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- *Threshold* welcomes contributions of original (not previously published) works of interest in the disciplines of Translation Studies, English Language Teaching, English Literature and Comparative Studies along with related reports, news, profiles of eminent scholars, book reviews, and creative writings.

- The contributors are expected to submit their works for the coming issue no later than 30 Khordad, 1392.

- Prospective authors are invited to submit their materials to the journal E-mail address: thresholdsbu@gmail.com

- The manuscripts are evaluated by editors of each section and at least two referees from the advisory board.

- The editors require the following format styles:
  - Informative title
  - Abstract (150-200 words)
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  - Notes and references

- The name of the author(s) should appear on the first page, with the present affiliation, full address, phone number, and current email address.

- Microsoft word 2007 is preferred, using Times New Roman font and the size of 11 with single space between the lines for the abstracts and the same font size and line spacing for the body of the paper. Graphics can be in JPEG format.

- Footnotes should only be used for commentaries and explanations, not for giving references.

- All papers are required to follow the APA style for citations and references.
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Editorial

I should thank God for all His grace, which made the publication of this new issue of Threshold possible. I should also be grateful to all our contributors for the interest they have shown in our journal and for their valuable contributions so far. Needless to say, the new issue you have in your hands now is the end product of many people's efforts in different areas.

I am pleased to announce two main changes regarding our editorial policies. First, in order to enhance the quality of our journal, Threshold is going to be published biannually from now on. Accordingly, as you might have already noticed, our volume/number system has undergone a change. Second, due to the low rate of high-quality submissions for "Translation Studies" section, the editorial board has been convinced to remove this section from the journal.

I am also proud of informing you that we have succeeded in obtaining an ISSN code (2322-4495), which could be considered as another step toward further establishment and promotion of Threshold.

Mehrdad Yousefpooori-Naeim

Editor-in-Chief
Literary Studies
Frantz Fanon (ca. 1925 - 1961) was born in Martinique, in the French Caribbean, and studied at a lycée in Fort-de-France. During the Second World War, he served with the French Army in North Africa and received the Croix de Guerre in 1944. After returning to France, he studied psychiatry in Paris and Lyons. At this time, he composed his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), an investigation of colonialism from the perspective of race consciousness and race relations. In 1952, Fanon began practicing psychiatry in Algeria, at Blida-Joinville hospital, where he was director of the psychiatric ward. The war between French colonial forces and the National Liberation Front (NLF) began in 1954. By 1956, Fanon had resigned and begun his work with the liberation movement.

He traveled all over North and Saharan African, visiting guerilla camps and training medical personnel. In the last few years of his life, in addition to writing several books, he worked as an ambassador of the provisional Algerian government to Ghana, edited a journal in Tunisia, and set up the first African psychiatric clinic. He died of leukemia in Washington, DC, but was buried in Algeria. Fanon’s work is largely concerned with African colonialism and the Algerian independence movement. *Toward an African Revolution*, published posthumously, brought together his shorter works published in NLF newspapers. Other essays on Algeria and the Algerian “national psyche” were compiled in *A Dying Colonialism* (1959).

His most important work, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), was also his last. Unlike the essay collections, this volume presented a neo-Hegelian critique of colonialism, an integrated study of spontaneity and colonial violence, national
consciousness, nationalist parties and leaders, the native intellectual, and the psychological trauma exacted by colonial wars. He was as critical of the nationalist bourgeoisie that inherited the privileges of the European colonizers as he was of the colonizers themselves. He understood that anti-colonial resistance could only succeed if the people were given the tools to “recreate” themselves as human beings. If necessary, they must do this through violence. Thus, the recognition and theorization of this hard necessity earned Fanon some criticism.

**Theories and Cast of Mind**

Fanon’s ideas about the nation are indeed influential. He rejected the Western conception of the nation as a “universal standpoint” that subsumes all particulars in the fulfillment of its own abstract freedom. Universality instead belongs to the people who comprehend themselves as a nation. The people’s struggle is largely the struggle “to make the totality of the nation a reality to each citizen”.

However, Fanon noted a deep chasm between the people in the countryside and the national bourgeoisie in the urban areas whose members fill the former colonial bureaucracies and enjoy the fruits of Western style corruption. Little by little, accommodations are made with former colonial rulers in order to sustain the privileges of power. This stage of decolonization, when nationalist groups consciously and unconsciously mimic the political formations of the imperial state, inevitably reveals the complicity that tempts even the most progressive anti-colonial groups to build political parties and unions on Metropolitan models.

Fanon, have embraced the idea of “emancipatory complicity,” the idea that nationalist or postcolonial critique can sustain itself within a social and political environment shot through with neocolonial relationships and lingering colonialist habits, historical determinations that can, if not overcome, work against the creative, forward-looking power of postcolonial nationhood. As Fanon points out in his *Wretched of the Earth*, nationalism is concerned not with inheriting power but with “the living expression of the nation” which “is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women”. Only this form of national consciousness will enable solidarity movements with other emergent postcolonial nations. “National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension”.

The determination to see the native at an earlier stage of development is, to Fanon, part of the political culture of colonialism, which abominated the native as ‘the enemy of values . . . the deforming element disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality’ This dehumanization of the colonized is not a mere fictional trope able to satisfy the prejudices of the colonizing and justify their
presence in someone else’s country. It remakes the settler and the native in turn as types of subjects, bearing completely different moral and cultural legacies: the colonized is unstable, irrational and inarticulate; the colonizer, on the other hand, is seen as a stabilizing force, bearing the transcendent discourses of enlightened humanity that cannot only rationalize the need for colonial domination and subordination, but also drown out the particularities and specificities of local culture with the thunderous and confident universal statements about the progress of humanity.

Major Works

**Black Skin White Masks (1952):** The explosion will not happen today. It is too soon … or too late. First published in English in 1968, Frantz Fanon's seminal text was immediately acclaimed as a classic of black liberationalist writing. Fanon's descriptions of the feelings of inadequacy and dependence experienced by people of color in a white world are as salient and as compelling as ever. Fanon identifies a devastating pathology at the heart of Western culture, a denial of difference that persists to this day. His writings speak to all who continue the struggle for political and cultural liberation in our troubled times.

**The Wretched of the Earth (1961):** A distinguished psychiatrist from Martinique who took part in the Algerian Nationalist Movement, Frantz Fanon was one of the most important theorists of revolutionary struggle, colonialism, and racial difference in history. Fanon's masterwork is a classic alongside Edward Said's *Orientalism* or *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and it is now available in a new
translation that updates its language for a new generation of readers. The Wretched of the Earth is a brilliant analysis of the psychology of the colonized and their path to liberation. Bearing singular insight into the rage and frustration of colonized peoples, and the role of violence in effecting historical change, the book incisively attacks the twin perils of post independence colonial politics: the disenfranchisement of the masses by the elites on the one hand, and intertribal and interfaith animosities on the other. Fanon's analysis, a veritable handbook of social reorganization for leaders of emerging nations, has been reflected all too clearly in the corruption and violence that has plagued present-day Africa. The Wretched of the Earth has had a major impact on civil rights, anticolonialism, and black consciousness movements around the world.

A Dying Colonialism (1959): An incisive and illuminating account of how, during the Algerian Revolution, the people of Algeria changed centuries-old cultural patterns and embraced certain ancient cultural practices long derided by their colonialist oppressors as primitive, in order to destroy those same oppressors. Fanon uses the fifth year of the Algerian Revolution as a point of departure for an explication of the inevitable dynamics of colonial oppression.

Towards the African Revolution (1969): This powerful collection of articles, essays, and letters spans the period between Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961), Fanon’s landmark manifesto on the psychology of the colonized and the means of empowerment necessary for their liberation. These pieces display the genesis of some of Fanon’s greatest ideas — ideas that became so vital to the leaders of the American civil rights movement.
Hardy’s Sue and Her Failure in the Mirror of Foucauldian Concept of Individuality

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**Abstract**

The paper is a study of Thomas Hardy’s female character, Sue, in *Jude the Obscure*. To discover the reasons for Sue’s failure in dealing with both society and her personal life, the character is analyzed from the framework of Foucauldian power relations and the concept of individuality. According to Foucault’s dynamic view of power relations, individuals or subjects in every society are free and dynamic and power produces individuals who act, and are not simply objects upon whom others act. Individuals change and take shape after they engage in power relations, and this is how our participation in power relations literally makes us who we are. In other words, an individual is not passive and a victim of power relations, but free to succumb to the demands of power relations or use the possibilities before him and practice his own ethics. The authors of this paper argue that while the female protagonist of Hardy’s novel enjoys all three Foucauldian necessary elements for creating a new self other than the normalized self that power relation has created for her. Her bitter defeat at the end is the proof of her illusive self and demonstrates that she has been unable to shake her normalized self off.

