (1988) suggests that the fullest competence in the

second/target language (L2) is accomplished if the teacher provides students with a rich L2 environment in which L2 is not only used for instruction and drill but also for disciplinary and management processes. Ellis (1984) also emphasizes the significance of using the L2 for management purposes and asserts that if otherwise, teachers “deprive the learners of valuable input in the L2” (p. 133). Cook (2001) also suggests that successful L2 acquisition depends on acquiring an L2 in the way that monolingual children acquire their L1 and recommends keeping L1 and L2 systems separate so as to avoid interference from the L1.

On the other hand, advocates of L1 use in the foreign language (FL) classroom hold a broad range of counter-arguments. They stress that the role of L1 use in teaching methodology in FL classrooms is of paramount importance (Nazary, 2008). In an early publication, Larsen-Freeman (2000) highlighted the advantages of using the L1 in the EFL context. She scrutinized the role of L1 across various English Language Teaching (ELT) methods and found that the learners’ L1 has a place in almost all teaching methods (with the exception of the Direct and Audiolingual Method). A significant number of researchers have identified important functions served by the L1 in the EFL classroom. Particularly, it is argued that the L1 can be used to raise awareness about the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 (Schweers, 1999; Carson & Kashiara 2012), give learners a sense of confidence and authenticate their experiences by allowing them to express themselves more easily (Schweers, 1999; Auerbach, 1993). In addition, evidence suggests that L1 can be used to supply scaffolding in order to lower affective filters (Meyer, 2008; Schweers, 1999) and helps learners with language disorders (Nazary, 2008). In the relevant literature, L1 is also identified as a tool to give instructions, discuss classroom methodology, check comprehension, build rapport, control pupils’ behaviour, and teach grammar explicitly (Atkinson, 1987; Macaro, 2005). Other L1 uses by teachers include bridging communication gaps (Nzwanga, 2000), disciplining the students (Macaro, 2001) and communicating about grammar, tests and assignments (Levince, 2003, 2014).

Teachers’ and learners’ attitudes and perceptions towards the use of L1 in the FL classroom have been investigated in a number of studies; some of them concentrate solely on the perception of students while other studies examine the attitudes of both the teachers and the students. However, research in the field seems to remain inconclusive since in some of these studies teachers and students report the importance of L1 as a tool that facilitates learning (Schweers, 1999; Burden 2001; Hopkins 1989), while in others participants appear reluctant to use it and share negative attitudes towards it (Duff & Polio, 1990; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2003; Nazary 2008).

In Greece and Cyprus, the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is a topic that has not been thoroughly researched since only two studies were conducted in the Greek and Cypriot EFL context. For instance, Prodromou (2002), investigating the attitudes of Greek EFL students, found that the higher the level of proficiency of the students the less their preference for L1 use in the classroom. In the same setting, Giannikas (2011) working with primary school students found that EFL teachers were reluctant to maximize L2 use due to traditional teaching trends and adherence to the curriculum. While L1 was mainly used for instructions, rules, social needs and grammar explanations, L2 use was restricted to course book corrections and games.



In Cyprus, Copland and Neokleous (2010) found that teachers in private institutions professed affective and cognitive reasons for using or excluding L1. Research conducted by Vassiliou (2010) in public EFL classrooms in Cyprus showed that teachers of public primary schools used L1 mainly for teaching grammar and disciplining the students.

While the views of researchers differ on the L1/L2 divide, we do not yet have a clear picture of what happens in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, e.g. such as the public primary and secondary education in Cyprus. It is therefore important to further explore teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes about the role of L1 in the EFL classroom since to date very few studies have been conducted to address the topic in the local context (Copland & Neokleous, 2010; Vassiliou, 2010). As a result, this paper examines the classroom practices, beliefs and attitudes of students and teachers in public secondary schools in Cyprus, with regard to the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. The results are expected to provide important insights about students' learning needs.

### **3. The aims and methodology of the present study**

To be able to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes as well as teachers' practices regarding the use of L1 in the EFL classrooms of secondary state schools in Cyprus, five research questions were identified as follows:

- A. What are students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of L1 in EFL state school classrooms in Cyprus?
- B. Do teachers and students believe that the use of L1 by the teacher is necessary? If yes, on what occasions?
- C. Which factors do teachers believe influence their use of L1 in the EFL classroom?
- D. What is the frequency of L2 use in the EFL classroom as reported by teachers and students?
- E. Do teachers' and students' reported L1 use coincides with actual use in the EFL classroom?

#### **3.1. Participants**

Ninety-six (N=96) Greek Cypriot EFL students participated in this study. The participants were students in two public secondary schools in Cyprus. 52.1% of the participants were in the first grade of senior high schools (Lyceum), 20.8% were in the second grade and 27.1% in the third. The students were all adolescents aged 15-18. 52.1% of students had three periods of English lessons per week, while 47.9% had six periods. For students in the first grade, English was a compulsory course taught for three periods a week, whereas for second and third grade students English language learning was elective and students were required to attend it for six periods per week.

The three EFL teachers of the participant students were all female. Each teacher had at least ten years of teaching experience. The teachers' L1 was Greek but they all reported that they felt as comfortable speaking English as they did when they spoke their L1. For the purposes of this study, the teachers were named Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3.

### **3.2. Methodology**

To answer the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from two public secondary schools in Larnaca, a city in the southeast of Cyprus. Quantitative data were collected in order to empirically investigate students' beliefs towards the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom. Therefore, a survey in the form of a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to measure students' (a) estimations of the quantity of L1 use by their teachers in the EFL classroom (b) attitudes towards L1 use in the EFL classroom and (c) beliefs about the use of L1 by their teacher. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from Vassiliou (2010) and Schweers (1999). The first version of the questionnaire was piloted with a small number of students. Based on their comments the questionnaire was refined to ensure clarity and avoid repetitive items.

In addition, qualitative data were obtained to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' attitude and practice regarding the use of the L1 and investigate the reasons that guided these attitudes. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with three EFL teachers took place in order to compare and contrast teachers' views with students' questionnaires responses. The interviews, based on a series of guiding questions (see Appendix B), elicited information about the teachers' background and training, philosophy of teaching, attitudes towards using L1 in the classroom, factors that influenced teachers' use of L1 and Ministry guidelines and policies. At the end of the interviews, teachers were asked to estimate the amount of L1 they used so that their answers could be compared to those of the students'.

### **3.3. Data analysis**

After the data collection, all students' questionnaires were divided into three groups, according to the teacher in charge. For example, 19.8% of the student population were taught by Teacher 1 while 33.3% by Teacher 2 and 46.9% were students of Teacher 3. The reason for dividing students' questionnaires in the three groups was to be able to compare each group's responses to their teacher's responses.

The questionnaire data analysis was done using the SPSS statistical analysis package (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 17 for Windows). Various statistical analyses were performed. Descriptive statistics will be reported in percentages. Correlations between the variables, e.g. agreement of students' and teachers' L1 use, were reported by calculating two-tailed Pearson Correlation (see Table 4, Appendix C). For the open-ended questions, the answers provided by the students were separated into keywords and categorized into concepts (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 85).

The three interviews with the EFL teachers were audio-recorded to secure an accurate account of the conversations and avoid losing data. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed by the researchers. The technique used to analyse the answers of the interviews was "quote research". According this, quotes from interviews were identified and were used as illustrative or confirming examples (Folkestad, 2008).

## 4. Presentation of Findings

### 4.1. Beliefs about L1 use in L2 classroom

Table 1 exhibits several important results with regard to students' perceptions. Specifically, 49% of the students believe that there are situations where L1 should be used in the classroom whereas 76% of them report that if teachers use more L2, students will communicate better in the L2. Another contradiction identified is that while 86.5% of the students believe that Greek should only be used as a last resort, 72.9% of the students report that they feel more comfortable and relaxed when teachers use the L1 in class. An outstanding percentage of students (87.5%) believe that L1 should be used in instances where students do not understand what is being said. Even though students report that the L2 should be the primary means of communication in the classroom, they seem to favour L1 use when difficulties arise.

<i>Student Questionnaire – Part II</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1. Students are better at communicating if teachers use L2	76.0%	5.2%	18.8%
2. There are no situations for L1 use	3.1%	49.0%	47.9%
3. Teachers should use L2 at all times	41.7%	21.9%	36.5%
4. Teachers should use L1 if students do not understand	87.5%	7.3%	5.2%
5. Teachers can use L1 as a last resort	86.5%	9.4%	4.2%
6. Students feel relaxed when L1 is used	72.9%	14.6%	12.5%

*Table 1. Students' beliefs about the use of L1 in the L2 classroom.*

Interestingly Teachers 1 and 2 shared similar views concerning the use of L1. Both of them argued that Greek should be used very rarely. They explained that L2 should be the primary means of communication in the EFL classroom and L1 should be used only when it is necessary, e.g.:

Teacher 1: I think it is very important is to use English... and when it's really necessary then use Greek. It's necessary to speak some Greek because some students complain that they do not understand... so I use Greek very rarely.

Teacher 2: They [teachers] definitely have to use English because you get them [students] thinking in the mode of the English language, so next time they produce something it's much easier for them.

Teacher 3 expressed a rather different point of view since she is of the opinion that the use of L1 is essential when teaching a foreign language, especially vocabulary and that educators should be encouraged to do so, e.g.

Teacher 3: I am one of those people who believe that the mother tongue should be used to explain things that would clarify the meaning to the students. Teachers should not be afraid to use their mother tongue when the need arises. Mother tongue is very very important.

#### 4.2. Instances of L1 use

As it is evident in Table 2, students see a place for L1 in the EFL classrooms especially when explaining grammar, defining new vocabulary, explaining reading and text comprehension and giving instructions. Students' answers with regard to the remaining three uses of the L1, namely teaching pronunciation, writing and interacting informally with students do not provide conclusive answers as to whether these are permissible L1 uses or not.

<i>Student Questionnaire – Part III</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1. Explain grammar	57.3%	12.5%	28.1%
2. Define new vocabulary	77.1%	12.5%	10.4%
3. Teach pronunciation	32.3%	30.2%	36.5%
4. Teach reading and text comprehension	60.4%	20.8%	17.7%
5. Teach writing	35.4%	27.1%	37.5%
6. Interact informally with students	49.0%	27.1%	24.0%
7. Give instructions	15.6%	25.0%	59.4%

*Table 2. Students' beliefs about the use of L1 by the teacher.*

The three teachers were also asked whether there are any particular instances during their EFL lessons that would make them resort to L1. Teacher 1 reported using the L1 mainly to define new vocabulary, and only after the students ask her to translate specific words in Greek. She also mentioned that she sometimes uses Greek to advise the students or discipline them. Teacher 2 said that there is always a way to teach or explain something without using the L1. The only instance she would justify the use of L1 would be when students have difficulties in understanding an exercise:

Teacher 2: There's a way to do things without translating... however if you see that students may be lost with the rubric of an exercise, with what the exercise wants them to do ... and you tried by giving them examples and they still do not understand, then you might think of using Greek.

The case was different with Teacher 3, who openly stated that she resorts to L1 to explain the meaning of words to save time and help learners, e.g.:

Teacher 3: What's the point of giving long definitions instead of just giving them the word in Greek? It's time consuming and it does not give time to understand and absorb the meaning of a word or a text.

### **4.3. Factors influencing L1 use in the L2 classroom**

Teachers' interviews showed that their decision as to whether they should resort to the L1 seems to be heavily influenced by the students' L2 skills and their proficiency level, as this was stressed by all the teachers. Teacher 1 referred particularly to incidents when several unsuccessful attempts to explain meaning in L2 concluded in L1 recourse while Teacher 2 admitted that she mainly makes use of L2. On rare occasions she needed to use L1 due to students' L2 skills. The same reasons were recorded by Teacher 3 for the use of L1, who also mentioned that the type of the activity is an influential reason to resort to the L1.

Another interesting finding was that none of the three teachers reported to be affected by the nature of the Ministry's policies and guidelines. They all stated that there is no specific training or guidelines they receive on this issue even though they attend seminars organised by the Ministry every semester. All three teachers believe that Greek should not be used, though they seem to be unaware of any policies from the Ministry concerning the use of L1 in the EFL classroom and mainly base their opinion on their own beliefs and assumptions. These are some of their responses:

Teacher 1: I think we are not allowed to use Greek or give the definitions of words in Greek.

Teacher 2: I assume that this is the case [the English only policy] - if you teach a FL then you need to speak the FL to invite the students to use it.

Teacher 3: You are not supposed to use Greek. However I don't think that there is a policy like this because we have students coming from various backgrounds so you are probably going to lose them if you speak only Greek.

### **4.4. Reported occurrence of the use of L1**

#### **4.4.1. Students' general estimation**

Students were asked to estimate the amount of L1 their teacher uses in eight communicative contexts in the classroom. Table 3 provides important findings about the estimation of amount of teachers' L1 use (see Part IV, Students Questionnaire, Appendix A). The most striking observation relates to three particular occasions when teachers make use of the L1 at around 81-100% of the time. Specifically 43.8% of students estimated that their teacher uses the L1 almost entirely (81-100% of the time) to communicate with students informally while 38.5% reported that their teacher uses the same amount of L1 to give instructions for tests, quizzes and other assignments. Notably a significant percentage of 58.3% of students reported that their teacher resorts to L1 at about 81-100% of the time for discipline purposes. Using L1 to teach pronunciation is not as frequent whereas students' reports indicate substantial but wide range in the amount of L1 use in instances such as teaching grammar, defining vocabulary and teaching writing.

<i>Student Questionnaire - PART IV</i>	<i>0-20%</i>	<i>21-40%</i>	<i>41-60%</i>	<i>61-80%</i>	<i>81-100%</i>
My teacher uses Greek to ..... of the time we spend discussing or working on this					
1. explain grammar	11.5%	25.0%	20.8%	27.1%	15.6%
2. define new vocabulary	19.8%	24.0%	14.6%	14.6%	26.0%
3. teach pronunciation	49.0%	22.9%	6.3%	8.3%	12.5%
4. explain reading and text comprehension	16.7%	30.2%	17.7%	16.7%	16.7%
5. teach writing	19.8%	33.3%	22.9%	8.3%	14.6%
6. communicate with the students informally (jokes, socializing etc)	16.7%	11.5%	12.5%	15.6%	43.8%
7. give us instructions for tests, quizzes and other assignments	6.3%	14.6%	21.9%	18.8%	38.5%
8. discipline the students	7.3%	7.3%	17.7%	9.4%	58.3%

*Table 3. Student general estimation of the amount of L1 use in the classroom.*

#### *4.4.2. Students' and teachers' estimations of teachers' overall L1 use*

The questionnaire also revealed some interesting findings regarding students' estimations of L1 use by individual teachers. For instance, a strong majority of students (52.7%) concurred that Teacher 1 uses L1 to give instructions for tests and assignments in approximately 21-60% of her teaching time while an equally significant percentage of students (68.4%) agrees that the teacher uses Greek for discipline purposes in about 81% of the classroom time. Almost half of the students (42.1%) reported that their teacher uses the L1 to interact informally with them in approximately 81-100% of classroom time. Interestingly, 68.4% and 73.7% of the students said that their teacher uses the L1 to teach reading/text comprehension and teach grammar respectively in less than 40% of her teaching time. When giving definitions of new vocabulary and explaining pronunciation, the majority of students reported that the teacher used the L1 for less than 20% of teaching time. However, Teacher 1 estimations in Table 3 are consistently different from those of the students since she admitted using the L1 more than 21% of the time she spends to define new vocabulary, while in all the other seven contexts she reported that she uses Greek less than 20% of her teaching time.

The variability in teachers' and students' estimations is also evident for Teacher 2. While the majority (71.8%) of the students estimated that Teacher 2 uses Greek to teach grammar between 40-60% of the teaching time, she said that she spends a lot less, e.g. 0-20% (see Table 3). In addition 62.5% of the students reported that Teacher 2 uses L1 to define new vocabulary more than 40% of the time and 53.1% of the students believed that she uses Greek to explain pronunciation less than 20% of the time they spend on this.

According to the students Teacher 2 also uses Greek to teach reading and text comprehension in less than 40% of the time devoted to it. 68.8% of the students also reported that Teacher 2 uses the L1 to teach writing for about 20-60% of the time they spend on it. The majority of the students reported that their teacher uses Greek to communicate with them informally, give test and assignment instructions and discipline them more than 60% of the time they spend on these areas. However, as can be seen in Table 3, the estimation of Teacher 2 on the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom greatly differs from what her students have reported. Particularly, Teacher 2 estimated that she uses Greek in no more than 20% of the time she spends on all eight instances mentioned. The only case her estimation and her students' estimation coincide is when she teaches pronunciation.

The majority of the students of Teacher 3 estimated that their teacher uses Greek to explain and discuss grammar, define new vocabulary and explain instructions for tests and assignments in more than 60% of her teaching time. An interesting finding is that more than 53% of the students estimated that Teacher 3 uses L1 to socialize and communicate with them while she spends more than 80% of the time to discipline them. 60% of the students also reported that their teacher uses Greek to teach reading and text comprehension in more than 40% of her time. In addition, 60% of the students supported that their teacher uses Greek to explain pronunciation in less than 40% of the time. As far as teaching writing is concerned, the estimations of the students are dispersed and thus no definite conclusions can be drawn.

As indicated in Table 4, Teacher 3 reported that she uses Greek to define new vocabulary in less than 60% of the time she spends on such language areas. She also estimated that she uses L1 to communicate informally with the students in less than 40% of the time spent on this. In all other six instances Teacher 3 said that she uses Greek less than 20% of the time she spends on similar activities. Similarly to the case of Teacher 1 and 2, Teacher's 3 estimations also greatly differ from her students' reports on the use of the L1 in the classroom.