**Keywords:** Foucault, individuality, Hardy, freedom, power relations
Introduction

The present study begins with a brief introduction to Foucault’s concept of individuality and then continues with a close study of Sue, a Hardian character using a Foucauldian framework. This does not seem to have received enough attention by the researchers. A survey of the literature related to *Jude the Obscure* shows that it has been mainly approached through frameworks of determinism, feminism, psychoanalysis among others. However, Sue’s failure as presented in Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, we believe, is firmly grounded in Foucault’s concept of power and individuality. Here, we study Sue, the female protagonist of Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, in the light of Foucault’s concept of individuality, and try to shed light on this character and put her in the context of a postmodern concept that emerged years after Hardy wrote the novel as an attempt to portray a slice of life as he perceived it in the closing years of the nineteenth century. To do this we first need to have a brief survey of Foucault’s concept of individuality to see how it helps us to come to a new understanding of the character of Sue in *Jude the Obscure*. This is explored through analysis of the novel’s main body, and the extracts cited in each part serve mainly to contextualize and support such type of manifestation. The article ends, conclusively, by briefly speculating on the reasons for the above phenomenon, giving readers a chance to learn how to “ultimately develop their creative and critical faculties and … create enough confidence in them to become autonomous” (Mishra 2011, p. 57) readers and critics of literature and literary texts.

**Foucault’s Concept of Individuality**

In Foucault’s view, one essentially important role of power is that it creates individuals who are actually subjects. There are at least three different implications for this idea. First, in the grammatical sense, power produces subjects who act and are not simply objects upon whom others act. The distinction is between an active agent rather than a passive victim. Second, as an echo of the sovereign-subject relationship, power produces subjects who are tied to others by modifiable bonds of obligation or control. And third, power creates subjects as a philosophical term for a self: a person (or group) with an identity and self-understanding. In Foucault’s more pejorative formulation, a subject is “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (Foucault 1982, p. 212). Thus, who we are, how we relate to ourselves, even our very identities and actions are all products of power – products of our interactions in human relationships (Piomelli 2004, p. 437).
For Foucault, individuals and groups are “neither preformed before they engage in power relations, nor unchanged by those relations” (Piomelli 2004, 437); this implies that our participation in power relations literally makes us who we are. For Foucault, it is the push and pull of human relationships that shape us as individuals and groups – as others seek to manage us, we succumb to or resist those efforts, and in turn we seek to steer the conduct of others, as well as to mold ourselves. As Foucault (1980) states in a lecture:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike… in fact it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals (98).

Hence, an individual to Foucault is dynamic and capable of change. One is not the absolute slave of the conditions he or she lives in; but there is enough space to act and perform one’s own ethics. The individual that Foucault has in mind is a free subject who can either succumb to the norms of society or act in one’s own way. Since according to Foucault power is dynamic and productive, and resistance is inherent to it, the individual has the space for acting in the power relation in a way that s/he can be far from the docile body who simply acts as normalized society demands. The Foucauldian individual is one who can be both the slave of normalization and the free subject who acts according to his/her own ethics, and this is while s/he still lives within the much normalized society.

Foucault urges his readers to refuse or resist being governed in the ways we currently are, to reject the identity and subjectivity – “the manner in which we behave and in which we become conscious of ourselves” (Foucault 1992, p.129) – that is presented to and imposed on us. He encourages us, by applying techniques of the self, to practice our liberty to invent new forms of subjectivity; that is, he urges us to think, act and relate to ourselves differently than in the ways we are programmed or managed. As he writes “we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of… [the] kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries” (Foucault 1982, p. 216). In his words “liberty is a practice … Liberty is what must be exercised” (Foucault 2002, p. 354). Thus, Foucault believes that one cannot get rid of the normalization process and the normalized society unless s/he makes a self, an identity that is independent, purely self-made and conscious of the condition surrounding and affecting him/her. Accordingly, it can be inferred that he suggests “care of the self” as a way to overcome the normalized self that is imposed on individuals through power relations.
As it is suggested in Foucault’s argument, “care of the self” is a series of technologies and activities by which one gains self-knowledge and skills in order to improve oneself. In order to practice “care of the self” in the way that Foucault recommends, we need to intensify our relations with ourselves and with others. Foucault’s “care of the self” is a social practice: self creation is neither possible nor practiced in isolation but it happens by being in dialogue with other people around. As Foucault elaborates on the subject “[care of the self] constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice … The care of the self – or the attention that he advocates to the care that others should take of themselves – appears then as an intensification of social relations” (Foucault 1986, p.51). As Infinito (2003) summarizes Foucault’s argument in his What is Enlightenment?

There are three decisive elements which have key roles in ethical self formation:

Firstly, an environment that encourages experimentation with the self is needed. Ethical self-formation requires a type of safe, experimental environment where individuals can participate in the ongoing production of themselves. It needs a space within which subjects can try out alternative modes of being a self in front of others and where they can both witness and generate for the experiments of other selves. (14)

Secondly, an awareness of one’s current conditions as defined by the given culture and historical moment is required (Infinito 2003, p. 14). We understand our present condition and how our identity has been shaped by investigating the historical epoch into which we are born and scrutinizing its associated discourses. Foucault supports the idea that by observing the world we are living in and our identity as a product of accidental, arbitrary and man-made games of truth, we can gain a more useful understanding of our past and present situation. Such an understanding prevents us from glorifying the present by giving it a universal significance or abandoning it in search of something better. We know that we always remain in the world, but we should not give in to it and miss our chances for bringing change. In this way, though we criticize our condition, we do not despair and through obtaining a good understanding of our past and present we can gain the motivation and have the reason for bringing a change to the world we live in. As Foucault maintains:

That criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value but, rather, as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying, … And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will
not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to
do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has
made what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking
what we are, do or think. (Foucault 1984, p. 47)

What he means by this is that to create a possibility for change, it is necessary to
build an understanding of present reality through genealogical inquiry.

Thirdly, the subject should have an attitude or disposition to critique (Infinito
2003, p. 14). According to Foucault, critical attitude is the willingness to hold at
the same time, both the reality of the present and ourselves and the idea of
ourselves as an object of purposeful elaboration. This means that we should
accept to see ourselves in a sphere where the substance of acceptance and
substance of change coexist.

Relying on Foucault’s notion of individuality and trying to read Hardy’s novel
in the light of his theories, we believe that Hardy knows an individual as one who
can be both a slave of normalization and the free subject acting according to
his/her own ethics while still living within the much normalized society. What
we do here in this paper is significant in itself because it can take us to a new
interpretation of Hardy’s novel, and give the readers a chance to see what ideas
Hardy has had about power, power relations, individuality and identity, and how
he has presented them in his novel.

SUE: A Failure as a Foucauldian Subject

In Jude the Obscure, Sue seems to be a different woman, a woman who has not
succumbed to the conventions and arbitrary norms of her society. She may seem
to have already gone through a successful process of self-formation. Observing
her throughout the story, one, like Jude, gets surprised by her liberal ideas, and
cannot help it but to believe that she is “a striking model of advanced
womanhood, aligning herself with Mill and striving to attain a high and beautiful
level of existence” (Hyde 1965, p. 156). It surprises us to find her describing
herself this way:

My life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in
me. I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed
with them – one or two of them particularly – almost as one of their
own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught
to feel – to be on their guard against attacks on their virtue; for no
average men – no man short of a sensual savage – will molest a woman
by day or night, at home or abroad, unless she invites him. […]

11
However, what I was going to say is that when I was eighteen I formed a friendly intimacy with an undergraduate at Christminster, and he taught me a great deal, and lent me books which I should never got hold of otherwise. (Hardy 1998, p. 72)

As it is evident from this quotation, Sue has been brought up in an environment that has allowed her to practice other alternatives in spite of the immediate expectations of her class. She was brought up by her father in town – her mother has died so soon to have any effect on her conduct. Christminster is a big city that offers plenty of opportunities to people desiring to practice new realms. Sue has been free from a rigid discipline, and it seems that because of her father’s carelessness toward her conduct she has been able to move among men so freely. She has received plenty of education that has helped her to shape her mind quite different from other women. This quality of her personality, as she herself confesses, is due to her graduate friend:

I have no respect for Christminster whatever, except, in a qualified degree, on its intellectual side, […] My friend I spoke of took that out of me. He was the most irreligious man I ever knew, and the most moral. And intellect at Christminster is new wine in old bottles. The medievalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go. (Hardy 1998, 137)

This means that she has not acquired this view of the world by her own searching and contemplation on life, but by imitating her graduate friend whose novel ideas and conduct has apparently fascinated Sue in a surprising way. Hence, Sue has not been able to take advantage of her encouraging environment effectively. She has only touched the surface and has not been able to go to the depth of realities, and this reminds us of her marriage when, as she says, she thought she “was old enough … very experienced” to rush on doing what she has done (Hardy 1998, p. 199). She has a critical view which is not truly her own but a sort of illusion, a surprising “cock-sureness of the fool” (Hardy 1998, p. 199). She criticises the conventions and norms of society but whenever it comes to act seriously, she fails to perform her own views. A good example of this is when she fails to express her love for Jude since loving a cousin is not normal.