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>explains grammar</i>	<i>defines new vocabulary</i>	<i>teaches pronunciation</i>	<i>explains reading and text comprehension</i>	<i>teaches writing</i>	<i>communicates with the students informally</i>	<i>gives instructions for tests</i>	<i>disciplines the students</i>
<b>1</b>	0-20%	21-40%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%
<b>2</b>	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%
<b>3</b>	0-20%	41-60%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	21-40%	0-20%	0-20%

Table 4. Teachers' estimations of the amount of their use of L1 in the classroom.



#### **4.5. Correlation between reported amount of L1 use and students' age**

Further correlational statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient) revealed that students' reported amount of L1 use in class was found to have a significantly negative relationship with the age of the students (see Table 4, Appendix C). Overall, these results suggest that the younger the students are, the more amounts of L1 are reported to be used by the teachers. Therefore, it is supported that the three teachers use more L1 with younger students whereas they tend to reduce the amount of L1 with older students. However, it is important to mention that although this correlation is drawn from the results of the students' reports on their teachers' L1 use, none of the teachers considered students' age to be one of the factors influencing their decision to use the L1 during the interviews.

### **5. Summary of the findings**

In line with previous research findings (Schweers, 1999; Burden, 2001; Hopkins, 1989), the results of the study indicate that students perceive a place for L1 in their monolingual EFL class, although they consider the use of the L2 to be greatly important. Students feel that the L1 facilitates learning and makes them feel more confident. They do, however, demand from their teachers to use more L2 than L1 in order to improve their skills in L2. This is supported by the majority of the students (76%) who believe that if teachers use more English than Greek, they will be better at communicating in English.

Teachers on the other hand perceive a place for L1 in class but the majority (Teachers 1 and 2) agrees that their primary goal should be to maximise L2 use. However, Teacher 3 does not share the same conviction as she considers the L1 to be a facilitating tool rather than a source of negative interference. Teachers' beliefs about the use of L1 in the EFL classroom support Macaro's (2005) argument that the majority of teachers consider L1 use "unfortunate and regrettable but necessary" (p. 68).

The findings also showed that the L1 was considered to be an invaluable teaching tool for teaching new vocabulary, reading and grammar, giving instructions for tests and helping students understand difficult concepts. These findings are consistent with those in Burden (2001) and Levine (2003) who found that participants also favoured L1 use for purposes of teaching grammar and vocabulary, giving instructions and communicating about tests and assignments.

The results of this study also indicate that there is some disparity in teachers' L1 frequency and purposes. Teachers resort to L1 when students have difficulties in understanding certain contexts. Teacher 1, for example, reported that she uses L1 to define new vocabulary and sometimes to discipline the students, while Teacher 3 uses Greek to explain vocabulary, to teach reading and give feedback. Teacher 2 insists that the only occasion she would use Greek would be to offer individual support to students who have difficulties in understanding an activity. Teachers' beliefs are consistent with Nzwanga (2000) and Polio and Duff (1994), who found that most of the times teachers use the L1 to bridge communication gaps and negotiate meaning.

The results of this study also identified several factors affecting teachers' decisions on how much L1 should be used. These are related with students' abilities such as their L2 language skills and overall academic level rather than teachers' L2 skills and self-confidence when using L2. Teachers in the current study use L1 in order to avoid the alienation of low achievers caused by poor understanding, which may lead to anxious students and limit opportunities for learning. This finding is in agreement with Vasiliou's (2010) findings who argued that when it comes to "controllable" factors the teachers do not allow these to influence their L2 use, whereas factors that are "beyond the direct control of the teachers" do influence their L2 and L1 use (p. 141). Another interesting finding of this study is that none of the three teachers was aware or influenced by the Ministry's policy with regard to L1 use in L2 classes but instead used the amount of L1/L2 they thought was appropriate. This finding contradicts the results of Duff and Polio (1990), who suggested that institutional policies on L2 use (among other factors) influence teachers' use of L1.

In line with other studies (Duff & Polio, 1990; Levine, 2003; Nzwanga, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Copland & Georgiou, 2010; Vasiliou, 2010) the results of this study indicated a wide range of L1 use by the teachers. Students reported that their teachers use more L1 when giving instructions for tests and assignments, communicating informally with the students and disciplining them.

However, teachers' estimations about the amount of L1 appear to greatly differ from what their students reported. In other words teachers' desires about L1 use are clearly in conflict with their classroom realities. All three teachers reported lower amounts of L1 use than their students. The fact that the striking majority of students did not agree on the amount of L1 use by their teacher may suggest that teachers did not accurately report on their classroom practice. This finding is linked to Copland and Neokleous (2011) who argue that if teachers reported accurately on their classroom practices, they would have to admit incompetence, and perhaps challenge their personal philosophies of learning and teaching. A final, yet important, finding of this study is the relationship between the amount of teachers' L1 use and students' age. The results suggest that as students become older, teachers tend to decrease the use of L1 in the classroom. It seems that L1 is more useful at lower levels as it can be used to introduce the major differences between L1 and L2 (also in Cole 1998).

## **6. Implications of the study**

The findings of this study have a number of implications. Firstly, studies such as the present one can raise FL teachers' awareness of how L2 is being used in the classroom and how changes in L1 and L2 use might be implemented. Consciousness-raising among teachers is important because they may not realize the extent to which they use L1 in the EFL classroom. Indeed, teachers' interviews contradicted their students' reports concerning the use of L1 in class. According to Polio and Duff (1994) this is a common finding in studies where retrospection and self-reported data are collected since speakers in social settings are often unaware of their language use in a given situation. It is argued (ibid) that language teachers must first become aware of their practices in order to apply their language knowledge and skills. A simple way for teachers to do so would be, for example, to view a videotape of themselves teaching and then observe their various uses of L1 so as to examine their behaviour in class.

Interestingly, nearly all the participants in the study reported teachers' L1 use to some extent. This fact puts into question the feasibility of the L2 exclusivity policy that exists in Cyprus since the educational policies were contradicted by teachers' classroom practices. Future research could examine whether this phenomenon occurs in other schools in Cyprus. If so, the Ministry might consider revising its policy with regard to L2 use as it does not seem to work in practice. A starting point would be teacher training which could provide teachers with strategies for balanced L1 and L2 use.

No other study conducted in the Cypriot context took into consideration students' views and beliefs. The findings of this study showed that students consider a place for L1 in the EFL classroom, especially when difficulties arise. It could be suggested that decision makers should consider a more thorough examination of students' attitudes and beliefs concerning the use of L1 and L2 in the classroom, and possibly take into consideration their views and needs when the principles regarding EFL pedagogy are decided. Finally, further research could empirically examine whether students learn better when L1 is used.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper aimed at contributing to a descriptive model of L1 and L2 use in the EFL secondary classrooms in Cyprus. More specifically, this study aimed at exploring Cypriot students' and teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning the use of L1 in the EFL classroom at secondary level and the reported classroom practices in two public secondary schools. Data were drawn through student questionnaires and three semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. Similarly to Vasiliou's (2010) study in public primary schools in Cyprus, the results of this study indicate that despite the prevailing principle of L2 exclusivity in Cypriot public secondary classrooms, both the L1 and the L2 appear to have a place in the classroom with L1 serving important functions.

The findings of the current study indicate that a more critical approach to the use of L1 and L2 is needed by educational policy makers in Cyprus. As pointed out by Macaro (2001), the task of educators is to identify effective pedagogical principles that acknowledge and support the classroom as a multilingual environment. This could be achieved by raising teachers' awareness about their students' needs in the EFL classroom and the right balance of L1/L2 use that should be applied in the classroom. The current results underscore the need for concrete future guidelines regarding the use of L1 by the EFL teacher that indicate which kinds of code-switching behaviours facilitate L2 acquisition and which behaviours undermine it (Levine, 2003).

However, further research is needed that would take into account classroom observations apart from interviews and questionnaire that could shed more light on the topic. The number of schools and teachers that were interviewed was limited due to practical constraints, such as time limits and the unwillingness of other teachers to take part in this research study. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to describe all Cypriot students' and teachers' beliefs regarding the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. As suggested above, the findings of this study provide the ground for further research to investigate the use of L1 in EFL classrooms in Cyprus.

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## Appendix A

### Student Questionnaire

Ο σκοπός της έρευνας είναι να κατανοήσουμε καλύτερα τις απόψεις και τις προτιμήσεις των μαθητών σχετικά με την χρήση της Ελληνικής γλώσσας από τον/ την καθηγητή/ρια στο μάθημα των Αγγλικών. Δεν υπάρχουν σωστές και λανθασμένες απαντήσεις. Επίσης, η συμπλήρωση του ερωτηματολογίου είναι ανώνυμη και τα δεδομένα που θα συλλεχθούν θα παραμείνουν εμπιστευτικά.

Ευχαριστούμε πάρα πολύ για την βοήθειά σας

#### **PART I – Tick (✓) what is true for you / ΜΕΡΟΣ Ι – Σημείωσε ✓ σε ότι ισχύει για εσένα**

1. Gender/ Φύλο: ☐ Male/ Αρσενικό ☐ Female/ Θηλυκό
2. Age/ Ηλικία: ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18
3. Grade of Lyceum/ Τάξη Λυκείου: ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> / Α' ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> / Β' ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> / Γ'
4. Periods of English lessons per week/ Περιόδοι Αγγλικών την εβδομάδα  
☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 6

#### **PART II -Tick (✓) / ΜΕΡΟΣ II- Σημείωσε ✓**

General opinion about the use of L2 in the EFL classroom/ Γενική άποψη για την χρήση της ξένης γλώσσας (Αγγλικά) στην τάξη

	Agree/ Συμφωνώ	Disagree / Διαφωνώ	Don't know/ Δεν ξέρω
1. If the teacher uses more English than Greek, the students will be better at communicating in English./ Άν ο/η καθηγητής/ρια χρησιμοποιεί περισσότερο Αγγλικά παρά Ελληνικά, οι μαθητές θα μπορούν να επικοινωνούν καλύτερα στα Αγγλικά .			
2. There are no situations in which Greek should be used in the classroom. / Σε καμιά περίπτωση δεν πρέπει τα Ελληνικά να χρησιμοποιούνται στην τάξη.			
3. Regardless how much English the students choose to use, the teachers should use English at all times in the classroom./ Ανεξάρτητα με το πόσα Αγγλικά χρησιμοποιούν οι μαθητές, οι καθηγητές πρέπει να χρησιμοποιούν Αγγλικά συνέχεια στην τάξη.			
4. Teachers should use Greek if the students do not understand something./ Οι καθηγητές πρέπει να χρησιμοποιούν τα Ελληνικά όταν οι μαθητές δεν καταλαβαίνουν κάτι.			
5. Teachers can use Greek as a last resort, after using English and other means of communication (miming, body language, paraphrasing)/ Οι καθηγητές μπορούν να χρησιμοποιούν τα Ελληνικά σαν τελευταία λύση, αφού			

έχουν δοκιμάσει στα Αγγλικά καθώς και άλλα μέσα επικοινωνίας (μίμηση, γλώσσα του σώματος, παράφραση)			
6. When the teacher uses Greek, the students feel more relaxed and comfortable in class. / Όταν οι καθηγητές χρησιμοποιούν Ελληνικά, οι μαθητές νιώθουν πιο άνετα στην τάξη.			

7. What is your general opinion concerning the use of Greek by the teacher during the English lesson? What are the advantages and the disadvantages? / Ποιά είναι η γενική σου άποψη σχετικά με την χρήση των Ελληνικών από τον/την καθηγητή/ρια στο μάθημα των Αγγλικών; Ποιά είναι τα πλεονεκτήματα και τα μειονεκτήματα;

### PART III -Tick (v)/ ΜΕΡΟΣ III- Σημείωσε v

What should happen.../ Τι πρέπει να συμβαίνει...

	Agree/ Συμφωνώ	Disagree/ Διαφωνώ	Don't know/ Δεν Ξέρω
The teacher should use Greek when /Ο/ Η καθηγητής/ρια πρέπει να χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά όταν			
1. explaining grammar/ εξηγεί γραμματική			
2. defining new vocabulary/ ερμηνεύει καινούριο λεξιλόγιο			
3. explaining pronunciation/ εξηγεί την προφορά λέξεων			
4. teaching or explaining reading and text comprehension/ διδάσκει ή εξηγεί κατανόηση και επεξεργασία κειμένου			
5. teaching or explaining writing/ διδάσκει ή εξηγεί γράψιμο (έκθεσης, παραγράφου, γράμματος κτλ)			
6. interacting informally with the students (joking, socialising etc)/ συναναστρέφεται ανεπίσημα με τους μαθητές (αστεία, κοινωνικοποίηση κτλ)			
7. giving instructions (for activities, tests etc)/ δίνει οδηγίες (για δραστηριότητες, διαγωνίσματα κτλ)			

8. Are there any other instances in which you think that Greek should be used by the teacher during the English lesson? / Σε ποιες άλλες περιπτώσεις πιστεύεις ότι ο καθηγητής/ρια πρέπει να χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά κατά την διάρκεια του μαθήματος των Αγγλικών;



**PART IV - Give an estimate, choosing A, B, C, D, or E from the following/ ΜΕΡΟΣ IV- Δώσε μια εκτίμηση, διαλέγοντας A, B, C, D, ή E από τα ακόλουθα**

**A: 1-20% B: 21-40% C: 41-60% D: 61- 80% E: 81-100%**

What actually happens... / Τι πραγματικά συμβαίνει...

1. My teacher uses Greek to explain grammar about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this. / Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να εξηγήσει γραμματική περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
2. My teacher uses Greek to define new vocabulary about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this./ Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να εξηγήσει καινούριο λεξιλόγιο περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
3. My teacher uses Greek to teach pronunciation about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend working on this. /Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να εξηγή την προφορά λέξεων περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
4. My teacher uses Greek to explain reading and text comprehension about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend working on this. /Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να εξηγήσει επεξεργασία και κατανόηση κειμένου περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
5. My teacher uses Greek to teach writing about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this. /Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να διδάξει γραφή κειμένου περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
6. My teacher uses Greek to communicate with the students informally (jokes, socialising etc) about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend on these. /Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά όταν συναναστρέφεται ανεπίσημα με τους μαθητές (αστεία, κοινωνικοποίηση κτλ) περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
7. My teacher uses Greek to give us instructions for tests, quizzes and other assignments about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing these./ Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να δώσει οδηγίες για διαγωνίσματα, κουίζ και άλλες εργασίες περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνουμε σε αυτό.
8. My teacher uses Greek to discipline the students about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time she/he spends on this. /Ο/Η καθηγητής/ρια μου χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικά για να πειθαρχήσει τους μαθητές περίπου \_\_\_\_\_ % του χρόνου που αφιερώνει σε αυτό.

**Thank you very much!**

## Appendix B

### Questions Used in Teacher Interviews

#### Teacher Background

1. *Please tell me about your teaching experience. How long have you been teaching English?*
2. *How do you feel about your proficiency in spoken English?*
3. *Do you feel as comfortable speaking English as you do when you speak Greek?*
4. *Do you use the two languages (English and Greek) for different purposes?*

#### Perception of students' ability

5. *What do you think about your students' ability in English?*
6. *When you speak English, how well do you think your students understand?*

#### Philosophy of Teaching

7. *What is your opinion concerning the use of English and Greek in the foreign language classroom? How much of English and Greek should be used by the teacher?*

#### Ministry Policy

8. *What guidelines or requirements has the school/ the ministry given you on how to teach English?*
9. *Is there a policy concerning the use of Greek in the English language learning classroom?*
10. *Have you taken any training by the ministry regarding the use of L1 and L2 in the EFL classroom?*

#### Teachers' practices/ opinion

11. *What is your general opinion concerning the use of Greek by the teacher during the English lesson? What are the advantages and the disadvantages?*
12. *In which of the following instances do you believe that the use of Greek by the teacher is essential?*
  - a. Teaching/ explaining grammar \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Defining new vocabulary \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Teaching/ explaining pronunciation \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Teaching/ explaining reading and text comprehension \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Teaching/ explaining writing \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Disciplining the students \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Interacting informally with the students (joking, socialising etc) \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Organising classroom activities \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Giving feedback \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Helping students understand \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Explaining instructions/ exercises in tests \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. Group work/ Pair work \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which (of the following) factors influence your use of Greek in class?

- a. Students' behaviour \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Your self-confidence when using the TL \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Students' skills in the TL \_\_\_\_\_
- d. How tired you are on a given day \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The year group you are teaching \_\_\_\_\_
- f. The type of the activity \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Ministry policy \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Review of research results in the area of TEFL \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Students who ask the teachers to use their L1 \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Students who tell you they don't understand \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Time constraints \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please give an estimate, choosing A, B, C, D, or E from the following

A: 0-20% B: 21-40% C: 41-60% D: 61- 80% E: 81-100%

- 
- 9. I use Greek to explain grammar about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this.
  - 10. I use Greek to define new vocabulary about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this.
  - 11. I use Greek to teach pronunciation about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend working on this.
  - 12. I use Greek to explain reading and text comprehension about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend working on this.
  - 13. I use Greek to teach writing about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing or working on this.
  - 14. I use Greek to communicate with the students informally (jokes, socialising etc) about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend on these.
  - 15. I use Greek to give instructions for tests, quizzes and other assignments about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time we spend discussing these.
  - 16. I use Greek to discipline the students about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time I spend on this.