Sue assumes that she is liberal both in thinking and action but deep inside she seems to be a well normalized woman who cannot actively and effectively resist norms of society; that is why against her heart, she marries Phillotson to act according to the norms of morality and middle class marriage. In fact, Sue has been familiar with new revolutionary ideas and has been fascinated with them
without being prepared actually to practice them. This is the reason that while Jude persists in getting close to her, Sue cries “I don't know what to do! … Don't come near me, Jude, because you mustn't. Don’t—don't!” (Hardy 1998, p. 197). She has never been able to effectively use the three elements necessary for “care of the self” which Foucault believes one needs to consider if he or she wants to create a new self capable of resisting the norms within the much normalized system. Just as the aforementioned example shows, Sue desires Jude but cannot free her real self from the burden that the normalized system imposes on her. Thus, although she is familiar with critical thinking and has a good knowledge of her time, she is not well aware of the condition she lives in, the consequence of her decisions, and above all her own identity as a normalized individual.

When she fails to act as she thinks she relates her failure either to the normalized society or to her own gender as a woman. Hence, being a woman and considered as an inferior being in the society she is living in, she seems not to have enough courage to exercise her unconventional ideas. Her distress and accompanied disappointment in herself get disclosed in what she says about herself:

...before I married him I had never thought out fully what marriage meant, even though I knew. It was idiotic of me – there is no excuse. I was old enough, and I thought I was very experienced. So I rushed on, when I had got into that training school scrape, with all the cocksureness of the fool that I was! I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one had done so ignorantly! I daresay it happens to lots of women, only they submit, and kick. When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what WILL they say! (Hardy 1998, p. 199)

In this scene she associates her failure to two causes, first her own ignorance at the time of marriage, and then the norms of society that do not allow subjects to undo things once they commit a mistake out of ignorance or lack of experience. However, Sue relates her failure at marriage to her own sex when explaining her feeling to Phillotson: “But I was a coward – as so many women are – and my theoretic unconventionality broke down” (Hardy, 205). This way she accepts her own fault as well as society’s severe norms that force individuals to act against their will. In fact, Sue’s marriage breaks down since she has no true understanding of her own sexual needs and desires except for what society demands her or what her so-called liberal thinking, which is only a fake mask, expects her; it is the society that shapes her mind to believe that she is a “coward as so many women are” (Hardy 1998, p. 205).
It is an unfortunate fact that Sue never tries to overcome her weakness and keeps standing against norms by means of her fragile new self which is more an illusion than a real new self. This makes her act timidly and she is proved to be always in need of Jude to help her keep her alternative pose. This is what Jude, himself, pronounces in a night talk to Sue when he says that "I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion anymore! Let them go! Let me help you, even if I do love you …" (Hardy 1998, p. 198). After leaving her husband which actually needs a great courage on her part, she cannot face the world without Jude. Even to find courage to leave her husband she needs her husband’s consent so that she can leave him with the least twinge of conscience because she is not truly sure that she has the right to leave her legal husband on the ground that she does not love him:

Wouldn’t the woman, for example, be very bad-natured if she didn’t like to live with her husband; merely […] because she had a personal feeling against it – a physical objection – a fastidiousness, or whatever it may be called – although she might respect and be grateful to him? (Hardy 1998, p. 194)

Sue’s next step in trying to practice her own ethics and test her so-called new self is her insistence on not marrying Jude even when they are both divorced from their ex-spouses and need to marry for their sake of their adopted son; Arabella’s son. By saying that “But I think I would much rather go on living always as lovers, as we are living now, and only meeting by day,” (Hardy 1998, p. 234) she resists marrying Jude though she claims that she loves him best. Her reason for not submitting to marriage is her questionable belief that marriage would spoil their true love. She criticizes marriage institution severely and rejects it with a firm determination making it clear that if women accept to marry it is due to the “dignity it is assumed to confer, and the social advantages it gains them sometimes—a dignity and an advantage that I am quite willing to do without.” (Hardy 1998, p. 235). The problem that we find in this character’s way of thought is that she is naïve to the extent that she considers marriage institution as an entity that would bring disastrous outcomes to her love. She fails to see the actual reason behind failures in marriage and married life. She cannot think that marriage, in itself, may not be responsible for the unsatisfactory condition of married couples and is also incapable of thinking that couples’ absolute acceptance of the norms of marriage without giving them a careful thought and scrutiny (or without criticizing them and choosing the appropriate alternatives other than the immediate norms of marriage) are to be blamed and corrected.
Accordingly, Sue’s strong rejection of marriage and married life takes place without giving it a careful and critical observation. She devalues marriage because she thinks it has been responsible for the tragic downfall she and Jude have both experienced and suffered; that is why she introduces herself as “a wretch—broken by my distractions” (Hardy 1998, p. 318). This is while we can see the basis of the problem in her own character; it cannot be denied that she is a deeply normalized subject of the society that whenever accepts an institution’s rules and responsibility she cannot help it but to sheepishly obey all its demands and codes. She is not strong enough to shed off the norms away and choose her own way according to her own ethics. Her statement that “Another was made for me there, and ratified eternally in the church at Melchester” is an unconscious confession that she firmly believes in the established norms of society which are always imposed on individuals by institutions like the church (Hardy 1998, p. 319). In fact, despite her apparently modern appearance, Sue is much more normalized than Jude. She knows they are wrong but she has been so deeply accustomed to the norms that she cannot leave them behind and does shy away from acting according to her liberal ideas.

Therefore, we may claim that though Sue has acquired a new self, she had not been involved in creating it. Her actual self is evidently bending and fragile since it is only an illusion, a shadow of a true new self made by her efforts through a process of self-formation. Sue has never truly used the three decisive elements that we borrowed from Foucault and previously discussed in this paper; the elements that Foucault knows them necessary for creating a new self. While her environment seems to be sufficiently encouraging, instead of carefully and critically viewing the world and the reality of her time, she has imitated the intellectual pose of her graduate friend and just in a parrot-fashion repeats his views and the quotations of liberal thinkers such as Mills. She has never truly understood the meaning of what she claims to believe. Hence, whenever a test of her ethics appears she simply prefers to leave the situation instead of staying and finding some alternative within the very situation. Foucault believes that resistance is not outside power relation but it occurs in the very system that forces individual to act normally. But Sue prefers to leave the situation because she knows that her new self is not strong enough to stand against the normalization effect; hence, she leaves her job and then the training school due to her own inherent weakness. With a self that is still normalized under the guise of a sort of modern mask, Sue cannot resist power relation surrounding her, and the only thing that she is capable of doing is to leave the situation for a safer one. That is why she bitterly fears to enter another marriage relation. She is incapable of directly facing the situations and coping with them accordingly.

Ironically, she knows to what extent her ‘self’ is vulnerable and hence avoids it being tested. However, she cannot keep to this strategy of escape for a long
time. When her children are killed by Arabella’s son, she ultimately breaks down and reveals her true self; the normalized one which is an absolute servant of norms. This self is so docile that makes Jude’s disgust of the church that, as he thinks, is responsible for its creation. However, in contrast to Jude’s judgment this self is not resulted solely from the force of church, but it is the product of the normalization effect of the society in which the church stands as a great pushing force. In such society, a subject is born to be brought up by the existing norms and standards, and Sue is such a subject who has never been able to forge a new self. She sees this clearly when she confesses to Jude that “Perhaps the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as ours! Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers!” (Hardy 1998, p. 320).