## Appendix C

Table 4. Correlation between reported amount of L1 use and students' age

			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
For all Teachers		Age	My teacher uses L1 to explain grammar	My teacher uses L1 to define new vocabulary	My teacher uses L1 to teach pronunciation	My teacher uses L1 to explain reading comprehension	My teacher uses L1 to teach writing	My teacher uses L1 to communicate with the Ss informally	My teacher uses L1 to give instructions for tests etc.	My teacher uses L1 to discipline the Ss
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.128	-.296**	-.268**	-.300**	-.206*	-.038	-.180	-.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.213	.004	.009	.003	.045	.710	.078	.089
	N	96	96	95	95	94	95	96	96	96
My teacher uses L1 to explain grammar	Pearson Correlation	-.128	1	.583**	.454**	.422**	.541**	.367**	.450**	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.213		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	96	96	95	95	94	95	96	96	96
My teacher uses L1 to define new vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	-.296**	.583**	1	.533**	.591**	.521**	.359**	.659**	.300**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003
	N	95	95	95	95	93	95	95	95	95
My teacher uses L1 to teach pronunciation	Pearson Correlation	-.268**	.454**	.533**	1	.580**	.559**	.158	.433**	.206*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000	.000		.000	.000	.126	.000	.045

	N	95	95	95	95	93	95	95	95	95
My teacher uses L1 to explain reading and text comprehension	Pearson Correlation	-.300**	.422**	.591**	.580**	1	.713**	.242*	.632**	.380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.000	.000		.000	.019	.000	.000
	N	94	94	93	93	94	93	94	94	94
My teacher uses L1 to teach writing	Pearson Correlation	-.206*	.541**	.521**	.559**	.713**	1	.356**	.520**	.296**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.004
	N	95	95	95	95	93	95	95	95	95
My teacher uses L1 to communicate with the Ss informally	Pearson Correlation	-.038	.367**	.359**	.158	.242*	.356**	1	.315**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	.000	.000	.126	.019	.000		.002	.000
	N	96	96	95	95	94	95	96	96	96
My teacher uses L1 to give instructions for tests etc.	Pearson Correlation	-.180	.450**	.659**	.433**	.632**	.520**	.315**	1	.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002		.000
	N	96	96	95	95	94	95	96	96	96
My teacher uses L1 to discipline the Ss	Pearson Correlation	-.175	.383**	.300**	.206*	.380**	.296**	.498**	.442**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	.000	.003	.045	.000	.004	.000	.000	
	N	96	96	95	95	94	95	96	96	96

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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## Writers' realization of self in three types of text

Hsu HSIAO-LING

*The present study investigates how Chinese writers apply linguistic elements to formulate their position and represent their intended meaning, thus building their identity/authorship on the use of personal pronoun across three types of articles: argumentative, descriptive, and narrative biography. Sixty-eight participants were recruited and they were second year college students at intermediate proficiency level. The students' written compositions were put into the same text file and processed with the concordance AntConc 3.2.1. A semi-structured interview and questionnaire were adopted for more general and in-depth insights on students' use of personal pronoun. From the analysis, students' autobiographical and discursal selves are two clear features that can be found through the examination of the personal pronoun, while the self as author is mainly realized in order to conform to social norms. The different uses of the personal pronoun across three texts are partly because of the authors' first language, their English language proficiency, and perception toward the target language (English). It is thus suggested that Chinese texts could be further examined on how Chinese student writers transform specific linguistic element into another language, i.e., English.*

**Key words:** writer identity, Critical Discourse Analysis, personal pronoun

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### 1. Introduction—Theoretical background—Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Language is an essential part of social life, and almost every form of interaction depends on it. Discourse is not the only thing that should be examined when we are in a world with multiple semiotics, but instead we should examine the elements that are closely interconnected with others, such as the representations that occur in interviews or news reports. In order to explore the dynamic of discourse, it is the analysis approach that plays an important role in interpretation. For instance, Fairclough (2003) reports that "[r]ather, [discourse analysis] is one analytical strategy amongst many, and it often makes sense to use discourse analysis in conjunction with other forms of analysis..." (p. 2). In other words, discourse analysis is a powerful approach, especially when it is connected with the approach analysis, and CDA is one option.



Every theory originates from practical research goals, CDA being no exception (Weiss & Wodak, 2007). CDA originated from contemporary social science, which has been influenced greatly by social constructivism in which human interactions are socially situated. Fairclough's (2003) views of social constructivism claim that interpretations from this school are prone to be idealist instead of realist. As he points out, "a realist would argue that although aspects of the social world such as social institutions are ultimately socially constructed, once constructed they are realities which affect and limit the textual (or discursive) construction of the social." (p. 8) Advocators from contemporary social science may interpret the world that solely depends on text in their approach; however, the interpretation of the world may or may not change the real world constructions depending on several contextual factors.

Considering CDA's approach in relating the context, formation of ideas and realistic view of world, CDA researchers often investigate the real world interaction both in written or spoken discourses (e.g. Richardson, 2007). When viewing spoken discourse, discourse is more than a product for researcher's interpretation; it is an interactive process between the text and researchers (including the researchers' aim of research). Take the example from Fairclough (2003), which is a dialogue between a customer and bartender.

1. Customer: Pint of Guinness, please
  2. Bartender: How old are you?
  3. Customer: Twenty-two.
  4. Bartender: OK, coming up.
- (Examples adopted from Fairclough, 2003, p. 10)

This is a context of alcoholic drink ordering. The customer realizes there is an age constraint and s/he does not take this as a personal issue when s/he makes the ordering. After the bartender got the information, s/he immediately responds toward the customer's request. This dialogue requires mutual construction of meaning from both parties; otherwise, this interaction may fail without considering the context. This is also the same in written discourse interpretation. While interpreting or analyzing texts, it is difficult to obtain precise or objective interpretations without considering contexts. In addition to what is written in the text, what is to be assumed is also a determining factor in the interpretation of the text, that is, the context. According to Fairclough (2003), interpretation is a complex process. The first influential factor of interpretation is the understanding of the text. This suggests the comprehensible level of words and meaning constructions. The second factor is researcher's/ interlocutor's judgment and evaluation, such as whether the statement is true or false or whether the purposes are made explicit or implicit. The last factor relates to the interpretation of underlying purposes. By employment of these three factors, the role of interpreter is to be revealed. When the text is transparent, interpreter does not place their personal view on the interpretation.

On the contrary, it is possible to assume that when interpreter does not involve in the interpretation, suggesting "objectivity". Fairclough points out that there is no such a thing as "objective". For example, there is no single way to approach an incidence and when we approach the incidence we are selective depending on our question in mind. In other words, the objective interpretation is not a central issue in analysing, since we already possess our selective approach and question in mind. The present study adopts the CDA to approach text—writers' representation in their writing. Weiss and Wodak (2007) suggest that this is one of the most essential purposes for CDA—"demystify' discourses by deciphering ideology." (p. 14) Fairclough (2001) has developed a three dimensional framework for the

interpretation between discourse and the contexts: analysis of language texts, analysis of discourse patterns, and analysis of discursive events. The first dimension reveals the analysis of words level while the second dimension builds the connection between words level and the context (power). The last dimension is to understand a broader context, such as societal currents.

### **1.1. The realization of writers' identity**

Reading and writing is a social and cultural process (Dijk, 1993), in which writers apply linguistic elements to formulate their position and represent their intended meaning, thus building their identity/authorship. Similarly, Fernsten (2008) supports that "people position themselves and are positioned by and construct and are constructed by the linguistic and ideological choices they make." (p. 45). Therefore, from the observation of writers' written works, the authors' selves may be observed.

When attempts are made to investigate a writer's identity, it is found that the self that is revealed is not static, but fluid, and depends on writer's choice of their intended meaning (Fernsten, 2008), the situated classroom context (Dijk, 1993) and persuasive writing skills (e.g., Harwood, 2005a; Harwood, 2005b; Harwood, 2005c). Dascal (2007) further explains that our personal identities are subject to constant changes due to the adoption of new elements in life and the abandoning of old ones, and proposes an example of writer's "cultural identity". If we aim to delineate this term, then definitions of each of the sub-categories of identity are necessary. However, the inclusion of all concepts of cultural identity may cause this term to become comprehensible or cause some individuals (such as participants in the present data) to be excluded from what is shared by most of the participants within one culture.

Fernsten (2008) investigates a case study of Mandy, a student who, although familiar with the format of academic writing, refused to follow the "format", and instead applied her own style when carrying out written assignments. She claimed that when she follows the "uniform style" (academic format), she feels that the resulting work is less her own. The writers' language background also influences their choices, and thus their identities. Writers with a "deficient self" who believe they are "bad writers" in their native language tend to be convinced that they will also perform badly in their L2 writing. (Fernstena & Redab, 2011).

In addition to writers' choice, the immediate context also affects writers' identity. Danzak (2011) investigated the influence of text type and writers' identities. Through the analysis of participants' reflective journals, questionnaires, and two kinds of written works (narrative and expository) in English, it has been found that the text types used in the classroom setting influence writers' representation and formation of identity. In other words, representations of identity change in response to the type of text used. Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2007), for example, believe that the use of narrative biography provides participants with the opportunities to be self-representative, based on narrative theory. Another immediate context is the bilingual one, in which two languages have different statuses in the classroom. When participants' native language (e.g. Spanish) is seen as being inferior to the target language (e.g. English), they tend to be facing difficulties in the process of writing. The differences in expressive channel used also affect the formation of a writer's identity.

In the previous paragraph, it should be evident that one's identity is subject to changes and that one's language background and self-perception are two factors that impose great

pressure before the writing process. Consequently, various models and strategies have been proposed to help writers in their formation of identity. Lea and Street (2006) proposed three models: the study skills model, the academic socialization model, and the academic literacy model. In particular, they emphasized the third model, showing that the other two mainly put the focus on the surface level of language only, i.e., strategies, while the last model focused on the relationships among power, authority, meaning making, and identity. Furthermore, Fernstena and Redab (2011) and Cameron, Nairn, and Higgins (2009) proposed a series of steps that may facilitate writers' building of their self-awareness as competent writers. One conclusion could be drawn from these studies. Although the participants in these studies were highly proficient in their L2 (English), they still struggled in their academic writing, either because of their self-imposition or language background. It is thus again evident that more support is needed for L2 writers.

We realize that writers' identity is subject to changes under various factors, as noted above, and that the importance of writers' identity cannot be ignored. However, how to realize or operationalize their identity still remains unclear. The literature review presented above suggests that localization of specific linguistic elements, such as personal pronoun, may be one possible approach to this investigation. There are many possible sources for the representation of these elements, such as journal writing, questionnaires, written works, or interviews. Clark and Ivanič (1997) propose a model for analyzing a writer's identity, in which identity can be operationalized into three categories for further analysis, and it should be noted that these three aspects are not mutually exclusive, and that they are all under the domain of the subject-position/ socially available context. The bigger domain (the outer circle) that includes three levels of analysis is abstract in nature. This outer circle may be compared to the entire social context, and it may also be a smaller context, like a single institution or particular act of writing. There are various conventions embedded in the socially situated contexts due to writers' use of linguistic elements and the social contexts they exist within. The first sub-category is the *autobiographical self*, which is strongly affected by writers' life history. Everyone is different, and when they write their personal life story, they will not give the same questions the same answers, as would be expected in tests of grammatical knowledge.

The underlying rationale of the *discoursal self* is that "writing not only conveys a message about content but also conveys a message about writer" (Clark & Ivanič, 1997: 142). Therefore, what a writer composes consciously or subconsciously in their writing is also a construct of writer's identity. When writers present themselves, they construct their identities in their situated context or immediate social context through the use of their selected discourse. These contexts may cause conflicting associations in a writer's identity, thus resulting in complex and multiple identities. Therefore, it is also possible that writers may create multiple identities within a single context.

The third category is the *self as author*, which is what most people think when they hear of a writer's identity. This is when a writer represents their thoughts in their writing, thus expressing their own voice. This is also the place where authorial identity comes about. Two components are proposed in this third sub-category 1) what an author feels like expressing in their writing, and 2) to what extent they establish their authorial presence. The second component indicates more of the manipulation of the word level from a writer's stance, and more of the possibility of varied manipulation from text to text. Various linguistic elements could be manipulated to represent a writer's identity; when examining academic texts, it is found that the most obvious indication of authorial presence is the use of personal pronoun "I".

From the review of the related theories presented above, it can be seen that writers in different social contexts manipulate discourse to create their identities based on their own interpretations of the world. The trace of a writer's identity on the linguistic level is mostly through the investigation of pronouns. Hyland (2000, 2002) asserts that the building of the self in academic writing is particularly important, because it is the researcher's representation of their own ideas. Hyland (2002) further cautions on the use of "I", noting that many writing manuals stress that writer should avoid the use of "I" in any kind of academic writing. However, his investigation shows that this is a false belief, and that the use of "I" is actually a judgment that represents the acceptance of the self (Hyland, 2000).

The investigation of "I" in academic writing seems to attract much more attention in corpus studies, since these researchers seem to assume an underlying connection between the use of personal pronouns and presence of an authorial identity. However, the use of "I" varies for a number of reasons, such as cross-disciplinary issues, writer's L1, and general cultural issues, as previously mentioned. Harwood (2005a, 2005b, 2005c) investigated the complex use of inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns in academic writing, making a comparison across disciplines. McCrostie (2008) investigated the visibility of Japanese writers' self-realization in argumentative essays through the examination of the personal pronoun "I". He found that Japanese writers avoided the use of this in their English writings, as in their Japanese articles. It was thus speculated that the rare use of the personal pronouns is due to L1 influence, based on interviews with the participants. In addition to the L1 influence, cultural issues are another factor that may influence the use of the personal pronouns. According to Cobb (2003) and Petch-Tyson (1998), there were more studies on second language learners' use of "I" than that of English native speakers. Therefore, McCrostie attributed the decreased use of the personal pronouns to participants' L1 (Japanese).

However, language and culture are inseparable. Breivega, Dahl, and Fløttum (2002) compared academic writing across three fields and three languages, and found that the "authorial presence signaled by the use of first person pronouns represented an important contribution to the determination of cultural identity in academic discourse" (p. 226). The connection between personal pronouns and writer's identity is subject to the influence of writer's language background, the immediate context, and writer's own manipulation of discourse. Writer's identity can be realized through the use of personal pronouns. However, there have been no studies, to the best of myr knowledge, investigating writer's realization of the self through the use of "I" across different texts. My research questions are as follows:

1. How do writers represent themselves in three types of articles (argumentative, descriptive, and narrative biography articles) through the adoption of "I"?
2. How do writers view the use of personal pronoun ("I") in three types of text (argumentative, descriptive, and narrative biography articles) in English compositions?

## 2. Methodology

Participants (sixty-eight) were second year college students who were at their intermediate level. Their language proficiency was defined by the college entrance exam (prepared by the Taiwan Ministry of Education). This is a required intermediate English writing course for the second year college students of a private university. The purpose of the study is not revealed to the students; they were acknowledged that this was a regular English writing class and needed to accomplish three writing assignments. At the beginning of the semester, students were acknowledged with the assignments which were the data collected in the present

study. In order to investigate participants' identity across three types of articles, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative biography were selected and generated based on the previously reviewed literature. To avoid the possible various topic factors influencing the analysis the use of "I", participants were given a range of topics for selection instead of choosing any topic at their own will. The topics for argumentative essay were as follow: "Death penalty for children", "Drug abuse", or "Slavery". The topic for descriptive essay was "My campus social life". The topic for narrative biography is participants' personal story. Because these assignments were due on different dates throughout the year, some students did not fulfill all assignments. For those who did not complete all three assignments, their works were not included into data collection. The total word count was 12,304, 14,504, and 12,389 for descriptive, argumentative and narrative articles respectively.

Participants' written works first underwent a series of "clear up". Their name, student ID, or other unnecessary information that was not related to the main composition were eliminated from the collected data. Then, the students' written compositions were put into the same text file, processed with the concordance AntConc 3.2.1 and the results were compared with the learner corpora generated from Petch-Tyson (1998). This analysis responds to our first research question. As for the analysis of students' perspective on the use of "I", a semi-structured interview and questionnaire were adopted for more general and in-depth insights. The questionnaire was a combination of students' background information on English. As for the semi-structured interview the questions were: "What do you think of the use of "I" in English composition? And how about it in Chinese?", "Do you find any similarity or difference in the use of "I" when you write different topics?", "Under what circumstance will you use "I" in English composition?", and "Will you avoid the use of "I" in English composition? Why or why not?". The above questions were the main four questions for all participants to respond; however, when the researcher finds the responses intriguing, more questions would be further explored. This interview was used in response to the second research question. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed for repetitive comments. The interview was conducted in Chinese, since it was participants' native language and their thought could be more clearly expressed this way.

### 3. Results and discussion

When these texts are put into the program, the frequency count of "I" is as expected that narrative biography text type has rather higher frequency among the three text types. The overall frequency count can be found in Table 1 below. The findings echo Danzak's (2011) remarks that different text types influence writer's representation of themselves. The frequency count of personal pronoun differs according to text types. Further, it is evident that narrative biography is the kind of genre that writers are more prone to self-mention than other types of text; thus, it is not surprising to find that the frequency of "I" is rather high among the three text types. This finding also echoes Mendelowitz and Ferreira's (2007) suggestion that self-representation is most evident in narrative biography in their study, since this is the type of article that authors use to talk about themselves. Although narrative biography does not rank first among the three texts, it may be due to the title differences that make descriptive essay rank the highest among the three text types. This will be discussed further in the following sections.

According to Clark and Ivanič's (1997) model, there are three categories of writer's self to be discussed. Writer's autobiography self is evident in all three text types especially for narrative biography, which ranks the second among the frequency use of "I" in three text types. Writers mention their own experiences or life stories to describe what they have

proposed. In their narrative biography, they propose a series of facts and related stories to support who they are as people in the world. To be more specific, they may state clearly “I am a social person” and they will give evidence of how they are as sociable people by demonstrating their social lives with friends. By expressing these instances, authors express themselves and use plenty of “autobiographical self” in their written works.