Sue’s tragedy is that she knows too well that she is the product of the arbitrary conventions of her society; that her identity is not a genuine one, that she seems “so bad and worthless that [she] deserves the utmost rigor of lecturing!” (Hardy 1998, p. 235) yet, she is not strong enough to go through the process of self-creation because society does not let her to do so. Hence, she remains a self-contradictory character who is supposed to be in an unbalanced and fragile position for the rest of her miserable life in which she considers herself “such a vile creature—too worthless to mix with ordinary human beings” (Hardy 1998, p. 318). As such, she would seem a subject of the society who has to live with the dilemma that whether to permanently remain a normalized subject or try to be free through experimenting with a new mode of being. And this is the dilemma that would torture her until she comes to her last days. It is the most unfortunate that she, herself, knows of her being a normalized individual who should not be as docile as she is, and it is also unfortunate that she does not dare to do anything against the norms that finally determine her debilitating defeat. Her knowledge of her normalized subjectivity is her hell.

**Conclusion**

Based on the discussion we had here, in spite of her apparent unconventionality, Sue is deeply normalized and cannot act differently from what norms impose in an overwhelming way. She behaves as if she is against the norms of society or at least she does not really care about them as Jude does. However, deep in her nature she is a normal woman with a pack of borrowed imitated liberal ideas that makes her seem abnormal whereas in the most critical situations, she fails to transgress the norms. As we demonstrated by our discussion, it seems, on the surface, that Sue has already acquired a new self; she has been lucky enough to enjoy all three necessary elements for creating a new self other than the normalized self made by power relation. However, this new self is only a shadow and a fading illusion. Her bitter defeat at the end is the proof of her illusive self.
She has gone through the process of self-formation without enough knowledge and strength to take off her normalized self. She, only temporarily, pretends to be a liberal thinker but she can never act as she thinks since her apparent liberal ideas are not her own but imitated from her graduate friends without truly understanding them. She looks like a normalized woman and all her major acts prove it; her final return to Phillotson is the last and most significant evidence of her still normalized self that has been masked under the figure of a new self.

References


Consciousness vs. Unconsciousness: A Psychoanalytic Reading of “The Opponent of the Blur Nights”

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**Abstract**

In the following article, Golshiri’s short story “The Opponent of the Blur Nights” will be analyzed in the light of Freudian psychoanalysis. The main objective hoping to be achieved is threefold. Firstly, it will analyze the protagonist’s, the narrator, speech and actions to pinpoint his identity. He acquires his identity in the tension present between his conscious and unconscious. Secondly, Freudian notion of death drive will be scrutinized to determine whether the story has proved it wrong. This is of value because death continues to have a strong presence in the story as if the narrator is obsessed by it. Thirdly, it focuses on a game being played between the protagonist and his unconscious. The game possesses significance in the story because it is symbolic. This article by using Freudian theories, which are nowadays neglected to some extent, hopes to bring Golshiri’s short story into a new level of appreciation.

**Keywords:** Freud, death drive, identity, unconscious
Upon reading any fictional work, no matter what the genre is, the reader will be transformed into another world filled with its own unique particularities. This is an idea shared by many readers and critics such as Hillis Miller (Miller, 2002, p.24). One of the aspects that is very interesting for many readers, for some it may be frightening, is the psychological aspect of the characters, mainly of the protagonist. Golshiri’s short story “The Opponent of Blur Nights” is a literary fiction, which is ineffably rich in its psychological aspect. It especially deals with the issue of death and death work. Death work is intrinsically an abstraction. In this essay, the short story will be analyzed psychoanalytically. The protagonist’s identity is indeed presented baffling. Thus, one of the main points of this essay is explaining the identity of the character. Moreover, the notion of the death drive will be observed to reveal if the story is successful in refuting Freud’s idea and making death drive concrete. Finally, there is a special focus on the game that the protagonist plays, which gives it a symbolic significance. This symbolic potentiality is going to be scrutinized psychoanalytically to see if it consolidates the story’s richness.

“The Opponent of Blur Nights” besides granting an extraordinary level of pleasure in its first reading, offers more pleasure if the reader looks at it psychoanalytically in his or her second reading. It recounts the story of a married man who has trouble in sleeping for five nights. Therefore, he has to spend the nights awake. To entertain himself, he plays “takhte nard” a game played by two people. The aim in this game is to first gather all your beads at your base and then put them out. Two dices decide the number of movements. The first person who wins five rounds is the winner. The protagonist plays against an opponent that is not given a clear description. He does not even see his opponent. As the two plays, the story recounts other events that have happened to the protagonist. Thus, the story exploits the stream of consciousness technique. The story finishes at the break of dawn before they can end their game. It is important to mention that at the end of the story the reader faces a shock. In the process of the story, it convinces the reader that all the characters except the protagonist die; however, at the end there are some conversations from the presumed dead characters proving that they are not dead. There are two options to explain such irregularity. One is that the incidents of the story happen in the mind of the protagonist when he is awake. He daydreams. The other one is that these are incidents happening to the narrator when he is asleep. To put it crudely, these are all a type of dream. Between these two, the second option seems more possible because the story exploits dream as a technique to forward the plot.

One of the baffling points of the story that invites the reader to contemplate is the mysterious existence of the protagonist’s opponent. There are no clear evidences in the story that this opponent is an individual. The protagonist starts
the game without seeing him in his flesh. He even draws his attention. The only prove that the opponent is there is his voice. However, voice alone is not hard evidence. Therefore, there is doubt about the identity of it. One of the speculations that the story really advertises is that this opponent is the unconscious mind of the protagonist. There are a couple of reasons to have this speculation, to believe that the two sides playing the game are the conscious and unconscious mind of the protagonist. Firstly, as it is mentioned earlier, the story uses the stream of consciousness technique. M.H. Abrams used definition of William James to describe the concept as “the unbroken flow of perceptions, memories, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind” (Abrams, 2009, p.345).

This technique developed and used abundantly in the beginning of the 20th century, the height of Modernism (Bressler, 2007, p.102). Secondly, the presence of the man’s wife, Akhtar, means the disappearance of the opponent. In the middle of the story, the opponent says that “if she [Akhtar] comes here?” I said, “You play your game.” He stood up and said, “Till I get back you play instead of me too.” Then the narrator tells us that he was silent during the time Akhtar was in the yard. The question comes to the mind of the reader. Why does the opponent become silent when the wife enters? If the opponent is just a man, and he has done nothing wrong, he should not become silent in her presence. Thirdly, when there is indication that dawn is near, the opponent insists that they must finish their game before the sunrise. He tries to persuade the man to procrastinate the rest of the game to another time. His excuse was the annoyance sun rays would cause for his eyes. Surprisingly, they were unable to finish the game due to the arrival of sun and the disappearance of the opponent, “when I returned, [he] wasn’t there.” The third reason may still be unclear; however, it becomes more evident to know that unconscious is identified as the irrational side of human mind and conscious as the waking side (Bressler, 2007, p. 146). When the light of day comes, the opponent, the unconscious part, vanishes. It is further supported by the fact that he reappears at nights and disturbs the protagonist. Fourthly, as it is mentioned earlier, the protagonist starts the game without seeing his opponent, without knowing who the other person is.

Based on the four reasons in the previous paragraph, it is clear that the opponent is the protagonist’s unconscious mind. To believe that he is facing his unconscious mind in the game is very important to the formation and existence of the protagonist’s subjectivity. In Freudian system, a person’s identity is split. It is naturally divided into two. These two parts, the conscious and the unconscious mind, when are together form a complete identity. Therefore, the protagonist in order to be complete needs the opponent. He needs his unconsciousness despite the problems it causes for him. In Freudian system, every human being conscious is in constant battle to repress the destructive yet powerful contents of the unconscious mind. Mansfield asserts that the unconscious materials are vague and leftover thoughts of a person. That person’s consciousness tries to suppress
them. Nevertheless, every one of us including the protagonist in order to get our identity needs the presence of the unconscious (Mansfield, 2000, p. 28).

Another amazing fact about the identity of the protagonist that makes him distinguished is his name. The fact that he is nameless makes him distinguished from other characters. He, though the narrator, is the only figure in the story deprived of having a name. There are one or two other minor characters without name. The first step in having an identity is to have a name because all of us have a distinct name of ours. When a person does something and it is reported in the newspaper, his or her name is the first thing people will look for. Mr. X has done this or Mrs. Y has done that. Therefore, he faces trouble at the first step of acquiring an identity. However, being the narrator, he needs an identity that compensates lacking a name. His identity comes not from having a name but from having a struggle within his psyche.