<i>Text types</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Argumentative	114
Descriptive	1030
Narrative biography	594
<i>Total</i>	<i>1738</i>

*Table 1. Frequency of three text types.*

Furthermore, as in narrative biography, students perform the same writing skill to propose their viewpoints in the argumentative essay. In response to the title of “slavery”, some students mention their experience of losing freedom and how terrible it may be to live in horror. It is when authors propose their own experience or feeling that they tend to use more of “I” in the explanation part. These propositions of personal experience in argumentative articles not only indicate the realization of autobiography self, but also echoes the Chinese style of writing that they will reduce the use of “I” in their composition when they argue for their stance. Because these writers only use “I” in the specific section, it is reasonable to conclude that the frequency of “I” ranks the lowest in argumentative essay.

It may be surprising to find that descriptive essay ranks the highest frequency among three types of text; however, as previously mentioned, the title for the descriptive article is “My Campus Social Life” which is descriptive in nature and the use of “I” follows what have been found in the other two types of text. Authors use personal pronoun “I” when they express their own idea and when they refer to themselves as an individual in the real world. For example, “Because I like friends, I participate in some clubs.” The second “I” in this sentence refers to writer in the real world; this type of “I” is found to account for about 36% of all use of “I” in the descriptive articles, thus suggesting that the high frequency of the use of “I” does not sum up to more of autobiography and discursal self representation. Rather, the use of “I” appears more often when writers refer to their feelings and to their real-world identity.

As for the last category, self as author, it refers to writer’s manipulation of words and thus yield writer’s image or the feel as a writer. Generally speaking, these student writers create a positive image for themselves in all three types of essay. For narrative biography and descriptive essay, these writers seem to all possess a wonderful family (when they describe their families) and be satisfied with their social life (in the description of their social lives). For argumentative essay, these student writers are more likely to conform to the majority view of the public on the selected topics. For instance, students propose their stance against “Is money an effective motivator at work?” and suggest their ideas. In fact, there is no definite answer to this issue; about half of the students give a moral reason for their supporting evidence.

The above is the description of how these student writers perform in three texts and the following describes how writers perceive the use of personal pronoun. When these students were asked how they use personal pronoun “I” in their composition, they gave a rather



general reason: they think that this was the fastest way to refer to themselves and express what they wanted to say. This response echoes what these student writers did in their essay: they expressed their thoughts and referred back to themselves, the representation of autobiography self and discursal self. However, it is found that the manipulation of the word level reflecting their “feel” of the written works is less controlled possibly due to their language proficiency. The lack of language proficiency can partly be supported by the result of data processing; these student writers unanimously used the same patterns to express their thoughts, such as “I think” or “I think that”, the frequency of which ranks the highest among all text types. Because of convenience or limited language proficiency, these students express that they only know “I» to refer to their thoughts and that they do not know appropriate replacement for the use of “I” in their English composition.

Furthermore, during the semi-interview, these students also realize that too many uses of “I” will influence their “feel” of their written work. The students unanimously responded that they do not like to use “我” (“I”) in their Chinese compositions. Their proposed reasons were that they did not want to sound subjective; their Chinese teachers told them that when writing a composition, it was important to be objective; otherwise the opinions within the written work will become dubious. In addition to this, they further stated that in order to maintain objectivity, they struck their best to argue for both sides when writing the argumentative essay. However, this might be a big issue when they composed in English, since it was essential for writers to express their stance at the very beginning of the writing in English composition. One translated response is as follows:

#### *Amy’s responses*

As long as I remember, my teacher (Chinese teacher in senior high school) told us to be balanced in our writing when we argue for something. It is not good to criticize any party. Even though I want to criticize something, I have to say it politely or keep it as low profile. (May 6, 2012)

This information either came from their Chinese or English composition teachers’ lectures. Although their teachers taught them to avoid the use of personal pronoun in their composition, they did not try to use any replacement for it and found it appropriate to overuse “I” since it was the essay that describes them. As McCrostie (2008) suggested as a possible reason, the Japanese students in his study avoided using “I” in the assigned texts because of the influence from their L1. From the students’ response and results of the present study, one possible reason influencing the use of personal pronoun might result from students’ L1 (i.e. Chinese).

The overall frequency of the use of “I” was thus expected to be low because of the influence from the participants’ first language. The most frequent use of “I” was in the narrative autobiography and descriptive essays, since the students needed to refer to themselves most often in these texts, and no replacements for “I” could be found, due to their low English proficiency levels. Indeed, both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews confirmed that the students were reluctant to use the personal pronoun because of their L1, and based on the advice of former teachers.

In addition to the differences in the type or title of the essays, the language “power” also played a role in the students’ selection of language. Due to the influence of world Englishes (arising from the globalization of English) and the power related to English itself, students



put more stress on English if compared to Chinese. Based on the questionnaire and interview, the students tended to associate English with a more formal occasion, and the ability to use English with better social and economic status. The inequality between the two languages is possibly explained by unequal power relation between them, and according to CDA, the realization of discourse and the context power around writers is thus to be built.

Although text type might be one of the reasons why these authors employed “I” differently in their writing, it was how they referred to themselves in the three text types that was one of the key focuses of the present investigation. The relatively rare use of “I” in the argumentative essays, as previously noted, was used to refer to authors themselves and to express their thoughts. When they used “I” in their argumentative essays, the use of “I think” ranked first among the two- and three-chunk collocations. This result shows a clear contrast to Petch-Tyson’s (1998) findings on the use of “I think”. In the present study, “I think” was mostly placed at the beginning of the sentence to express author’s thoughts, while the learners in Petch-Tyson’s (1998) study placed this chunk at the end of the sentence to create a conversational tone. The initial position found in the present study echoes McCrostie’s (2008) Japanese students’ writing. Although this finding may simply be attributed to differences between native and non-native speakers, Hyland (2001), in his investigation of academic prose in the social sciences, found that about 45% of the uses of “I think” occurred in the sentence initial position, and he stated that this position highlights the significance of the proposed idea. Therefore, the function of “I think” can be interpreted as writer’s statement of thoughts instead of simply the differences between native and non-native speakers.

The found results in Hyland’s study were based on academic research studies that could not be directly applied to the proeses of the present data; however, a direct comparison between academic research studies and other types of proeses was difficult, and the functions of “I think” in writing was also varied, such as the organization of one’s argument, guidance for readers, or comparison between different views (McCrostie, 2008). These functions can be applied to general proeses. As with the students in McCrostie (2008), the students in the present study mostly adopted “I think” to help in the organization of their arguments, to strengthen or restate their positions. Examples collected from the present corpus are shown in Table 2.

1. are poor and not fashion.	<b>I think</b> that fashion are not equal to
2. You must keep in mind.	<b>I think</b> that prostitution will have some
3. of thinking. Nowadays,	<b>I think</b> that everyone wants to different with
4. sucks or not fashion. Besides,	<b>I think</b> that fashion has nothing with identity
5. clothes he wants to wear,	<b>I think</b> that just have something with his
6. cheap clothes. All in all,	<b>I think</b> that following is not a bad
7. some styles of ourselves	<b>I think</b> that is the real fashion
8. give readers much surprise.	<b>I think</b> that prostitution should be legalized
9. to the author’s argument.	<b>I think</b> that a movie cannot be compared
10. and set for death penalty.	<b>I think</b> that it is a correct decision, although

Table 2. Concordance of I think in the argumentative essays

<i>Descriptive essay</i>		
1.	I was admitted to the college,	<b>I think</b> it as a great chance to make friends
2.	ignore my social life, but	<b>I think</b> it is my life. I am used to live
3.	as well as my president.	<b>I think</b> one day I can perform in front of
4.	my best friends in my life.	<b>I think</b> my college life is great, and I like
5.	Now, my friends are few,	<b>I think</b> I am wrong. When class end, I will
6.	Several months later,	<b>I think</b> the girl didn't notice me. I have
<i>Narrative autobiography essay</i>		
7.	It was not boring.	<b>I think</b> previously. For this reason,
8.	Because of the features,	<b>I think</b> this department is the place of my
9.	matter what decision I make,	<b>I think</b> I will be still live in XXX
10.	I study in the XX University.	<b>I think</b> that my characteristic is my height
11.	I have a little nervous. But,	<b>I think</b> I can do it. Just like a doctor
12.	it opened and I walk in. So far,	<b>I think</b> my life is enriched. My name is

Table 3. Concordance of I think in descriptive and narrative autobiography essays

The frequent use of “I think” in the argumentative essays can also be observed in the two other types of text, narrative autobiography and descriptive essay. However, “I think” was not used to argue in favor of the students’ ideas or their points of view, but instead just to present their opinions. Examples of this can be seen in Table 3.

Students’ general perceptions toward English and Chinese conform to those commonly expressed by the general public in Taiwan. To be more specific, based on the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, the students felt that with better English proficiency they might be able to get better pay or a better job, and English was essential to communicate with others, either in business or daily life. Furthermore, most of the students used “I” or “I think” to state their positions, and this was also confirmed in the interviews. However, there seems to be a contradiction between students’ claims to objectivity and their use of the personal pronoun. For example, although students claimed that they tended to avoid the use of “I” to show their objectivity in the argumentative essays, they at the same time overused “I” to state their positions in all three types of texts. In response to this, the students said that when they wrote Chinese compositions, they found it awkward to use “我” (“I”) throughout their Chinese composition, and that they would also get a lower grade for this. For example, they stated that if they overused “我” in their written works, they would get responses like “the overall tone of your written piece seems to be subjective and only your ideas are included in the text, how about the ideas of the general public?” or “Your written piece seems to include mainly your point of view. Your single point of view makes your works less persuasive” (researcher’s translation). Therefore, the students in the present study claimed that they avoided the use of the Chinese personal pronoun in Chinese compositions, but yet failed to apply this rule in their English writing.

On the contrary, they stated that in English texts they felt it was appropriate to use personal pronoun to refer to their opinions, and thus that they did not seem to consider personal pronoun as the equivalent to the Chinese “我” (“I”). Therefore, it may be assumed that the connotations of using “我” in Chinese did not transfer to the English use of personal pronoun.

## 4. Conclusion

Although the examination of the personal pronoun and the realization of a writer's identity cannot be viewed as having a casual or definite relationship, it provides a window for researchers to evaluate how authors reveal themselves in their writing, and how they employ these linguistic elements. From the analysis of students' three types of texts carried out in this work, students' autobiographical and discursal selves are two clear features that can be found through the use of the personal pronoun, while the self as author is mainly realized in order to conform to social norms. The different uses of personal pronoun across three texts are not only due to the different genres, but also to authors' first language and their English language proficiency.

From the results, despite the influence from L1 and English proficiency limitation, participants in the present study are aware of the connection between personal pronoun and self-representations. While they may overuse personal pronouns in some contexts, they employ this linguistic element to stress one's ideas. In such circumstances, instructions may be provided to enhance their appropriate use of personal pronouns in regular writing classes. In my observation, it seems that this connection is seldom a topic in regular writing classes even for advanced writing lessons. This research may be further extended to explore the possible influence from students' L1. For example, Chinese texts could be examined in future work to gain more information on how Chinese student writers transform specific linguistic element into another language, i.e., English. Furthermore, the data collected in the present study was from a hard science department. More works could be collected from various departments in order to extend our understanding of the related issue.

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## Teachers' different types of feedback on Iranian EFL learners' speaking errors and their impact on the students' uptake of the correct forms

Mohammad RAHIMI and Arezoo SOBHANI

*The present study mainly aimed at investigating the relationship between types and distribution of corrective feedback and their effect on learners' uptake in Iranian adult EFL classrooms. The framework of this study has been adopted from Lyster and Ranata's (1997) analytic model. The database consisted of 32 hours of recorded classroom interaction between 3 teachers and 79 adult EFL learners. The interactions were audiotaped and transcribed, and then coded according to Lyster and Ranata's (1997) model. The study also investigated whether there is any relationship between the type of feedback provided by the teachers and the learners' proficiency level, and whether the feedback types differ with respect to the error types. The data were subjected to a Chi-square test. The results showed recast as the most frequent error feedback type given to learners in all proficiency levels—elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The feedback techniques that mostly led to uptake were elicitation and request for clarification, mainly leading to self-repair. Accounts for the differences in the results as well as pedagogical implications are provided.*

**Key words:** corrective feedback, error correction, recasts, speaking, uptake

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### 1. Introduction

Language learners have access to two types of input, namely, positive and negative evidence (Gass, 1997). The former refers to the teacher's instruction that makes the learner informed of what is acceptable in L2; the latter—negative evidence—refers to the teacher's provision of corrective feedback (CF) on the erroneous language produced by the learner. The significant role of CF in L2 development has been highly emphasized in SLA studies (Gass, 1997; Long, 2007). Based on Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1983), corrective feedback and learner uptake can serve as a source of interactional modification, which can lead to language development. According to Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, production of modified output (as a result of extensive opportunities for output and supplying of useful

and consistent feedback from teachers and peers) is necessary for learners' language acquisition.

Nonetheless, according to Ellis (2009), there are a number of important issues related to CF that require deeper scrutiny. Primarily, there is a need for more studies on language features that can most benefit from form-focused instruction and CF (see Doughty & Williams 1998; Ellis 2001; Lightbown & Spada 1990; Long & Robinson 1998; Norris & Ortega 2000; Spada 1997). Additionally, feedback type and the context (EFL) in which CF is provided need further investigation. Discussions target the efficacy of feedback (Ellis, 2006; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), the effectiveness of different feedback types (Long, 2006; Russell and Spada, 2006) the students' proficiency level (Kennedy, 2010; Ahangari and Amirzadeh, 2011), as well as the language learning context (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008). The present study aims at investigating three important issues in CF, i.e. proficiency level, language features, and the language learning context.

## 2. Literature review

From the pedagogical perspective, language teachers use a wide range of CF to help learners identify their non-target like utterances in second/foreign language. Oral feedback is a particular type of CF that is employed by teachers and probed by researchers more and more. The rationale behind the evident growth in oral corrective feedback can be seen in what Ellis (2010) mentions with respect to oral CF studies, that there has been a progression from predominantly descriptive studies aimed at developing taxonomies of the CF strategies (e.g., Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977) to experimental studies that investigate the effects of different types of CF strategies on second language (L2) development (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007).

Theoretical arguments have been advanced for CF, too. Ellis (2010) argues, "...CF is of both theoretical relevance to SLA researchers and of practical concern to language teachers" (p. 335). A further theoretical reason for researching CF is that it can provide positive and negative evidence, increase the saliency of target forms, and promote interaction. In practice, although there is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of oral CF for helping L2 learners improve the accuracy of their speaking (See Lyster and Ranata, 1997; Mackey, Gass and MacDonough 2000; Lochtmann, 2002; Sheen, 2004, 2006; Rydahl, 2005; Russell and Spada, 2006; Mackey and Goo, 2007; Kennedy, 2010; Lyster and Saito, 2010; Li, 2010), the research on CF is not yet conclusive with regard to the extent to which the negotiation of form may enhance L2 learning in classroom settings under appropriate circumstances (see Lyster, 1998a; Lyster and Ranata, 1997).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) investigated specific patterns of corrective feedback and its relationship to error types and immediate learner repair. The study revealed that teachers tended to recast grammatical and phonological errors and to negotiate lexical errors. Moreover, phonological repairs tended to follow recasts, whereas grammatical and lexical repairs tended to follow the negotiation of form. Finally, results of their study supported that the negotiation of form constitutes a considerable account of feedback moves used by teachers; however, as the authors acknowledge, still more investigation is needed to determine the impact of negotiation of form on the development of target language accuracy.

Mackey, Gass, and MacDonough (2000) probed the way learners perceive interactional feedback. Their results revealed that learners were relatively accurate in their perceptions



about lexical, semantic, and phonological feedback. However, they believe future research is needed to investigate why grammatical feedback can rarely be obtained through negotiated interaction. They suggest some other potential factors such as individual differences in meta-linguistic abilities, working memory, and sensitivity to morphosyntax might have affected learners' perception of grammatical feedback.

Lochtman (2002) investigated the role of different types of oral corrective feedback in analytic foreign language teaching/FLT. The results revealed that the distribution of the different types of corrective feedback within analytic FLT varies according to different classroom activities. He further found that by shifting the focus to meaning (text comprehension), the number of recasts is significantly higher. He concluded that in analytic FLT both recast and explicit correction are effective but might serve different purposes. The findings revealed that the amount of correct uptake was the same for both strategies.

Sheen (2004) reported similarities and differences in teachers' corrective feedback and learners' uptake across four instructional settings. The variety of teachers' CF and learners' uptake were examined, and communicative classroom contexts were investigated with respect to variables such as age, proficiency of the students and pedagogical focus. The findings showed that not only did the effectiveness of recasts in terms of uptake and repair differ significantly in the four instructional settings, but also that the nature of recasts differed in these settings. However, as the author herself admits, further study is needed to develop a fine-grained taxonomy of recasts that occur in natural classroom discourse and to investigate the relationship between the nature of these different types of recasts and learner uptake and repair.

Sheen (2006) carried out a further study to investigate the taxonomy of the recasts that arose in communicative ESL and EFL classrooms. The study suggested that explicit recasts lead to more uptake/repair since they are focused on a single linguistic feature and the reformulated item is salient to learners. However, the study was limited in a number of ways: the small sample size, a particular context in which learners were motivated and relatively homogeneous in proficiency. Finally the research didn't examine supra-segmental aspects of recasts or how the different characteristics of recasts affected learning.

Kennedy (2010) probed how a teacher of English as second language (ESL) provided corrective feedback to 15 child ESL learners. The author found each proficiency group produced different types of errors and received different types of feedback, and suggested future research could focus on the provision of finely adjusted corrective feedback based on learners' individual differences.