When Freud was making his theories, he attempted to explain people’s excessive obsession with death. He believed that each human being has a death drive or thanatos. This death drive is a biological drive making it predetermined. Thus, it is an abstraction rather than a concrete entity (Tyson, 2006, p. 22). Golshiri’s short story is very interestingly obsessed with death because almost all the characters in the story in one way or another die. This death issue is a baffling point that the story never settles it decisively. When the story finishes, it makes the reader to ask, “Are the characters dead or alive?” The first instance of death is related to an incident Akhtar has read in the newspaper. The story recounts the murder of two children by their father and his immediate suicide while the mother, who has left the house at the urge of her husband, is at her mother’s house. It really affects Akhtar because later in the story she carries out the same scheme. The news in the paper foreshadows the action of Akhtar. She gives a lethal drug to her two children and herself. The only difference between the two events is the change of parents. In the newspaper, it is the father whereas in the story the mother commits the crime.

Akhtar is an example of a neurotic person. Her excessive obsession with death causes her depression that the reader may presume severe for three reasons. The first reason is related to two subsequent terrible experiences she had earlier in her life. She first lost Shamsi, probably her sister, though it is not for sure, and immediately after that, she lost her mother. It is an accepted fact that losing close people could cause severe traumas for people. In some cases treatment is impossible. This reason could be more than a reason. It could be a start for her obsession with death. The second reason is when she is questioning why their children should suffer losing them. What is the point of having children when they have to undergo the ordeal of losing their parents? This reason is closely related to the fear of intimacy, the core problem of Akhtar. Tyson defines the fear of intimacy as “the chronic and overpowering feeling that emotional closeness
will seriously hurt or destroy us and that we can remain emotionally safe only by
remaining at an emotional distance from others at all times.” (Tyson, 2006, p.16)
In the story, there is no intimacy between Akhtar and her husband or between
any other characters. It should be noted that the focus of the story is not this
defense mechanism. Its focus is identity and psychology of the protagonist. The
third reason is related to the news Akhtar read in the newspaper. If she were not
obsessed with death, why did she draw a circle around it? If she were not, why
did she read it for her husband? If she were not, why did she follow the pattern of
the news in killing her children and herself? Based on these three reasons, it is
obvious that she is not a sane person.

The second instance of death, which is related to Akhtar somehow mentioned
in the previous paragraph, is when the narrator is reminiscing how he met his
wife. In the process of remembering, he mentions that his wife has lost two close
relatives, firstly a person named Shamsi who died in a hospital in New York. The
relation between them is not clear yet I conjecture she could have been her sister
or she was a lose friend. The fact that they were close is certain. The other person
is her mother. In comparison with the first instance, the second one is concerned
about less important people and thus it requires less attention. The first instance
foreshadows the murder of the two children by their mother and the mother’s
suicide. It is one of the fundamental events of the story. The third instance is
when the narrator reports that their neighbor’s wife dies too. The reason for her
death is that she was pregnant and not careful about her conditions. She stayed
for a long time in the cold, rainy weather despite the requests of her husband, Mr.
Moghadami, and once the protagonist. The protagonist then narrates after Mr.
Moghadami’s wife was dead, Mr. Moghadami hanged himself from a tree in their
yard. As it is mentioned to the surprise of the reader, it is suggested that all the
characters are alive at the end of the story, Akhtar complaining about the radio
that it is on, or Mr. Moghadami watering the flowers and plants in his yard. It is
like the insertion of death in the protagonist’s dream making the whole story a
dream rather than a presentation of actual events. For it was not a dream but a
real narration, the matter that the characters are first dead, and then alive would
be ridiculous.

As it is mentioned in the last two paragraphs, almost all of the characters in
the story would die, even the least important ones. However, the protagonist does
not die. Why is he alive? Why does not he die? What is it that makes him
distinguished? The answer to all these questions lies in the simple fact that he
despite other characters is engaged in doing something. He plays a game with his
unconscious mind. This game is symbolic psychoanalytically. It is repeated a
couple of times. There are two possible interpretations for the game. Firstly,
since the protagonist is playing with his unconscious he gets his identity. His
consciousness and unconsciousness are together. This does not happen to any
other characters. He is the only character doing something. Secondly, it is for the purpose of the game they play. The story suggests that they are looking for a purpose for their game, for example saving Mrs. Moghadami’s baby or the protagonist’s serenity. Immediately the first example is put away by the story with the suggestion that the baby is dead.

The second example has a more stable ground in comparison. In the beginning of the game, the protagonist’s first suggestion about the purpose of the game they are about to play is that the opponent, the unconsciousness, has to leave them alone. “As I have said, if you [the opponent] lost, you have to leave us alone. He said, “I asked what you mean by us?” I said, “I and Akhtar and our two children and this neighbor’s wife and her child and even Moghadami’s.” He said “each person has to play for himself.” I said, “very well, so you have to leave me alone.” (My italics) The last two sentences that are italicized is further proof that the opponent is the protagonist’s unconsciousness. Back to the point, this opponent being the unconscious of the protagonist is the source of his troubles. “In psychoanalysis, the unconscious is the mental realm into which those aspects of mental life that are related to forbidden desires and instincts are consigned through the process of repression.” (Wolfreys, 2002, p. 100). “Each person has to play for himself” indicates that unconsciousness of each person is unique. It is impossible to find two persons with identical unconsciousness. He has problems since the repressed contents of his unconscious are resurfacing. David Carter writes, “The tensions caused between the need of such truths to surface and the determination of the self to repress them can lead to serious mental disturbance, what Freud called neurosis, involving compulsive behavior and obsessive modes of thinking.” (Carter, 2006, p. 71) Their coming to his consciousness has caused trouble for him. Their coming is the main reason that he is experiencing insomnia lately. His sleeplessness is the expression of his unconsciousness. What caused it is unknown. Consequently, he is playing with his unconsciousness for his serenity. He is playing to repress the stirring contents of his unconsciousness. The symbolic significance of the game is its crucial role in repressing the troublesome materials of the protagonist’s unconsciousness.

The idea that the whole story is a dream of the protagonist is supported by the fact that one’s unconsciousness is more liberate when one is asleep (Tyson, 2006, p. 28). In other words, the consciousness of a person equipped with various defense mechanisms is more vigilant when the person is awake or conscious. When a person is sleeping, he or she moves into the unconscious state causing the reduction or stopping of some of these defense mechanisms. One of the ways for the unconscious to resurface is through dreams. (Bressler, 2007, p. 145) Thus, the unconscious can move freely and bringing its irksome contents to the consciousness in disguised forms easily. When oneonders the story and the events it narrates, one understands the significance of dream better. If the
protagonist is not having a sort of dream, how could he have his disguised worrying unconscious materials? Their appearance in the consciousness does not happen through slip of tongues or jokes.

In conclusion, “The Opponent of Blur Nights” is a fascinating short story to read. Its psychological materials are so overwhelming that overlooking them is impossible even for a novice reader. The protagonist’s psyche is presented masterfully. One cannot determine for sure that if the events of the story are creation of his mind or they have actual reference in the real world. This feature alone is enough to make the work interesting. Moreover, his identity being a theme of the work is explored in the essay to reveal its potentiality. An identity that comes from the famous struggle of his consciousness and unconsciousness, an identity that is universal, inclusive, rather than exclusive. It is crucial to note that the notion of struggle is universal, not his consciousness or unconsciousness for they are distinctive. In addition, the presentation of death abundantly in the form of the protagonist’s dream is carried out skillfully. Golshiri connected death and dream in the story very good. It would not be a daring statement to say that the story has the worth of reading more than one time.

Reference


A Structuralist Reading of *Afra or the Day Passes*

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**Abstract**

This article tends to have a structuralist reading of Bahram Beyzaei’s play *Afra or the Day Passes*. This play deals with Afra’s life and how, in her social and cultural relationships, we could observe the difficulties of her life. The article begins with a number of theoretical definitions of structuralist movements and their key terms, especially on the very concept of binary opposition, since the abundance of the examples of this concept in our structuralist reading of the play necessitates such an extended space for its definition. Poverty/wealth, truth/untruth and the concept of ethnicity are the most apparent binary oppositions of the play.

**Keywords:** *Afra or the Day Passes*, structuralism, binary oppositions
Theoretical Introduction

This article is going to have a structuralist reading of the play *Afra or the Day Passes* by Bahram Beyzaei. The play is made up of several binary oppositions around which its whole theme evolves. Therefore to gain a better understanding of the play, an understanding of its binary opposition, or binarism as Jonathon Culler calls it, seems to be inevitable.

As argued in his *From the New Criticism to Deconstruction*, Structuralism in its earliest formulation has a genealogy that includes Fredinand de Saussure, Russian Formalism, Prague Structuralism, the anthropology of Levi Strauss, and the analyses of literature by French writers such as Ronald Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, A.J. Greimas, and Gerard Genette (Berman, 1988, p. 114).