Lyster and Saito (2010) in their meta-analysis looked into the pedagogical effectiveness of oral corrective feedback on target language development. They came to the conclusion that CF had significant and durable effects on language learning. Moreover, they argued that the consequences were larger for prompts than recasts and most apparent in techniques that elicit freely constructed responses. The instructional setting was not identified as a contributing factor to CF effectiveness; effects of long treatments were found to be larger than those of short-to-medium treatments but not distinguishable from those of brief treatments. Additionally, they found that younger learners benefited from CF more than older learners. Considering the wide range of CF types that constitute both explicit correction and prompts, the authors acknowledged that further investigation is needed to identify the components of these CF types that might contribute to their effectiveness. They also acknowledged that further research is needed to investigate the many learner



characteristics that were not accounted for in their meta-analysis but that are known to mediate the effects of CF for individual learners (e.g., learners' proficiency, literacy levels, degree of anxiety, L1 background).

Li (2010) meta-analysed empirical research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback. The analysis revealed that explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback over the short term and that the effects of implicit feedback did not decrease or increase over the long term. It also identified some significant moderators such as research context, research setting, task type, treatment length, and interlocutor type.

### **2.1. The gap in previous CF research**

Many studies have been conducted to examine the efficacy of error correction as well as the strategies and the treatments teachers use for error correction. However, concerns about rigorous methodologies, validity of instruments and generalizability of employed procedures alongside theoretical problems have kept the outcomes in the shadows. The previous studies would have benefited more if more introspective data from the teachers and students had been collected to further account for the variability in the results. The next phase of error treatment study should explore the relationship between CF and its contribution to language development (i.e. learner uptake) or the type of corrective feedback to be provided at different levels of proficiency. Still thorny questions on the issue remain unresolved. Perhaps what is needed is a clear framework that can inform future studies.

## **3. Context of the study**

The significance of the current study lies in the fact that the EFL context in Iran, similar to many other EFL contexts, offers limited contact with English outside of the classroom. In such contexts, teachers' feedback has a key role in improving students' proficiency level. Particularly, the case for the speaking skills is of paramount importance; as Richards and Renandya (2002) assert, "a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. Consideration needs to be given as to how learners will receive feedback on the language they use during speaking tasks" (p. 201).

However, to the best of the knowledge of the researchers, CF literature does not reveal any comprehensive exploration oral corrective feedback in the EFL context of Iran and, more specifically, the contribution of individual factors such as EFL learners' proficiency level and the types of errors they make in different proficiency levels to the CF methods L2 teacher use in language classrooms.

### **3.1. Objective and research questions of the study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the types and distribution of corrective feedback moves and their impact on the learners' uptake. In doing so, the study aims at determining whether there is any relationship between the type of feedback provided by the teachers and the learners' proficiency level and whether the errors occurring in different language components (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) induce different feedback type. The study, in addition, intends to investigate the extent to which the different feedback types lead to the learner's uptake.

The study has the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between learner errors types and the corrective feedback provided by the teacher?
2. What types of feedback do teachers use in different proficiency levels?
3. Which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels?

### **3.2. Method**

#### *3.2.1. Participants and setting*

The method designed for the present study is an experimental quantitative one. The data was collected from a large and popular language institute in Iran. The participants of this study were 79 EFL learners participating in three classes randomly selected from three different levels of the institute, namely, elementary (n=28), intermediate (n=27), and advanced (n=24). That is, from among all the elementary levels in the institute, one was randomly selected; the same procedure was followed for the intermediate and advanced classes. Each class was held twice a week, each session taking 105 minutes, for a total of 10 weeks. The students had the same first language, Persian, with ages ranging from 18 to 28. The students had been placed in each level based on their language proficiency level assessed by a placement test (held by the institute) prior to the instruction.

The second group of participants incorporated the teachers of these three classes. The teachers had 7, 8, and 10 years of teaching experience, respectively. The materials used in the classes were *Top Notch* (Saslow and Ascher, 2006) and *Summit* series (Saslow, Ascher, Carolina Tiberio, 2007).

#### *3.2.2. Instruments*

Observation. The main instrument of data collection for the present study was direct class observation. Two MP4 recorders were used to audiotape the learners and teachers interaction while the researcher was present in classes taking notes to remove any kind of misunderstanding and ambiguity.

Interview. In addition, after the recording procedure, the teachers and students were interviewed with regard to their views and feelings about the CF provided and received. The interview was unstructured; the teachers were asked to talk about their feedback methods and strategies and why and when they provide feedback and what type of errors their feedback targeted. The students were asked to express their opinions regarding the type of feedback and the method through which they received feedback and if they found it effective or not. The purpose for conducting the interview was to triangulate the results of the study.

#### *3.2.3. Coding Definitions*

The coding definitions for the present study were adopted from Lyster and Ranta (1997). They describe error treatment sequence as learner error, teacher feedback, and learner uptake. Based on this classification, error types are categorized as phonological, lexical and syntactic; corrective feedback types are categorized as recasts, explicit correction, elicitation, clarification requests, repetition of error, and meta-linguistic feedback. In the present study, however, some modifications were made in categorizing error types. For example, the category of L1 (Persian) unsolicited error was not included because there were

few shifts and the learners used L1 for the words they did not know in English and just asked for the equivalent words in L2 (English), which did not happen very often.

Accordingly, three types of errors were analyzed: grammatical errors, lexical errors, and phonological errors. Grammatical errors included problematic use of determiners, prepositions, pronouns, number agreement, tense, verb morphology, negation, word order, and auxiliaries. Lexical errors included inaccurate use of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Phonological errors involved inaccurate pronunciation of words that often lead to difficulty to comprehend the target words. In case mispronounced words were comprehensible by the teacher, the words were still considered to involve phonological errors if they were given corrective feedback.

#### *3.2.4. Design*

The present study required a descriptive design. The authors made use of classrooms in their natural context for a sustained period of time to collect data. The second researcher was typically an observer and did not participate in classroom activities.

#### *3.2.5. Data collection*

Each class, elementary, intermediate, and advanced, was observed at the beginning (the first week), in the middle (the fifth week), and at the end (the tenth week, the week before the final exam) of the term, twice each week; each class took 1 hour and 45 minutes. In aggregate, 32 hours of classroom instruction were recorded. However, the time spent on group work during which no teacher-student interaction happened was subtracted from the total. In addition, the break between the activities and the time spent for greetings at the beginning of the class and giving next session's homework was also subtracted from the total time. In order to increase the reliability of the collected data, the second researcher was present in classes as a non-participant observer and took field notes while trying to minimize any interference in the teaching process. At the end of the term both teachers and students were interviewed.

#### *3.2.6. Data Analysis*

As the process of recording and note taking was completed, the raw frequencies as well as the percentages of the corrective feedback types and uptakes were calculated. Since the data consisted of frequency counts of categorical data, a Chi-square test was used in order to test whether the similarities and the differences between the feedback types in different proficiency levels were statistically significant.

## **4. Results**

*Research Question One:* What is the nature of the relationship between learner errors types and the corrective feedback provided by the teacher? In order to explore the nature of the relationship between the error category and the corresponding feedback method, the frequencies of feedback types provided on different error categories were calculated. Table 1 presents the results.

Feedback type	Vocabulary	Perc.	Grammar	Perc.	Pronunc.	Perc.
Recast	122	78.20%	149	70.30%	142	80.20%
Elicitation	14	9%	26	12.30%	6	3.40%
Explicit correction	8	5.10%	20	9.40%	10	5.60%
Clarification request	8	5.10%	4	1.90%	10	5.60%
Repetition	4	2.60%	9	4.20%	7	4%
Meta-linguistic feedback	0	0	4	1.90%	2	1.11%
X <sup>2</sup>	331.94		449.98		516.32	
Asymp. Sig	0.00		0.00		0.00	

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of Feedback types in each error category.

As the results presented in Table 1 show, recast turns out to be the most frequently used strategy of error correction on the whole, and for each grammar category, with 78.20% for vocabulary, 70.30% for grammar, and 8.20% for pronunciation. For the vocabulary category, the next most frequently feedback strategy used by the teachers is elicitation (9%), and then explicit correction and clarification request, each with 5.10% of the CF moves made by the teachers. For this category, no metalinguistic feedback was provided, which, due to the nature of the error, is quite natural. As for the grammar category, similar to vocabulary, the second most frequently used feedback method is elicitation (12.30%), followed by explicit correction (9.40%). For this category, too, metalinguistic explanation was used very rarely. The results for pronunciation show rare use of metalinguistic clue (1.11%), and the same frequencies for clarification and explicit correction (5.60%).

*Research Question Two:* What types of feedback do teachers use in different proficiency levels? Table 2 illustrates the frequency of different feedback types provided to the errors of the participants within each proficiency group and among different proficiency levels.

Error Feedback								
Level	Recast (%)	Elicitation (%)	Explicit correction	Clarification request	Repetition	Meta-linguistic feedback	X <sup>2</sup>	Asymp. Sig
Elementary	187/74%	26/10.28 %	19/7.50 %	11/4.33%	7/2.7%	3/1.19 %	605.14 *	0.00
Intermediate	93/71%	17/13%	7/5.30%	7/5.30%	7/5.30%	0%	215.75 *	0.00
Advanced	133/82.6 %	3/1.86%	12/7.45 %	4/2.50%	6/3.72%	3/1.86 %	506.19 *	0.00

Table 2 Relationship between Feedback type and proficiency level.

The results of the chi-square test presented in the table show that the differences among the feedback types in each level of proficiency are significant (elementary, X<sup>2</sup> = 605.14, p < 0.05; intermediate, X<sup>2</sup> = 215.75, p < 0.05; advanced, X<sup>2</sup> = 506.19, p < 0.05). In all the proficiency levels, the most frequently used feedback type is recast, while the least frequently used one is metalinguistic feedback. Similar to the case for the error categories,

in the elementary and intermediate levels, recast and elicitation are the most frequently used feedback strategies; in the advanced level, however, the second most frequently feedback strategy by the teachers is explicit correction with 7.45% of all the feedback moves made.

*Research Question Three:* Which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels? In order to see which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels, the frequencies of feedback types leading to uptake moves were calculated. Table 3 presents the results.

<i>Uptake</i>	<i>Explicit correction</i>	<i>Recast</i>	<i>Clarification</i>	<i>Meta-linguistic feedback</i>	<i>Elicitation</i>	<i>Repetition</i>
<i>No uptake</i>	24 63%	300 73%	2 9%	0 0%	9 19.5%	6 30%
<i>Self-repair</i>	13 34%	108 26%	16 73%	6 100%	32 69.5%	8 40%
<i>Peer-repair</i>	1 3%	5 1%	4 18%	0 0%	5 11%	6 30%
<i>Total</i>	38 100%	413 100%	22 100%	6 100%	46 100%	20 100%

*Table 3 Relationship between feedback type and uptake.*

As the table illustrates, out of the total number of feedback types provided through explicit correction, 13 (i.e. 34%) led to uptake by self-repair, while more than 60% of the errors were not followed by the learners' repair of the erroneous language; three percent of these errors were corrected by the students other than the ones who had made the error.

As for recast, only 26% of the errors that were treated by recast were repaired successfully by the learners, while the students did not repair more than 70% of the errors that received teacher's feedback. Only one percent of the errors were repaired by the peers. Similarly, solely 40% of the errors receiving teacher's feedback through repetition of the erroneous form (as a hint) have been corrected by the students who made the errors; the remaining errors were either corrected by their peers (30%) or not repaired at all (30%).

On the other hand, request for clarification and elicitation seem to be the most effective feedback methods leading to the self-repair of 73% and 69.5% of the errors, respectively. Providing metalinguistic information led to the students' self-repair of all the errors targeted by this strategy, but the number of the errors treated by this strategy is small (only 6).

## 5. Discussion

The results of the present study showed that recast was the most frequently used feedback method for treating the errors in all three linguistic categories. , (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation). This finding is in line with the results of similar studies done by Mackey, Gass, and MacDonough (2000) and Lochtman (2002). The next most frequently used feedback type in the three categories was elicitation. These were followed by explicit correction, clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic feedback.

In the present study, similar to the findings of Lyster and Ranata (1997), the most frequently used type of corrective feedback was recast; however, unlike Lyster and Ranata, the least frequently used feedback method was meta-linguistic feedback (in their study repetition was the least frequently used). Table 4 illustrates the distribution of feedback types in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and compares it with the findings of the present study.

<i>Lyster and Ranta (1997)</i>		<i>Present study</i>	
Recast	55%	Recast	75.8%
Elicitation	14%	Elicitation	8.4%
Clarification request	11%	Explicit correction	7%
Meta-linguistic feedback	8%	Clarification request	4%
Explicit correction	7%	Repetition	3.7%
Repetition	5%	Meta-linguistic feedback	1.1%

*Table 4 Comparison of Distribution of Types of Feedback in Lyster and Ranata (1997) and the present study.*

In line with Lyster and Ranata's (1997) findings, the frequencies of feedback types provided in different error categories in the present study follow the same pattern as the adopted framework for the two most frequent CF types of recast and elicitation. While in contrast to the adopted framework, in the current study the sequence of explicit correction, clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic feedback (with decreasing frequency) do not follow the pattern of Lyster and Ranata's model (1997).

The next research question dealt with the different types of corrective feedback and their distribution in an adult EFL classroom as given by language teachers with regard to the learners' different levels of proficiency. The results of the study, similar to those of Sheen's (2004), showed that in all the levels, elementary, intermediate and advanced, recast was the most frequently used feedback type. The next most frequently used feedback type turned out to be elicitation in the elementary and intermediate levels. For the advanced level, however, the second rank belonged to explicit correction. In all the three levels, the decreasing pattern of the three least frequently used feedback methods were clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic.

Regarding the proficiency level of learners, the elementary learners produced the greatest number of grammar and pronunciation errors compared to the other levels. This is in line with Kennedy's (2010) study, which revealed that 71% of the low proficiency learners' total errors were errors of form. These results may be due to weaker abilities of the elementary level learners in applying new grammatical structures because of their speaking ability, which may have been a factor in their teacher's classifying them as elementary. The elementary learners had less exposure to English, as compared to the intermediate and advanced students, and were challenging with basic English pattern (subject-verb agreement, for instance), or basic components (subject, verb, and object) of a simple sentence. They may have been less able to understand new grammatical rules or pronunciation of the new sounds, which were absent in their native language. The fewer vocabulary errors in the elementary level probably happened because the number of words the elementary learners know and use in their interaction is limited and as a result they had the least problem in this part.

In Kennedy's (2010) study the mid/high group produced 92% of their errors as errors of form; only 8% of the errors for the mid/high group were errors of content. But the case was reversed in this study; as the learners became more proficient, the number of vocabulary errors increased. The greater number of vocabulary errors of intermediate/advanced level learners seems puzzling. If the intermediate/advanced level learners were indeed more proficient, why were they producing more errors of vocabulary? The answer may lie in the types of interactions or questions that the teacher provided to each level and in the amount of language that each level produced. For example, for the elementary level learners, only simple questions were asked, so little language was needed to answer the questions; therefore, chances for errors of vocabulary to occur were reduced. In contrast, the questions that the teacher asked the intermediate/advanced learners level required more elaborate and creative answers, thus there were more opportunities for these learners to produce vocabulary errors. The teacher allowed the intermediate/advanced level learners much more freedom in speaking, allowing them to make their own decisions on what to say and how to say it, which also created more opportunity for errors of vocabulary. Moreover, the learners in the intermediate/advanced level were more eager to make comments and take part in conversations, elaborate on, or repair others' answers. In contrast, the learners in the elementary level appeared more reluctant to speak.

As for the uptake of the feedback, the results of the study showed that recast, in spite of being the most frequently used feedback type, did not turn out to be effective enough and it led to uptake only 27.3% of the time, followed by explicit correction, which led to uptake 36.8% of the time. These results are similar to those of Lyster and Ranta (1997). On the other hand, the most effective feedback methods were elicitation and clarification with about 70% of the errors treated by the teachers leading to self-repair.

A likely explanation for these findings is that, as argued by Lyster and Ranta (1997), because recast and explicit correction supply the correct form and, thus, do not encourage learner repair, whereas feedback strategies such as elicitation and clarification which provide prompts and, hence, encourage self-correction. Moreover, Lyster and Ranta (1997) contend that there is a lot of ambiguity in perceiving recast by L2 learners. That is, when involved in a communicative interaction with their peers/the teacher, the learners take their teacher's modification of their errors (entailed in recast) as the reinforcement of the meaning of their statement, rather than the indication of an error in their utterance, which requires repair. Moreover, as Lyster (2004) argues, teachers' over use of recast might be due to the fact that this using this method of error correction, unlike using prompts (elicitation, request for clarification, etc.), does not break the flow of communication. Interestingly, the results of the interview with the teachers in the present study (presented in the following section of the study) verify this speculation. Classroom observation carried out by the second researcher, too, confirms this implication.

### **5.1. Results of the interview**

The results of the interview confirm, to some extent, the result obtained through the analysis of the data. A summary of the teachers' and the students' ideas and opinions is in order. The majority of the students in response to the question of how they preferred their errors to be corrected said that they expected their teacher to provide them with the correct form when they made an error. Some of the students complained that some teachers made them produce the correct form by themselves. They said, if they knew it, they could have produced it while speaking or as soon as the teacher notified them of



making the errors. This might explain the reason why the teachers resorted to recast much more frequently than the other correction strategies.