The assumption that an understanding of the elements, processes, and rules of language serve as a foundation for critical theory and method places structuralist literary criticism, more specifically theoretical "poetics," either as a sub-discipline within linguistics or at the side of linguistics as a neighboring discipline with a method, a "rhetoric," comparable to, but not identical with, linguistics (Berman, 1988, p. 120).

In *Structuralist Poetry*, it is argued that linguistics is not simply a stimulus and source of inspiration but a methodological method that unifies the otherwise diverse projects of structuralists (Culler, 1989, p. 4). This sentence alone very well admits the importance and significance of linguistics among the structuralists. One of the major features of language, among other ones, on which structuralists base their ideas, is the fact that human being understands the meaning of the words in their relations to other words and mainly in opposition to other words. In other words, "relation" becomes a significant aspect of language on which structuralists focus. Relations are important for what they can explain: meaningful contrasts and permitted or forbidden combinations (Culler, 1989, p. 14). Culler believes that the advantage and also the danger of binarism lie in that it allows classifying everything. This can be done by finding some differences in the items presented to human being. Levi-Strauss argues that this opposition between two items seems to be a simplification while it leads to a complication as far as the difference is qualitative. If one opposes A to B and X to Y, the two cases become similar because each involves the presence and absence of a given feature, but this similarity is deceptive in that the features in question may be of very different kinds. According to Levi-Strauss, it is the limit inherent in the nature of certain ideological operations rather than methodological difficulty. In fact the weakness as well as the strength of the ideological operations lies in the fact that they can be logical as far as they as rooted in the qualitative.
Additionally, the reason why binarism is so pervasive in literature is that it can be applied to order the most heterogeneous elements: "when two things are set in opposition to one another the reader is forced to explore qualitative similarities and differences, to make a connection as to derive meaning from the disjunction" (Culler, 1989, p. 15).

In Critical Theory Today, it is argued that according to Saussure the components of a system interact and therefore because of their relation they form a working unit. And we perceive these components only because of their differences. Basically according to structuralism, the human mind perceives differences in terms of opposites which structuralists call binary opposition (Tyson, 2007, p. 202). This is how the opposites, their relations and their differences become important in the perception of the structure of literary works especially.

**Plot Summary**

Before applying structuralism to the play at hand, I would like to offer a very short summary of what happens in the play and then I will have a reading of it in the light of its binary oppositions.

*Afra* was published in 1376 but it was not until 1387 when it was produced on stage. It turned to a very successful performance and was welcomed by the audience. The play is divided to no acts and no scenes; it just starts with every character giving an account of what is happening at the time of the play and also very brief references to the past and later on moves to their interactions and its aftermath. Every character somewhat introduces himself or herself at the beginning. The main focus of the play and its protagonist is Afra, a teacher, and her family consisting of mother, Borna, in the 5th grade primary school and a student of Afra, and Manda, the baby of the family. Their father who apparently has been a policeman has been martyred in an offensive. They are leading a very difficult life mainly due to financial problems. Afra and her family along with almost 10 other families are living in an old house which has once been a part of Shazdeh Badrolmolouk's house, and which she has divided to small suits so that she can make a profit out of it. She is a remainder of the once-royal family, Ghajar, and now claims that the entire place belongs to her and her family. She has also a son, Shazdeh Cholman Mirza, living with her. He is in his 20s or 30s but mentally no older than a five-year-old boy. The problem is that he has never been let to grow up. His mother has always kept him isolated. He had never been allowed to go out and play or socialize with people living around him as his mother believed birds of a feature flock together, even he is banned from bike riding outdoors. Therefore the upshot of such an upbringing turns to become a gauche person with no social graces
whom no one desires to marry and live with; hence becoming the main concern for Shazde Badrolmolouk. Seeking to persuade Afra to consent to marry Cholman Mirza, but to no avail, Badrolmolouk frames Afra. Consequently she becomes imprisoned which leaves her social status and job and family face at stake in the small district in which they live. To add insult to injury, Hamid Shayan who claims to be Afra’s lover and has been trying to improve his small business and increase his income gets drastically disillusioned. He distributes the money he has been saving for his wedding ceremony among Afra’s students to run everywhere and tell every single person in their district of Afra’s imprisonment and accusation, and also the fact that whatever present she gave to her student were stolen from the shop. The police man, Sarkar Khademi, who is going to be retired in less than a week, is absolutely perplexed in such a situation. On the one hand, feeling indebted to Afra’s father, he wants to help Afra, on the other hand, stands Shazdeh Badrolmolouk who has been his landlady for a long time and is so powerful that everyone accepts whatever she says. Finally with the help of Mr. No’e Bashari, who is the valuer, and Cholman Mirza’s confession, Afra, is released. In fact, while assessing the value of Shazdeh Badrolmolouk’s house, he hears Shazdeh Cholman Mirza confessing that he himself has stolen all the jewelry and other things from the guests’ pockets, and reveals his mother’s evil plans for the poor teacher with whom he is in love. Ironically, he believes that her mother seeks to degrade him in Afra’s mind and shatter the relationship they have and his love for him while her mother is trying to persuade Afra to marry him. At last, Afra comes back home, but they are shocked by the traumatic nature of what has happened to them especially what their neighbors did to them.

Disillusioned and exhausted someone knocks at the door; yes, he is Afra’s cousin. But how? Who cares? What counts is that he is here with them, so Afra was right; he had a cousin in deed. This very fact leaves all those who considered her a liar ashamed. Her once imaginary cousin himself says that

I received his letter [Borna’s letter]. Do you believe? For so many years you keep sending a letter with an address on it, but it never gets delivered. But this time I received a letter without any addresses but it was really for me (p. 90).

Theoretical Application

The major binary opposition in the play is the reality/illusion opposition. This opposition can be considered in the play almost in relation to all of the characters. Apparently this opposition is more conspicuous with regard to Afra and her world. She is a teacher; she has to lead their life; however her mother,
Afsar Khanoum also works for Shazdeh Badromolouk. As mentioned in the summary of the play, Shazdeh Badromolouk who is too worried about his son's future seeks to make Afra marry him, but Afra cannot accept such a proposal. Therefore, she concocts her own story. She tries to force her dream upon the world. This dream is the dream of having a cousin, an engineer, who is her fiancé. From the very beginning of the play this issue is approached in a way that the reader cannot make up his or her mind as to the trueness of the existence of such a cousin. Once Afsar Khanoum is sick and is having fits of delirium she asks Afra "why isn't there any news from your cousin?" (p. 11). Then, Afra wonders whether or not they really have any cousins at all. As this matter turns to an obsession for Afra, she asks her students to write a letter to their imaginary cousin and tell him that their lives are passing very difficultly and they need his help. Borna, as her student, while writing his composition talks of some picture they have. The picture is so murky that one cannot distinguish the faces (p. 27). Shazdeh Badrolmolouk does not believe Afra's story though:

Khanoum Shazdeh: enough! We both know that there's no such a thing as a cousin!

Afra: I said, ma'am, I got married to a cousin who is not only my cousin but one who has been a lover for so many years.

......

Afra: I said believe me ma'am. I'm awaiting him by all my heart.

Khanoum Shazdeh: hee! Just in dreams?

Afra: what's the difference? The only important thing is that whenever I need him, he comes to help me (p. 52).

The distinction between the opposition is sometimes shattered such as in these examples. In fact, this opposition on this level not only concerns itself with Afra alone, but also with her whole family.

Another level on which this very opposition can be overseen is in relation to Shazdeh Badrolmolouk. She is resistant to reality. She cannot accept that her family was once a royal family but not anymore. She still tries to show off the superiority of her blood. Close consideration reveals that actually she is bullying the people around her. She does whatever pleases her regardless of the rights of those on whom she is playing trick or those whom she is framing. She, like Afra, prefers illusion to reality. She also does such a thing to his son. In other words, she tries to limit him to the borders of the small world she has shortsightedly made for him. He is not allowed to transgress the borders of this world. He has been brought up as a prince; however, it seems that despite the
fact that he is apparently insane, he understand the truth and reality better than his self-conceited mother.

Sarkar Khademi is another character whose story becomes meaningful once this reality/illusion opposition is looked into. However, his case can be distinguished from the other two ones by the fact that he moves from illusion to reality but the other two from reality to illusion. He deemed that he had been a useful member of the society who has been at people's service for thirty years. Upon his retirement, he gives whatever he has done a second thought; hence his perception that he has done nothing special and has just been a very common policeman with no great achievements. He knows that it is too late for disappointment of this kind, so he thinks that he will return to where he came from and do the farming job. The turning point in his story is Afra's imprisonment and his efforts towards her exoneration.