In a similar vein, the teachers said that they usually used recast as their error correction strategy. They said they did so because, first of all, they had already taught the materials to the students and they did not feel there was a need to teach the same material again. Some added that, particularly during discussions, using other techniques, such as elicitation and metalinguistic explanation, would interrupt the flow of speech; others found other techniques too time consuming, particularly because they had to cover lots of materials in one session. They said they had already taught the materials and the repetition of the correct form would remind the learners of that. These opinions might explain the extensive use of recast by the teachers in all levels. It also explains why, in spite of the fact that the use of recast did not seem to be effective as elicitation and request for clarification in helping the students to repair their errors, the teachers insisted on using this technique. Using this method is very easy, not time consuming, and to some extent is a response to the students' demand for hearing the correct form directly from the teacher.

## 6. Conclusion and pedagogical implications

The present study aimed to investigate various spoken corrective feedback types provided by EFL teachers for their learners at various levels of proficiency. To this end, a database of 545 spoken corrective feedback moves was collected and in subsequent analysis of the results six different types of spoken corrective feedback were identified. Then the impact of different types of corrective feedback, their distribution in an adult EFL classroom, and the correlation of both to the learners' levels of proficiency were investigated. A major finding of the present study was that teacher's feedback type was not sensitive to the students' level of proficiency or the language component in which the errors occurred. The teachers participating in this study attributed their frequent use of recast to the lack of time and not breaking the flow of communication in class. Hence, in the EFL context of Iran, there seems to be an urgent need for the modification of teacher training programs and language learning curricula in order that L2 teachers learn and be able to use appropriate CF methods with regard to the type of error made and the students' level of proficiency; two important factors that have been highly emphasized as deciding factors in using different CF methods (See Sheen, 2004).

The results of the present study also indicated that elicitation and request for clarification were the most effective feedback methods, albeit not used very often by the teachers. Therefore, using these two feedback types must be reinforced and encouraged in the Iranian EFL context. In this context, providers of feedback should consider how effectively their programs already correspond to students' proficiency levels and how much more effective they could be if they provide the CF strategies that mostly lead to uptake. Therefore, instead of turning to the "free correction approach" (Truscott 1996, p.361), teachers should take the learning context (mainly students) into account to best identify the likely causes of failure, and hence provide the means to solve them appropriately. Finally, it is necessary that teachers be aware of preferences and interests of the involved L2 learners, and help them adopt the needed strategies which are believed to more helpfully support them in the process of providing feedback.

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## The Impact of Form-focused Guided Strategic Planning on Oral Task Performance

Fatemeh MAHDAVIRAD

*The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the impact of form-focused guided strategic planning on accuracy, complexity, and fluency of L2 oral output. The twenty upper-intermediate level freshmen English major participants of the study performed a planned and then an unplanned picture-prompted narrative task. The results of the statistical analysis revealed that the participants produced a more accurate, more complex, and more fluent discourse in their performance of the task when they benefited from form-focused guided strategic planning which contained detailed instructions about how to plan, by being advised to focus on form. The guidance included an explanation of the structural and lexical patterns employed to express a sequence of events. The findings highlight the need to consider guided strategic planning as a task feature in syllabus design and materials development and the necessity of considering this task feature for accomplishing accuracy, complexity, and fluency in oral task production.*

**Keywords:** TBLT, form-focused guided strategic planning, accuracy, complexity, fluency

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### 1. Introduction

Tasks hold a central place in current SLA research and also in language pedagogy (Bygate, Skehan, and Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2012; Lee, 2000; Robinson, 2012; Skehan, 1998; Skehan and Foster, 2012; Willis, 1996). The issue of task types and variation in L2 learners' performance is of main concern of language teachers and syllabus designers (for a review of research see Ellis, 2003; Rahimpour, 1997; Skehan, 1998). On the other hand, planning is an inseparable part of all spoken and written language use (Ellis, 2005). Research to date lends general support to the claim that pre-task planning affects positively language production, especially as far as fluency and complexity are concerned. However, mixed results have been obtained for accuracy (e.g. Ellis, 1987, 2012; Crookes, 1989; Mochizuki and Ortega, 2008; Ortega, 1999; Tajima, 2003). Thus, more research is needed before we can decide how planning affects accurate language production. Furthermore, the previous studies mostly investigate online and/or strategic planning. In the present work, a particular kind of strategic planning,

namely form-focused guided strategic planning, will be the independent variable of the study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Task-based Language Teaching

As early as 1970s, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach became popular among second language acquisition researchers and teachers (Skehan, 2003). Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a realization of CLT. It is indeed the strong version of CLT, as tasks provide the foundation for an entire language program (Ellis, 2003). According to Foster and Skehan (1997, 1999), teachers can employ some pre-, mid-, and post-task activities to enhance learning by helping learners pay a balanced attention to both form and meaning simultaneously. Variety of design factors (e.g., reasoning demand, number of elements, feedback, context support, and topic familiarity) and how they influence the language produced by learners regarding accuracy, fluency, and complexity have been the main focus of studies of many researchers (Ellis, 2009; Foster and Skehan, 1999; Housen and Vedder, 2009; Wigglesworth and Storch, 2009).

### 2.2. Planning

To make the significance of planning in the field of SLA understood, Ellis (2005) argues that even the language that seems to be effortless and naturally occurring involves planning and that “planning is essentially a problem solving activity”; it involves deciding what linguistic devices need to be selected in order to affect the audience in the desired way. Moreover, planning provides a chance to attend to language as form (Ellis, 2005). There are a number of different types of planning and these are discussed and operationalized by Ellis (2005). A distinction has been made between two important kinds of planning, i.e., *online planning* and *strategic planning*. The former type deals with an examination of the planning which takes place during the task performance; whereas the latter is related to the planning time prior to task performance (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). The effects of online and strategic planning are somewhat different. Online planning has been found to increase accuracy but decrease fluency (Ellis, 1987). The effect of strategic planning on accuracy, complexity, and fluency is more complicated and, depending on the measures taken and the design of the study, mixed results have been obtained. Skehan and Foster (1997) found that learners who benefit from a planning time before task performance achieve greater accuracy in unstructured rather than structured tasks, while they show greater fluency in structured rather than unstructured tasks. For Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) a task is regarded as structured when it has the following characteristics: a clear time line, a script, a story with a conventional beginning and middle and end and finally, an appeal to what is familiar and organized in the speaker’s mind. Other studies by Foster (1996), Foster and Skehan (1996), Menhert (1998), Sangarun (2001), Skehan and Foster (1997), and Yuan and Ellis (2003) suggest a positive effect on fluency and complexity, but a negative impact on accuracy. Crookes (1989), Ortega (1999), and Wigglesworth (1997), on the other hand, did not find significant differences regarding the impact of pre-planning on accuracy.

### 2.3. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning “may involve the provision of linguistic forms/strategies for performing the task depending on the amount of guidance the teacher wishes to provide” (Ellis, 2003:247). There are a number of methodological options available to teachers who opt for strategic planning. The first concerns whether the learners are given the task workplan and

left to decide for themselves what to plan which results in priority to content over form, or whether they are given guidance in what to plan (Ellis, 2003). Thus, pre-task planning can be *guided* or *unguided*. In guided planning, learners receive (more or less) detailed instructions about how to plan, for example by being advised to focus on syntax, lexis, content, or organization (Philip, Oliver, and Mackey 2006). Sangarun (2001) suggests channeling learners' attention on both form and content. Skehan (1996) believes that learners need to be made explicitly aware of where they are focusing their attention- whether on fluency, complexity, or accuracy. Foster and Skehan (1996) found that when learners tend to prioritize content, they are more likely to produce more complex discourses.

The majority of the empirical studies have examined unguided pre-task planning (Crookes, 1989; Ellis and Yuan, 2004; Foster, 1996; Foster and Skehan, 1996; Foster and Skehan, 1999; Hulstijn and Hulstijn, 1984; Kawauchi, 2005; Menhert, 1998; Ortega, 1999; Sangarun, 2001, 2005; Skehan and Foster, 1997; Wigglesworth, 1997; Yuan and Ellis, 2003). This implies that less attention has been paid to the effects of different types of guided strategic planning. Having the above mixed results in mind, the present study tries to look at the issue from a new angle. Concentrating on the oral modality of language production, and adopting more manageable measures for scoring learners' performance, the study focuses on the way form-focused guided pre-planning affects picture-prompted tasks, i.e., a pedagogic task type commonly used by language teachers in language courses.

### 3. Method

The study addressed the following research question and research hypothesis:

- *Research Question:* What is the effect of form-focused guided strategic planning on accuracy, complexity, and fluency of learners' oral performance?
- *Research Hypothesis:* Form-focused guided strategic planning has a positive effect on learners' oral performance in terms of accuracy, complexity, and fluency.

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants in the study were 10 male and 10 female freshmen English majors doing their conversation course at a private-control university college in Yazd, Iran. The researcher was the instructor of that course and the learners participated in the study as part of the course assessment in their respective course. The native language of the learners was Persian. The participants' ages ranged between 18 and 30, and the average age equaled 20.

#### 3.2. Procedure

Before the experiment, the participants were informed that the tasks would be considered as part of their course grades. Every individual participant of the study was provided with two tasks; namely, an unplanned task (Appendix 1) and a planned one (Appendix 2). Each task involved a single type of stimulus, i.e., a sequenced set of picture prompts, which were linked to each other by a common theme. Every individual participant was provided with the task prompts related to the task under investigation. The participants were asked to look at the picture prompts and talk accordingly, describing what they see in the pictures. First, the unplanned task was administered. For the performance of the planned task, the participants were allotted with a five minute planning time before performance, while for the unplanned task, the participants did not benefit from strategic planning time before performance. In addition, in the pre-planning time allotted for the planned task, the participants were told to think about the story illustrated in the picture to get ready for telling the story. They were



provided with detailed instructions about how to plan, by being advised to focus on form. The guidance included an explanation of the structural and lexical patterns employed to express a sequence of events which was provided by the teacher (i.e., the researcher). No explicit instruction was given regarding the content (see Appendix 2). The participants were also allowed to take down notes. Every individual participant's performance was observed and recorded without the presence of other participants. The allotted time for the performance of each task was five minutes. Every individual participant's performance on both tasks was audiorecorded. After the data were transcribed, they were coded, scored and analyzed with regard to the research question which the study set out to address.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Testing Instrument

In order to score the data, the measures used by Skehan and Foster (1999) were adopted for scoring the 'fluency' and 'accuracy' of the participants' performance accordingly. 'Fluency' measurement was operationalized as the number of words per minute. 'Accuracy' measurement, on the other hand, was achieved by calculating the percentage of error-free clauses in the total number of clauses. In order to measure 'complexity', the ratio of lexical to grammatical words was calculated (Robinson, 2001). In order to test our hypothesis to examine the way form-focused guided strategic planning affected task response characteristics of the participants, these measures were employed to obtain every individual participant's score for accuracy, complexity, and fluency of task response for each task. Regarding the hypothesis of the study, the raw scores of the participants on planned vs. unplanned tasks were used for further data analysis.

## 5. Data Analysis

The data analysis results for the accuracy, complexity, and fluency of discourse produced by the participants in performing the planned vs. unplanned task are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Planned Task	86.8049	3.0335
Unplanned Task	79.7804	3.9396

*Table 1. Results of Data Analysis for the Task Response Accuracy of the Planned vs. Unplanned Task*

Task		
<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Planned Task	1.9762	.0737
Unplanned Task	1.9240	.0743

*Table 2. Results of Data Analysis for the Task Response Complexity of the Planned vs. Unplanned*

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Planned Task	86.7586	4.1572
Unplanned Task	77.1595	3.5817

*Table 3. Results of Data Analysis for the Task Response Fluency of the Planned vs. Unplanned Task*



In sum, as can be seen in Tables 1-3, form-focused guided strategic planning had a positive effect on the accuracy, complexity, and fluency of the participants' task performance. In order to make the above conclusions more justifiable and test the research hypothesis, the results were compared using Matched t-Test.

Mean (Planned Task)	SD (Planned Task)	Mean (Unplanned Task)	SD (Unplanned Task)	t-Value Critical	Degree of Freedom	Two-Tailed Probability	t-Value Observed
86.8049	3.0335	79.7804	3.9396	2.093	19	.05	2.211

Table 4. Matched t-Test Results for Task Response Accuracy of Planned vs. Unplanned Task

Mean (Planned Task)	SD (Planned Task)	Mean (Unplanned Task)	SD (Unplanned Task)	t-Value Critical	Degree of Freedom	Two-Tailed Probability	t-Value Observed
1.9762	.0737	1.9240	.0743	2.093	19	.05	2.095

Table 5. Matched t-Test Results for Task Response Complexity of Planned vs. Unplanned Task

Mean (Planned Task)	SD (Planned Task)	Mean (Unplanned Task)	SD (Unplanned Task)	t-Value Critical	Degree of Freedom	Two-Tailed Probability	t-Value Observed
86.7586	4.1572	77.1595	3.5817	2.093	19	.05	2.404

Table 6. Matched t-Test Results for Task Response Fluency of Planned vs. Unplanned Task

It can be observed from Tables 4-6 that the observed t-value is greater than the critical t-value for the accuracy, complexity, and fluency of task response in planned vs. unplanned task ( $t_{\text{observed}} > t_{\text{critical}}$ , at .05 level of significance). Therefore, concerning the impact of form-focused guided strategic planning on accuracy, complexity, and fluency, the research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, according to the results of inferential statistics, form-focused guided strategic planning had a positive effect in promoting the participants' performance of the narrative task in terms of accuracy, complexity, and fluency.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

To discuss the results, we return to our research question which addressed the impact of form-focused guided strategic planning on learners' oral performance. Dependent variables measured were 'accuracy' (operationalized as the percentage of error-free clauses in the total number of clauses), 'complexity' (operationalized as the ratio of lexical to grammatical words), and 'fluency' (operationalized as the number of words per minute). The independent variable was 'form-focused guided strategic planning'. Reported findings confirmed the research hypothesis, that is, task response characteristics of the participants' oral task performance were positively affected by form-focused strategic planning.

The results of the present study indicated that form-focused strategic planning had a positive effect on the accuracy of the performance. This finding supports the results of other studies in the literature, which investigated other types of planning (e.g., Sangarun, 2005)

and suggests that when learners are provided with form-focused strategic planning, they can plan *how* to say their intended meaning. Regarding complexity, the findings indicate that form-focused strategic planning has a beneficial effect on complexity, too. Previous research reporting the gain in complexity as a result of planning includes Crookes (1989); Ellis and Yuan (2004); Foster and Skehan (1999); Gilabert (2005); Skehan and Foster (1997); Tavakoli and Skehan (2005); and Wigglesworth (1997). Regarding the results of the present study which focused on a particular type of planning, i.e., form-focused strategic planning, the results can be justified by the fact that planners tend to focus on both form and content and thus produce more complexity. On the basis of the results of the present study, it can be hypothesized that form-focused pre-planning contributes to learners' fluency (Lange, 2000; Newton, 1991; Zuengler and Bent, 1991). As a result, the form-focused guidance would encourage the learners to function as more active speakers. It is easier for them to organize the propositional content of the task and encode the intended meaning with more self confidence in the planned tasks and this would, in turn, decrease their dysfluencies. Such a clear goal and well-organized plan reduces processing load.

The findings may have implications for syllabus design and materials development, too. As Robinson (2003) argues, the major problem in task-based language teaching is determining criteria for grading and sequencing tasks; therefore, data based empirical research is needed to determine the criteria affecting task difficulty. In line with this suggestion, the findings of the present study can be used as an empirical basis for selecting, grading, and sequencing tasks. Moreover, one of the primary implications of this study for the language classroom is the need to use a pre-planning time period to enhance fluency, complexity, and accuracy in oral tasks. Rather than limiting learners' oral performance to certain unplanned tasks, teachers can choose tasks designed to have pre-planning time. Instead of confining the learners to online processing of the talk, they can be motivated to maneuver around the task topic by having the chance to concentrate on the task prompt (pictorial or verbal), activate their memory system, organize the propositional content, plan *how* to express their intended meaning, take notes, gain confidence, and finally perform the task more actively, accurately, and fluently. This would necessitate designing tasks which allow learners to strategically plan their discourse. A focus on form in guiding the learners during the planning time can be beneficial in helping them to focus not only on the content i.e., *what* to say, but also plan *how* to say.

As in all classroom studies, the researcher was confronted with the inevitable limitation related to the sample size as the sample size for this study was not large, and thus, as always, further research is needed to make stronger generalizations. Hopefully, the issues raised and discussed in this work have offered insights for improved research practices. In order to enable better accumulation of knowledge in this research domain, sufficient numbers of studies in which variables like participant factors are taken into account, are needed. Moreover, the study can be conducted in settings different from that of this study. Different task types can also be used for data collection. Replication studies using measures other than the ones used in this study are obviously advisable in order to permit greater confidence in the results. Replication of the study across different proficiency levels and investigating the contribution of individual differences to the way form-focused guided strategic planning influences task performance are suggested.

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## Appendix 1

### (Unplanned Task)

Look at the following picture prompts and talk accordingly, describing what you see in the pictures.



(Adapted from: Richards, J. C. (1998). *New interchange 3, Workbook*. Cambridge: CUP, p. 27)

## Appendix 2

### (Planned Task)

Look at the following picture prompts and talk accordingly, describing what you see in the pictures. You are allotted with a five minute planning time before performance. Listen carefully to the explanations given by the teacher and think about the story illustrated in the picture to get ready for telling the story. You are allowed to take down notes.

- The participants were provided with detailed instructions about how to plan, by being advised to focus on form. The guidance included an explanation of the structural and lexical patterns (simple present tense, and textual devices used for expressing a sequence of events) which was provided by the researcher. No explicit instruction was given regarding the content.



(Adapted from: Hill, L. A. (1980). *Advanced Steps to Understanding*. Oxford: OUP, p. 17)

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## Investigating the Effect of Motivation and Attitude towards Learning English, Learning Style Preferences and Gender on Iranian EFL Learners' Proficiency

Saeed MEHRPOUR and Fatemeh AHMADNIAY MOTLAGH

*The present study was carried out to investigate the effect of motivation and attitude towards learning English, learning style preferences, and gender on Iranian EFL learners' proficiency. To this end, 154 Iranian EFL learners (male and female) participated in the study. Three instruments, namely, Oxford Quick Placement Test (OPT), Brasch Learning Style Inventory (BLSI) Questionnaire, and Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire were used to collect the data necessary for the study. Crosstab procedure, correlation, one way ANOVA and multiple regression analysis were utilized to analyze the data. The results indicated that visual and auditory learning styles are the most frequently preferred learning styles among the Iranian EFL learners. These learning styles were also the mostly preferred learning styles by both male and female EFL learners. According to the findings, there was no significant difference between gender and learning style preferences, and motivation and attitude towards learning English. Moreover, learning style preferences did not correlate with learners' language proficiency. Finally, it was revealed that gender was the best predictor of language proficiency for Iranian EFL learners.*

**Key words:** motivation, attitude, learning style, learning preferences, gender, proficiency.

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### 1. Introduction

Human beings are unique creatures and each person is a unique combination of feelings, mentalities, concepts, aims and reactions. This can be regarded as one of the most significant characteristics of human beings. Teachers should be well aware of the fact that each individual has his/her own innate traits and strengths. Learners perform well in some specific fields and teachers should pay equal and enough attention to every learner so that they become well educated (Chung, 2009). Dunn (1990) is of the opinion that "[s]tudents can learn almost any subject matter when they are taught with methods and approaches responsive to their learning style strengths" (p.15). Being aware of their peculiar learning



styles, they can vary their study habits suitable to their personal learning styles and it will contribute to their better performances on tests and improving their grades as well.

Learning style is a broad concept that includes cognitive, affective and physiological styles. It is defined as cognitive, affective and physiological traits which are stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with or respond to learning environment (Keefe, 1979, as cited in Shen, 2010). Learning styles do not distinguish talented students; but they make us capable to perceive such students more accurately and know their gifts, and teach them more effectively as well (Kreitner, 1981).

Motivation plays a vital role in the realm of language learning and it seems that it positively affects language learning process. A group of individuals are intrinsically motivated and enjoy learning language itself; however, a group of them are extrinsically motivated, driven by external factors such as sources of rewards and punishments as well (Brown, 2000; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). However, according to Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011), successful individuals are well aware of their preferences, strengths and weaknesses. They know how to use their strengths to compensate their weak points. Language learning is also linked to individuals' passion which is related to an individual's intrinsic desires and goals. Such being the case teachers should scrutinize ways to connect to this passion or motivation. According to the aforementioned points, the existence of a positive relationship between variables such as learning style preferences and motivation and attitude towards learning English seems to be logical.

## 2. Theoretical framework—categorizations of learning styles

According to Reid (1995), learning styles appear to take place in three major areas: “cognitive learning”, “sensory learning” and “personality learning”.

Cognitive learning styles are identified as the way a person perceives, thinks and solves problems. For instance, a Field-Dependent Learner “tends to look at the whole of a learning task which contains many items”. This is while a Field-Independent Learner “is able to identify or focus on particular items and is not distracted by other items in the background or context” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 200). An Analytic Learner “remembers something by separating it into parts”. On the contrary, a Global Learner “tries to remember something as a whole” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.226 & 227). A Reflective Learner learns better when he/she has enough time to regard options before responding. On the other hand, an Impulsive Learner is able to respond immediately and take risks (Reid, 1995).

Psychological or Sensory learning styles are biological; moreover, they contain reactions to the physical environment that may influence learning. Sensory learning styles are divided into two groups. The first one is Perceptual Learning Style which includes Auditory Learners, who learn by hearing; Visual Learners who learn by observing options; Kinaesthetic Learners, who learn more effectively through movements of body; Tactile Learners, who learn by touching; and Haptic Learners, who prefer combining touch and body movement. The second group is Environmental Learning Style which includes Physical Learners, who learn in a situation in which different variables embracing temperature, sound, light, time, food, mobility, and classroom or study arrangement are regarded, and Sociological Learners who learn when variables such as group, pair, individual and team work are considered (Reid, 1995; Riasti, 2005).

Affecting or Personality learning styles embrace emotional characteristics (Reid, 1995; Hohn,

1995; Borich & Tombari, 1997; Slavin, 2000). For instance, an Extrovert Learner is a person whose interests and energies are consciously directed outwards towards other individuals and happenings than towards the persons themselves and their inner experience. However, an Introvert Learner is an individual who tends to avoid social contacts with others (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). A Sensing Learner learns by reporting observable facts and is dependent on the five senses. In contrast, a Perception Learner learns more efficiently from meaningful experiences and association with others. A Thinking Learner learns from logical consequences. A Feeling Learner gains insight from social values and personalized circumstances. A Judging Learner learns through processes, reflection and analysis that involve closure. On the other hand, a Perceiving Learner not only learns by negotiation and feeling, but also by inductive processes that delay closure. When opportunities for taking risks are presented, an Ambiguity Tolerant Learner learns best. On the contrary, an Ambiguity Intolerant Learner learns most effectively in a less risky situation. A Left Brained Learner is eager to visual, reflective and self-reliant learning; however, a Right Brained Learner is interested in auditory, impulsive and interactive learning (Reid, 1995; Riasati, 2005).

These three major learning styles and their subcategories are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

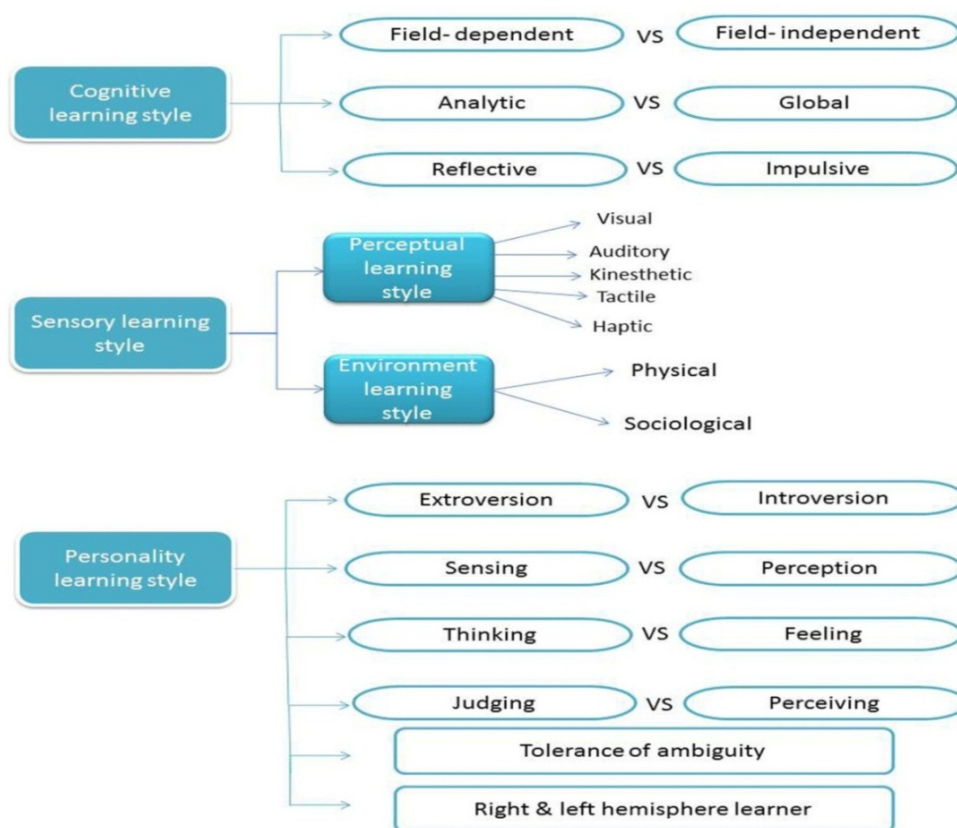


Figure 1. Three Major Categories of Learning Styles

## 2.1. Motivation and attitude towards learning English

A good instructor should find ways to associate sources of intrinsic motivation with external motivational factors in a classroom. Individuals have various goals to study a language, so

teachers should recognize their purposes and evolve a suitable motivational strategy. Every individual has his/her peculiar expectations and instructors should consider these facts for designing language courses (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011).

In the field of language learning, motivation is defined as combination of the individuals' attitudes, willingness and desires to expand efforts to learn the second language as well (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). As Oroujlou & Vahedi (2011) argue, attitude is different from motivation. In general, "attitude is a set of beliefs and motivation is a reason for doing something" (p. 997). It is confusing due to the fact that set of beliefs could be reasons of doing something. Such being the case, individuals might be motivated to learn the language because of their attitude towards the culture of that language or their teachers.

It is worth to say that in this study motivation and attitude towards learning English is taken into account as one variable, that is, they are not two separate items.

## **2.2. Statement of the problem**

With regard to the crucial importance of learning styles, some researchers have devoted themselves to investigating the issue, yet it seems more research is needed on the relationship between variables such as learners' English proficiency, motivation and attitude towards learning English, gender and learning style preferences. Therefore, more efforts can be put into the investigation of learning styles and these three variables, especially in Iran. These matters seem to be of high necessity to be taken into account by teachers, learners, test developers and material and curriculum designers.

## **3. Literature review**

### **3.1. Previous investigations outside Iran**

Gunes (2004) aimed to determine the learning style of preparatory school learners from Gazi University to observe the relationship between individuals' learning style preferences and faculty, gender, proficiency level, and achievement score on listening, reading, writing and grammar in English courses. Three hundred and sixty seven randomly elected individuals took part in this study. The Index of Learning Style (ILS) was administered to them. Finally, the results revealed the existence of no significant difference between individuals' learning style preferences and faculty, gender, level and achievement scores as well.

Salem (2006) tried to investigate the role of motivation, gender and language learning strategies in EFL proficiency. To achieve this goal, 147 male and female participants were asked to complete two questionnaires; Motivation Scale (MS) to estimate their motivation and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to evaluate their language learning strategies. Furthermore, verbal SAT scores were used to determine language proficiency as well. Findings of the study indicated that although motivation does not correlate with EFL proficiency generally, effort does, in favor of the high proficient. Moreover, no significant gender differences in overall motivation were demonstrated. This is while in comparison with males, females had more efforts and had higher perception of the valence of learning EFL. The results did not illustrate a significant role for gender in EFL achievement. The overall strategy use did not play a significant role in EFL achievement, although the results showed a low and negative correlation between using metacognitive strategies and proficiency. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies were considered as the most frequently used strategies and the least frequently used were the affective strategies. To summarize, the

findings did not show any significant differences between males and females in their memory use, compensation strategies and cognitive strategies in favor of females.

Gomleksiz (2010) believed not only age, socio-economic status and methods and techniques, but also teaching-learning environment and cultural dimensions are some of the factors which influence English language learning. Another important factor that should be considered is motivation. Gomleksiz aimed to explore learners' attitudes towards learning English in different terms including grade level, gender and department variables. One thousand and two hundred and seventy five learners took part in this study. Collecting data through a Likert scale questionnaire and analyzing data through ANOVA and t-test, statistically significant differences were found in terms of grade level, gender and department variables. According to statistics, individuals had significant differences in terms of attitude and there were significant differences between their attitudes in terms of gender as well as grade level and department variables. Their attitudes towards learning English varied significantly in terms of gender.

Tao (2011) aimed to predict English achievement of Chinese learners by using a Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS). Participants of the study were 300 university students who were non-English majors and their foreign language achievement was estimated by using the learners' final marks in their English course. Nineteen modalities of noise, light, temperature, design, motivation, persistence, responsibility, structure, peer orientation, authority orientation, auditory, visual, tactile, kinaesthetic, intake, evening/morning, late morning, afternoon, and mobility were measured. She aimed at investigating the modalities that predict English proficiency. Results revealed the fact that just seating design, responsibility, authority orientation, kinaesthetic and mobility could significantly predict English achievement. Moreover, learning styles were not strong predictors of English achievement of Chinese learners. The results of the study also demonstrated that Chinese learners would rather visual and auditory approaches to learn.

### **3.2. Previous Investigations in Iran**

Riazi and Mansoorian (2008) did a study on the preferred learning style(s) of male and female EFL Iranian students. Their findings revealed the fact that the major styles preferred by the students were the auditory, the visual, the tactile, and the kinaesthetic learning styles. Individual learning styles and group learning styles were considered as the minor learning styles among male and female students. Regarding gender as a distinguishing factor, they found male students more interested in tactile, group and kinaesthetic learning styles, while female students were less willing to use these styles, particularly group learning style. They came to the point that introducing different learning styles to the students will cause them to ease their way of learning a new foreign language.

Ghazvini and Khajepour (2011) tried to examine Iranian learners' attitudes and motivations toward learning English. One hundred and twenty three male and female learners participated in their study. Interestingly, they concluded that female learners were more interactively motivated and male learners were more instrumentally motivated to learn English. Furthermore, female learners had more positive attitudes to learn English than males and were more inclined to bilingualism as well. On the other hand, they found no significant difference between participants in motivational orientations, while they have positive attitudes to learn English as a second language.

Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) did a study to observe if there is any efficient association

between language learning and motivation and attitude to provide an overview of recent advances in research on motivation and attitude to second language. Analytic and descriptive approaches were utilized to clarify motivations and attitudes' role. They concluded that creation and implementation of different techniques can positively vary individuals' attitudes toward learning English. Based on the results of the study, there exists a direct relationship between the individuals' efficiency in classrooms and motivation and attitude. To summarize, motivation and attitude have great roles in increasing proficiency of the learners and beside other factors including talents of the individuals they can affect the efficiency of the individuals.

As the literature review presents, what is prevalent in Iran's context is a lack of investigation to identify the relationship between variables such as learners' English proficiency, their motivation and attitude towards learning English, gender and learning style preferences. Such being the case, more studies are needed in order to investigate the relationship(s) between or among these variables.

#### **4. Objectives and research questions of this study**

First, the study investigated if variables such as learning style preferences, motivation and attitude toward learning English and gender are related to one another in the EFL learners. The second purpose of the study is to see if these variables have any relationship with the learners' English proficiency and can be a good predictor of this variable.

Considering the above objectives of this study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the most frequently preferred learning styles among the Iranian EFL learners?
2. Which type(s) of learning style(s) is/are mostly preferred by male and female EFL learners?
3. How are learning styles, motivation and attitude toward learning English and gender related to one another?
4. Which type of learning style has more influence on learners' language proficiency?
5. Which of the variables, learning style preferences, motivation and attitude toward learning English and gender is the best predictor of language proficiency?

#### **5. Method**

##### **5.1. Participants**

The participants of the study were 154 Iranian EFL learners (46 males and 108 females). All the participants were Persian native speakers, learning English as a foreign language at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics of Shiraz University, Iran. They mostly ranged in their twenties and were chosen based on convenience sampling.

##### **5.2. Instruments**

In general, three different instruments were used in this study which are described in details in the following.

*Oxford Quick Placement Test (OPT)*. The OPT is a test of English language proficiency which is developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL. It is flexible and reliable as well

as time saving. The OPT consists of 2 sets of graded items; each of which evaluating learners' abilities in vocabulary, grammar and reading (Geranpayeh, 2003). It took the participants about 30 minutes to answer 60 items of the test. The first 40 items are nearly suitable for all the learners and the second part consisting of 20 items are appropriate for more proficient learners. Using Alpha Cronbach, the reliability of the test was measured as 0.75.

*Brasch Learning Style Inventory (BLSI).* BLSI was developed by Brasch in 1996 was used in the current study because not only is it composed of a simple and convenient set of questions, but also it is time saving and takes 10-15 minutes to complete. Moreover, it is easy to understand and as Gunes (2004) states it is peculiarly designed for English language learners. The main focus of the instrument is on the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning style preferences to be tested. There are 24 statements, each of which has been assigned scores: 5 points, 3 points and 1 point in order for often true, sometimes true and seldom true. Items are divided into three separate sections. The first 8 items address the visual learning style, items 9-16 are allocated to the auditory learning style and the last section, items 17-24, are devoted to the kinaesthetic learning style. Learners selected the choices that corresponded with their styles better and then totaled up their scores for each of these options to know their individual learning styles. The highest score showed their preferred learning style, which could be visual and related to seeing, auditory and related to hearing or kinaesthetic and related to actual performing in a task (Amran, Bahry, Yusop, & Abdullah, 2011). Some of the participants preferred a mixture of these three main learning style preferences. Although students had totaled up their scores, the latter were computed again by the researchers to prevent any source of miscomputation. The reliability of the questionnaire obtained through Alpha Cronbach was 0.73, which indicated that the questionnaire was reliable enough.

*Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire.* The Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire was used in this study in order to evaluate the Iranian EFL learners' motivation and attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. It was developed and validated by Laine (1987) and has been validated by Salimi (2000) in an Iranian context. The questionnaire has five choices for each item. The choices have numerical values from 1-5, which show the participants' degree of preference for or tendency towards the items of the questionnaire. The numerical value 5 was assigned to strongly agree, 4 to agree, 3 to no idea, 2 to disagree, and 1 to strongly disagree. It took the participants 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and then their averages were calculated to reach an estimation regarding their motivation and attitudes towards learning English. Using Alpha Cronbach, the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated as 0.88.

### **5.3. Data collection and analysis procedures**

Data needed for this study were mostly collected in one session by administering the questionnaires and the proficiency test to the participants during their class time. In the first stage, OPT was administered to determine their level of proficiency. Having explained the purpose of the test and introducing it to the participants, they were given about 30 minutes to complete the test. In the second stage, the researcher administered the two questionnaires directly to the participants. The first one was BLSI to determine individuals' learning style preferences, and the second one was Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire to determine their motivation and attitude toward learning English as a foreign language.