The reality/illusion opposition appears to be so simple and obvious on the surface. An in-depth consideration reveals that it underpins the whole theme of the play. Later in the play, this opposition again pops up under the guise of the truth/lie. This happens when Shazdeh Badromolouk frames Afra. Consequently everyone believes that the shoplifting has been Afra's job. Even Hamid Shayan, the lover, suspects Afra, and paves the way for her and her family's torture. No one can accept the reality, the truth about what Shazdeh Badromolouk has in mind for the poor teacher who is leading an honorable life with her family when light is thrown on everything.

The next major binary opposition revolves around the wealth/poverty binarism. This outstanding opposition is the foremost cause of all that happens in the play ranging from Afra's and her family's illusion about the imaginary cousin to Shazdeh Badromolouk's proposing to Afra. Ironically, the dominant, that is the once royal family, is basically dependent on the poor and the low class family in order to secure their future. Shazdeh Badromolouk herself admits this fact "may God never make one dependent on this down-and-out people, whether they are social workers or teachers"(p. 11). That is not to say that the subversive does not need the dominant's money either. For example when Afra is suggested to teach Cholman Mirza, she says "yes ma'am, I will come because I'm in need. But I know that he won't learn anything as far as he is constantly afraid of you" (p. 35).

There are only a few people in the play who can live comfortably with their income. One is Sarkar Khademi who is working for the Government, that is, his salary is to some extent secure. The next one is Mr. Eghdami, the shopkeeper. However, he exaggeratedly claims that the shopliftings which have been happening recently will lead to his bankruptcy. Mr. No'e Bashari is also relaxed and not that concerned about how to earn his living. As a matter
of fact, the main character obsessively concerned with this issue is Afsar Khanoum. She is too weak and sick to be able to do all Shazdeh Badromolouk's errands. As she has asked her to send Afra to help at home, exactly what she does not wish to happen; she tries to harness all her power to do the errands on her own. She even discards the idea of telling Afra so, though later on we see Afra serving Shazdeh Badromolouk's guests at her home which paves the way for her being unfairly framed.

The only person who seems to be taking benefit from the current situation is Shazdeh Badromolouk. By always reminding people that whatever they have is from her property, she makes them obliged to her.

Finally, the last significant binary opposition in the play is the opposition between being Tehrani/Shahrestani. Some of the characters have immigrated to Tehran, for example Afra's family due to her father's job had to come to Tehran years ago. The society has not been able to absorb these people; therefore whatever bad event takes place Tehrani people attribute it to the Sharestani ones. This discrimination seems to be constantly existent in the society, in several places in the play this very theme is concurring. A good example is with regard to Hamid Shayan, the bicycle man, who claims to be Afra's lover. Once he gets informed of the shoplifting and Afra's accusation, he says "who said that she passes her brother while he doesn't deserve it? Why do you underestimate yourselves? At least you are from Tehran while they are Shahrestani. It is evident from your appearances that you are hotshots" (p. 63). Later on in regard to Afra, Shayan says that "this Shahrestani girl talks in a way that makes me, a Teharni, feel like I'm a villager" (p. 79). This opposition also encompasses the complacency/modesty one as well. Tehrani people in the play have clean forgotten that what makes a person respectable is his or her conduct and mentality and the way he behaves in the society rather than where he belongs to. This very fact makes them so complacent and conceited. Shazdeh Badrolmolouk also refers to Afra as Shahrestani. Interestingly enough, although Afra knows the true intentions of Shazdeh Badrolmolouk, she remains very faithful and respective. She always admits that it is so kind of her to help her mother and give them some gifts sometimes.

Conclusion

Classifying the events happening in the play in the light of the binary oppositions should not lead to the oversimplification of either the themes to be conveyed or the play's structure. This essay aims at introducing the oppositions around which the story revolves and provide some clues to the better understanding of the play. As mentioned earlier, these oppositions are closely interrelated. Additionally they produce a network through which the
reader comes to grasp the meaning and the messages each part of the play is going to imply.

References


TEFL
Biography

Born in New Zealand, Dr. Richards obtained a Master of Arts degree with first class honours in English from Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1966. He obtained his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Laval University (a French-Language University) in Quebec City, Canada in 1972.

He has worked in many parts of the world, including New Zealand, Canada, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. After completing his PhD, he taught in Indonesia and was then appointed specialist in applied linguistics at the Regional Language Centre Singapore, under the auspices of the New Zealand Government. Later, he was Senior Lecturer in English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, before being appointed full professor in the Department of English as a Second Language at the University of Hawaii in 1981. In 1989, he returned to Hong Kong to set up a new department of English at the City University of Hong Kong, where he was head of the department of English and also chair professor. In 1996, he returned to his home country for two years to set up an MA program at the University of Auckland. In 1999, Dr. Richards retired from full-time university teaching and administration and since then has taught for part of each year at the Regional Language Centre (RELC), in Singapore, while making his primary residence in Sydney, Australia. At RELC, Dr. Richards teaches in the MA in Applied Linguistics program, as well as the RELC Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics.
Professor Richards has for many years made himself available as a speaker at many professional conferences without a fee, and supported scholarship programs in different parts of the world. In recognition of this, the Presidents of De La Salle University, Manila and of Philippine Normal University, Manila, presented Professor Richards with a citation in 2001 which states:

Generous in sharing his expertise with junior members of the profession, unstinting in his efforts to promote excellent language teaching in all parts of the world, indefatigable in showing the applications of theory to teaching practice in the classroom, Dr. Richards is a fine example of what English language education and applied linguistics can accomplish.

In December 2011, Dr. Richards was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature by Victoria University, Wellington, in recognition of his contributions to English language teaching and the arts. In 2011, Dr. Richards was made an honorary professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney, Australia.

He has written over 60 articles and 20 books. Many of his books and articles are classics in the field of second language teaching and have been translated into many different languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Arabic. Among his well known professional books are:


2010. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*. (Guest Editor, special issue on teacher research). Vol. 9, 2 December 2010. Published by Centre of English Language Communication, National University of Singapore.


A number of his articles include:

The Effect of Immediate Feedback on the Writing Accuracy of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract
As a crucial element of the language teaching process, providing feedback on the written product of the learners has always been perceived as a pressing need. Thus, the present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of immediate feedback on the writing accuracy of Iranian EFL students. To fulfill the purpose of the research, 2 intact groups consisting of 32 intermediate-level language learners participated in the study. In order to ascertain that the participants were at the same level of English language writing proficiency, a pre-test was administered prior to the instructional treatment. During the treatment, the participants in the experimental group received immediate feedback after completing the writing task, while the participants of the control group were provided with delayed feedback. Four aspects of concern were the vocabulary choice, grammar, punctuation and spelling ability of the participants. At the end of the course, an attitude survey was administered to the participants of the experimental group in order to assess their attitude towards the treatment. The results of the data analysis indicated that the experimental group could achieve significantly higher scores in the given task in two aspects of spelling and punctuation in the post-test. However, no significant differences were observed regarding vocabulary choice and grammar. Furthermore, the participants of the experimental group reported positive attitude towards the course.

Keywords: immediate feedback, delayed feedback, attitude survey
Introduction

The great number of studies allocated to teacher’s feedback might seem as a tangible proof to its significance (Allwright, Woodley, & Allwright, 1988; Bates, Lane, & Lange, 1993; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; James, 1998; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Krashen, 1984). Nevertheless, it has been a matter of controversy in the literature as to whether provide feedback on the written product of the learners or not (Ferris, 1999; Truscott, 1996, 1999). Along these contradictory ideas, various types of feedback have been incorporated in language classes - especially when it comes to the writing skill- such as direct, indirect (Bitchener, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999, 2002, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lalande, 1982), immediate and delayed (Anderson, Corbett, Koedinger, & Pelletier, 1995; Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991; Brosvic & Cohen, 1988; Clariana, 1999, 2000; Kulhavy & Anderson, 1972; Kulik & Kulik, 1988; Phye & Baller, 1970; Pressey, 1926). Furthermore, different modes of presenting this feedback (such as emails) have been the focus of many studies thus far (Chun & Brandl, 1992; González-Bueno, 1998; González-Bueno & Perez, 2000; Perez & González-Bueno, 2003).