SPSS (version 19) was employed to analyze the data. In general, the descriptive statistics were used to demonstrate frequencies, percentages, means and the range of scores. As for



the data analysis related to the first research question, frequencies and percentages were computed. For the second research question, the crosstab procedure was conducted. For the third research question, correlational analysis was used. For the fourth research question, one-way ANOVA was computed to find the best learning style which can influence participants' language proficiency. Finally, for the fifth research question, multiple regression was used to determine whether the participants' gender, learning style preferences, and their motivation and attitude towards learning English could predict their proficiency in English.

## 6. Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics of the data are provided to portray the frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of the participants' learning style, motivation and attitude towards learning English, gender and foreign language proficiency.

	<i>Visual</i>	<i>Auditory</i>	<i>Kinaesthetic</i>	<i>Visual Auditory</i>	<i>Visual Kinaesthetic</i>	<i>Auditory Kinaesthetic</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Freq.</i>	88	34	11	8	8	5	154
<i>%</i>	57.1	22.1	7.1	5.2	5.2	3.2	100.0

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of learning style preferences

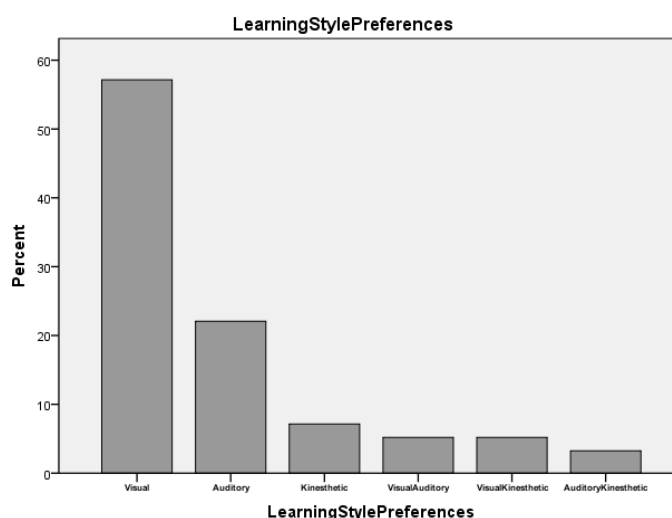


Figure 2. The percentage of different learning styles preferred by the participants of the study

With regard to Table 1 and Figure 2, in terms of learning style preferences, 51.1% (n=88) of the participants were visual, i.e., they had high visual scores. Such learners need to see all the study materials. 22.1% (n=34) of them were auditory, that is they had high auditory scores. They listen to tapes and prefer to sit in front of classrooms or lecture halls to hear well. 7.1% (n=11) were kinaesthetic, that is they had high kinaesthetic scores. Such learners involve their body in the process of learning. Hence, they trace words as they say them. However, a small number of the participants had a mixture of two learning style preferences, for instance, 5.2% (n=8) took advantage of both visual and auditory learning



style preferences, 5.2% (n=8) benefited from both visual and kinaesthetic learning style preferences, and 3.2% (n=2) took advantage of both auditory and kinaesthetic learning style preferences. So, visual and auditory learning styles were found to be the most frequently preferred learning styles among the participants, respectively.

In terms of motivation and attitude towards learning English, as seen in table 2 below, Iranian EFL learners had the mean of 3.8 and SD of .039, the maximum score was 4.89 and the minimum score was 2.28 out of 5.

<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error of Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
3.7772	.03916	2.28	4.89

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on motivation and attitude.

Table 3 shows that, in terms of foreign language proficiency, Iranian EFL learners had the mean of 43.5 and SD of .530, the maximum score was 55 and the minimum one was 26 out of 60.

<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error of Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
43.4675	.53015	26.00	55.00

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on proficiency scores.

### **6.1. Results related to crosstab procedure, correlational analysis, one way ANOVA and multiple regression**

Crosstab procedure was utilized to find the learning style(s) which is/are mostly preferred by males and females according to the findings obtained from the learning style questionnaire developed by Barsch.

As Table 4 illustrates, 56.5% (n=26) of males were visual learners and 32% (n=15) of them were auditory learners. Just 2.2% (n=1) preferred kinaesthetic learning style. A small percentage of them had mixed learning style preferences. Respectively, 57.4% (n=62) of females were visual learners, 17.6% (n=19) were auditory learners and 9.3% (n=10) were kinaesthetic learners. Moreover, a small percentage of them had mixed learning style preferences, too. Hence, visual learning style was the mostly preferred learning style by both genders and auditory learning style was the second preferred learning style.

Correlational analysis was performed to see if learning styles, motivation and attitude toward learning English and gender are related to one another.

According to the results illustrated in Table 5, there was not any statistically significant relationship between gender and learning style preferences, gender and motivation and attitude, and learning style preferences and motivation and attitude ( $p>0.05$ ). In other words, these three variables were not related to one another.

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Learning Style Preferences	Visual	Count	26	62	88
		% within Gender	56.5%	57.4%	57.1%
	Auditory	Count	15	19	34
		% within Gender	32.6%	17.6%	22.1%
	Kinaesthetic	Count	1	10	11
		% within Gender	2.2%	9.3%	7.1%
	Visual Auditory	Count	1	7	8
		% within Gender	2.2%	6.5%	5.2%
	Visual Kinaesthetic	Count	2	6	8
		% within Gender	4.3%	5.6%	5.2%
Auditory Kinaesthetic	Count	1	4	5	
	% within Gender	2.2%	3.7%	3.2%	
Total	Count	46	108	154	
	% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 4. Crosstabs procedures for learning style preferences and gender.

		Gender	Learning Style Preferences	Average for Motivation
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.083	.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.305	.296
	N	154	154	154
Learning Style Preferences	Pearson Correlation	.083	1	-.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305		.653
	N	154	154	154
Average for Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.085	-.036	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.296	.653	
	N	154	154	154

Table 5. Correlations among gender, learning style preferences and motivation and attitude.

Learners were also administered Oxford Quick Placement Test to determine their current level of foreign language proficiency. One way ANOVA was mainly used to see which type of learning styles has a better influence on language proficiency.

Proficiency	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	184.917	5	36.983	.850	.516
Within Groups	6437.420	148	43.496		
Total	6622.338	153			

Table 6. One way ANOVA for the effect of learning styles on language proficiency.

With regard to Table 6, the values ( $F=0.85$  and  $p=0.516$ ) indicated the existence of no significant relationship between various learning styles with regard to the proficiency scores

( $p>0.05$ ). In other words, the mean of proficiency for learners with different learning styles was the same. Such being the case, in this study learning styles do not show any significant relationship with foreign language proficiency.

Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to see which of the independent variables of learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning English and gender is the best predictor of language proficiency.

*ANOVA<sup>b</sup>*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
1 Regression	192.147	3	64.049	1.494	.219 <sup>a</sup>	0.029
Residual	6430.190	150	42.868			
Total	6622.338	153				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Average of Motivation, Learning Style Preferences, Gender

b. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 7. Multiple regression analysis for the relationship between independent variables and language proficiency.

According to the results shown in Table 7, the three variables of learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning English and gender have no significant relationship with foreign language proficiency in the full regression model ( $p=0.219>0.05$ ). The results show that the R<sup>2</sup> index is 0.029 which shows that 2% of the variation in the language proficiency scores was accounted for by the independent variables.

*Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	47.876	4.516		10.602	.000
Gender	-2.438	1.161	-.170	-2.099	.037
Learning Style Preferences	.053	.392	.011	.135	.893
Average for Motivation	-.096	1.094	-.007	-.088	.930

a. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 8. Partial regression coefficients for the degree of prediction of independent variables.

However, with regard to the partial regression coefficients, as seen in Table 8, the independent variable of gender has a significant relationship with foreign language proficiency ( $p=0.037<0.05$ ). Moreover, the purpose is finding the independent variable(s) which is/are the best predictor(s) of foreign language proficiency. Such being the case, Backward Method was utilized in order to find a suitable model.

Backward Method estimates the parameters for the full model that includes all eligible

variables. That is, finding the best possible regression model is the main purpose of Backward Method. According to Rawlings, Pantula, & Dickey (1998), “[b]ackward elimination of variables chooses the subset models by starting with the full model and then eliminating at each step the one variable whose deletion will cause the residual sum of squares to increase the least.” (p. 213). So, this method chooses the variables with the largest significance and removes them ( $p > 0.05$ ). The Backward Method procedure continues until the analysis reveals the variable with the least amount of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*ANOVA<sup>d</sup>*

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	192.147	3	64.049	1.494	.219 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	6430.190	150	42.868		
Total	6622.338	153			
2 Regression	191.818	2	95.909	2.252	.109 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	6430.519	151	42.586		
Total	6622.338	153			
3 Regression	190.988	1	190.988	4.514	.035 <sup>c</sup>
Residual	6431.349	152	42.312		
Total	6622.338	153			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Average for Motivation, Learning Style Preferences, Gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Style Preferences, Gender

c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender

d. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 9. Regression of Backward Method for the relationship between independent variables and language proficiency.

*Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	43.001	4.313		9.971	.000
Gender	2.438	1.161	.170	2.099	.037
Learning Style Preferences	.053	.392	.011	.135	.893
Average for Motivation	-.096	1.094	-.007	-.088	.930
2 (Constant)	42.634	.991		43.021	.000
Gender	2.447	1.153	.171	2.122	.035
Learning Style Preferences	.055	.391	.011	.140	.889
3 (Constant)	42.741	.626		68.285	.000
Gender	2.433	1.145	.170	2.125	.035

a. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 10. Partial regression coefficients of Backward Method for the degree of prediction of independent variables.

With regard to the results of Tables 9 and 10, firstly the model is considered with all the independent variables (learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning

English and gender), and then these independent variables are removed based on their highest amount of significance.

*Excluded Variables<sup>c</sup>*

Model	Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Colinearity Statistics
					Tolerance
2 Average for Motivation	-.007 <sup>a</sup>	-.088	.930	-.007	.991
3 Average for Motivation	-.008 <sup>b</sup>	-.094	.925	-.008	.993
Learning Style Preferences	.011 <sup>b</sup>	.140	.889	.011	.993

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Learning Style Preferences, Gender

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Gender

c. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 11. Excluded variables in Backward Method.

Excluded independent variables are presented in Table 11, respectively. In this table there are non-significant coefficients, indicating that these variables do not contribute much to the model. Taking the process of Backward Method into account, in the first step motivation had the highest significant value, so it was removed ( $p=0.93$ ). Then the backward procedure was continued regarding the two variables of learning style preference and gender. In this section, learning style preference had a higher significant value ( $p=0.889$ ). Hence, learning style preference was the second removed variable from the model. Such being the case, there exists a regression model just in accordance with gender variable ( $p=0.035<0.05$ ). So, the most important significant predictor is gender variable. To sum it up, among these three independent variables, gender was the best predictor of foreign language proficiency.

## 7. Discussion

In accordance with the frequencies and percentages presented in Table 1, visual and auditory learning styles are the most frequently preferred styles among the learners, respectively. So, individuals do not learn in the same way(s). This aspect of the results of the study is congruent with findings of Tao (2011) who showed visual and auditory learning style preferences as preferred approaches to learning by Chinese learners. Not completely, but to some extent, this aspect of the results of the study supports those of Riazi and Mansoorian (2008). They found that auditory, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic learning style preferences were the major styles preferred by the participants of their study.

The results of crosstab procedure revealed that both genders have tendency towards visual and auditory learning styles, respectively (Table 4). Hence, most visual male and female learners prefer pictorial materials such as graphs, diagrams, taking notes, using highlighters, and copying written materials from the board, while auditory learners utilize audiotapes, take part in group discussions, read more slowly, explain well and are not afraid of speaking in classrooms. Riazi and Mansoorian (2008) found male learners to be more interested in tactile, kinaesthetic, and group learning styles, while female learners were less willing to use these styles.

According to Table 5, independent variables of learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning English and gender were not related to one another. This is due to the fact that learning style preferences of the learners are not taken into account either by learners or instructors. Learners are not well aware of their peculiar way(s) of learning, so they get bored in the process of learning and lose their motivation towards the subjects and materials. In addition, instructors' teaching methods and techniques are more or less the same in different classrooms, which, in turn, causes learners to lose interest and motivation. In fact, as stated by Harrelson, Dunn, and Wright (1998), learning style can be expressed very closely in the form of teaching style when an educator teaches. Salem (2006) found no significant gender differences in the overall motivation. Gunes (2004) also came to the point that there is not a significant relationship between learners' learning styles and their gender. Gomleksiz (2010) found significant differences between individuals' attitudes and their gender.

As Table 6 indicated, in general, learning styles did not influence language achievement since learning styles and language proficiency had no significant relationship with each other. One possible explanation for this aspect of the study is ignoring styles in classrooms by teachers. For example, teachers want learners to listen and respond to tests that are the worst test types for visual learners who prefer reading essays to learn through seeing. They expect learners to read passages and write the related answers to them in a timed test, which is the worst test type for auditory learners who prefer to write responses to lectures they have listened to. Teachers would rather give long tests and essays that are the worst test type for kinaesthetic learners who prefer multiple choice items, fill-in-the blanks and short definitions. In reality, as maintained by Tao (2011), a common phenomenon which can be observed in most learning/teaching environments is that certain dominant teaching styles might not conform to students' preferred learning style and consequently their learning becomes worse. Gunes (2004) hold the view that individuals' learning style preferences and their achievement scores do not have any significant relationship with each other. Tao (2011) came to the conclusion that learning style preferences are not strong predictors of foreign language achievement. In other words, they are indirectly and weakly connected to foreign language proficiency.

The results of multiple regression and Backward Method (Tables 7 & 9) revealed that among all the independent variables (learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning English, and gender) gender was the best predictor of language proficiency. As mentioned earlier, ignoring learning style preferences in classrooms, particularly by teachers might be a reason for lack of significant relationships between learning styles and language proficiency. Moreover, based on the related literature, motivation is of great importance in the realm of language proficiency and acts as a fundamental predictor of language achievement. With regard to learning style preferences, results of the current study are congruent with those of Gunes (2004) who discovered no significant relationships between individuals' learning style preferences and their achievement. Regarding motivation, Salem (2006) found that motivation does not correlate with EFL proficiency generally. Among nineteen modalities used in her study, Tao (2011) also did not find motivation as a modality that could predict foreign language proficiency. The reason why motivation did not correlate with language proficiency can be attributed to the fact that some participants did not actually take the study seriously enough and did not respond to the motivation and attitude questionnaire accurately enough. Of course, the participants of the study should not be blamed so much either since they had already taken part in some other studies throughout the same semester when the data were collected for the present study and they had, in fact, lost their motivation to take the job seriously enough. However, the results of the present

study are in sharp contrast with those of Ghazvini and Khajehpoor (2011). Regarding motivation, they found female learners integratively motivated and male learners instrumentally motivated to learn English. Based on analytic and descriptive approaches, Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) also pinpointed motivation and attitudes have great roles to increase individuals' foreign language proficiency. In order to explain the difference between the findings of the present study and that of Oroujlou and Vahedi, one can refer to Yeung, Lau, and Nie (2011) who believed that although motivation has an important impact on essential academic outcomes, learners' motivation may diminish as they grow up.

## **8. Conclusion and pedagogical implications of the study**

Referring back to the findings of the present study, the results indicated that visual and auditory learning styles were the most popular and frequently used styles among the Iranian EFL learners. Visual learning style was the first and most frequently preferred learning style by both male and female learners; in addition, auditory learning style was the second preferred learning style for both genders. The results also indicated no association between gender and learning style preferences, gender and motivation and attitude towards learning English, and learning style preferences and motivation and attitude towards learning English. In other words, the relationship between the aforementioned variables was not statistically significant. In light of the results of the study, learning style preferences did not have any significant influence on foreign language proficiency. That is, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles had no relationship with learners' language proficiency. Finally, among the independent variables learning style preferences, motivation and attitude towards learning English and gender, gender was the best predictor of language proficiency.

Based on the finding of the study, the following pedagogical implications can be proposed. First of all, findings of this study are of great importance to learners in order to show the importance of learning style preferences. That is, distinguishing the way(s) through which individuals can acquire the language is what the learners should identify. This way, individuals will be acquainted with their strong and weak points during the learning processes and they will share more responsibilities for their personal learning. Second, findings of the study seem to be crucially important to instructors in order to select suitable teaching methods and materials to enhance their learners' achievements. In other words, individuals learn in various ways and instructors should teach through miscellaneous methods.

Last but not least, findings of the present study can provide valuable information to design appropriate materials for successful teaching. Hence, suitable materials can be developed for various groups of individuals at various levels based on their preferred learning styles.

### **8.1. Limitations of the study**

Although insights of the present study seem to be beneficial in the field of language learning/teaching, it suffers from one major limitation that is related to sampling and participants. The 154 participants of the study were chosen based on convenience sampling; furthermore, they were mostly females and studied in Shiraz University. It was, in fact, almost impossible to enquire more subjects to take part in the study due to lack of interest on the students' part to participate in the study and also owing to the limited number of EFL learners in the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics of Shiraz University. In fact, as mentioned earlier, some of the participants did not take the study seriously enough and, as a result, did not respond to the motivation and attitudes questionnaire accurately



enough. The imbalance between the number of participants in terms of gender may have had an effect on the findings of the study; however, it was not actually possible to reach such a balance in this study due to the existing difference in the number of males and females studying English at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics of Shiraz University. Moreover, the researcher had to limit the participants of the study to Shiraz University. This, in turn, limits the generalizability of research findings.

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