Indeed, there are various aspects of the writing accuracy teachers take into account when providing feedback for the learners. These include grammar, organization, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, content, mechanics and vocabulary choice (Cunningham, 2000; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; McCurdy, 1992; Reid, 1994). In addition, with regard to the learners, they not only seem to expect this type of response, but also welcome it (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1991; McCurdy, 1992).

Review of the Related Literature

Direct and Indirect Feedback

From one point of view, feedback types are classified according to their straightforwardness: direct and indirect patterns (Ferris, 1999, 2003). The former provides the learner with the correct form directly and the only thing to be done is the transcription of the correction into the final version (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). This type of feedback is more beneficial for beginners (Ferris, 2002, 2003) or lower proficiency learners (Bitchener, 2008) making grammatical or lexical errors that cannot be treated otherwise (Ferris, 2002, 2003). In other words, these are errors for which “there is no handbook or set of rules students can consult to avoid or fix” (Ferris, 1999, p. 6).

On the other hand, indirect feedback gives some indication of the fact that an error exists without providing the correct form, leaving the problem for the
learner to be solved (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). This pattern of feedback is valued for the great amount of engagement and attention to the forms and problems (Ferris, 2003). In addition, it has been praised for the long-term effects on the accuracy of the written product of the learners (Lalande, 1982). As Ferris (1999) suggests, this pattern of error correction is best suited for 'treatable' errors that "occur in a patterned, rule governed way" (p. 6).

In their study on three different feedback patterns (coded errors, underlined errors and no-feedback), Ferris and Roberts (2001) came to the conclusion that the participants were more successful in self-editing "treatable" errors (verbs, noun endings and articles) than the "untreatable" ones (word choice and sentence structure). The participants in their study also reported their major weakness in verbs, sentence structure and choice of words, suggesting the fact that they were aware of their areas of weakness. Chandler also (2003) reported the efficiency of both feedback types (direct and indirect) in her experiment. Therefore, it might seem satisfactory to combine the positive points of both patterns to achieve the optimum results.

**Immediate and Delayed Feedback**

From another perspective (timing), feedback can be of two other types: immediate and delayed. The former is provided right after a learner's response, however, the latter is withheld for some seconds, minutes or days (Clariana, 2000). Each of them has proponents and opponents who bring different reasons for their claims and refer to different theories supporting their arguments.

The Interference Perseveration Hypothesis (Kulhavy & Anderson, 1972) gave a much firmer foothold to the proponents of the delayed feedback pattern. It proposes that interference-producing errors are forgotten during the interval provided by the delay. As a result, attention to the provided feedback increases. Therefore, these errors would not be able to stand in the way of the correct material (Kulhavy & Anderson, 1972). Putting the hypothesis into practice, the researchers expected their 194 high school juniors and seniors to complete a multiple-choice test under immediate and delayed feedback conditions. The delayed-feedback groups outperformed the immediate-feedback conditions in the same test after a one-week delay. In a similar vein, Clariana (1999) suggests that when the learners are in the process of completing a familiar task, it is preferred to provide them with delayed feedback, since the immediacy of feedback might cause an interruption.

On the other hand, proponents of the immediate feedback believe that classroom learning will be hindered if the provision of feedback on the students' test results is delayed (Pressey, 1926). Clariana (1999) also believes that if a task
is difficult or new, it is better to provide the learners with immediate feedback not to make them frustrated. Similarly, Brosvic and Cohen (1988) consider the immediate feedback superior to the delayed pattern when it comes to perceptual and motor skills. In a study carried out by Anderson et al. (1995) on ACT theory (Advanced Computer Tutoring), the most efficient learning results for the immediate feedback were reported. Phye and Baller (1970) also provided their participants with informative feedback, immediately or after 48 hours, and measured their retention either immediately after feedback provision or after 7 days. Subsequently, they found insufficient support for the delayed informative feedback resulting in better retention over time.

One of the most complete meta-analyses carried out on 53 studies by Kulik and Kulik (1988) revealed different results for different types of studies: Applied studies with classroom quizzes and programmed learning materials have usually found immediate feedback to be more effective than delayed. However, experiments on the acquisition of test content have usually reported the opposite. In their analyses, experiments on list learning have produced a variety of results. Likewise, in a complete analysis of different feedback types, Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991) reported the superiority of immediate over delayed feedback in typical classroom settings. However, gains for immediate over delayed feedback in CALL material in their analysis was small to moderate. Therefore, considering these mixed results, it seems reasonable to conduct more studies concerning these two patterns of feedback.

The Role of Emails in Providing Feedback

To achieve the goal of feedback provision, it seems that computers have played an active role since their emergence. Lewis (1997) expresses a strong preference for using them to teach grammar. The highlighting device, in his opinion, provides the opportunity for the learners to underline, italicize or change the color of certain parts of speech.

One of the most widespread facilities provided by the computers is the email system, which is able to provide the learners with immediate feedback and an increased autonomy rate (Chun & Brandl, 1992). According to Perez and González-Bueno (2003) emails give greater flexibility and ease in manipulating and editing the written product. This immediate feedback can also have a positive effect on "learners' self-monitoring skills" (p. 870). In his article, Belisle (1996) considers some of the advantages of incorporating email activities in the course such as working at more convenient times for the teacher and the students and thus not being confined to the limited classroom time.
Empirical Studies Supporting the Use of Emails

González-Bueno (1998) compared the performance of the email writing with paper-and-pencil writing of 50 Spanish college students. The conclusion he drew indicated that the email-writing group could show better performance in terms of language production and functions. In addition, more accuracy in the written product of the participants was reported.

Subsequently, in a similar study, in which they had 30 participants, González-Bueno and Perez (2000) reported that the email-writing group could just outperform the paper-and-pencil-based dialogue journal group in terms of quantity of language but not in lexical and grammatical accuracy. In their succeeding study, Perez and González-Bueno (2003) admitted that the "out-of-class" experimental group in their previous study had more time to write than the "in-class" control group (p. 870). Thus, they made the email dialogue journaling as an out-of-class activity for both of their groups in their more recent study (Perez & González-Bueno, 2003). They were concerned with grammatical accuracy and number of words used. Subsequently, they found a significant difference between the groups concerning the first factor and a non-significant difference for the second one. Positive attitude towards incorporating emails in the course was also reported.

In a survey conducted by Oliva and Pollastrini (1995), the results of the self-assessment of 88 Italian college students revealed their positive attitude towards the emails. Their participants evaluated the internet as being very helpful. Cunningham (2000) was also interested in exploring the attitude of his word-processing group towards the efficacy of this program. He found that the participants were interested in the program and perceived it as being helpful in certain aspects of grammar, choice of words and organization.

Despite the perceived significance of this mode of feedback presentation, in the studies carried out thus far, none have investigated the effect of a mixture of direct and indirect feedback types for the experimental and control groups. Accordingly, the present study tries to hold this variable constant across the two groups while varying levels of feedback timing are provided. The email-writing group receives immediate feedback (an integral opportunity computer provides), whereas the paper-and-pencil group receives delayed feedback.

Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of the email writing for EFL learners, considering four aspects of their writing accuracy. Therefore, the following three research questions guide the study:
1) Do learners in the email-writing group complete their writing task more accurately than learners who do the same task by paper and pencil?

2) If so, which categories benefit from email writing?

3) What is the attitude of the students towards the email-writing course?

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants in the present study were 32 Iranian intermediate language learners (20 females and 12 males) who were studying English in a private language institute in Tehran. Their age range was between 13 and 15. The participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups with 16 participants in each.

**Tasks**

The tasks provided for the participants consisted of seven topics for descriptive paragraph writing: two of them for in-class writing as the measure of the pre-test and post-test, and the remaining five for their homework (both groups). At the beginning of the semester, different descriptive topics were taken from http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index Good topics for descriptive writing/ and given to the participants to mark the preferred ones. Since the number of the topics was somehow vast (about 40), the researchers assumed that they will not be recalled by the participants for the post-test. The teacher made an attempt to go through all the ratings and choose the ones almost all the participants favored. This gave the participants a sense of belonging to the classroom, since they had had a voice in choosing the topics. Given that the participants had equal mastery of the different English tenses (past, present and future), these seven topics were chosen as the basis for this study:

1) A character from a book, movie or television program
2) A storefront window
3) An ideal apartment
4) A city bus or subway train
5) Your cell phone in the future
6) Backstage during a play or a concert
7) Your memory of a place that you visited as a child
The Attitude Survey

At the end of the last treatment session, a very short questionnaire consisting of 9 questions was administered to the participants of the email-writing group. This was carried out to assess the mailing group's attitude towards the new treatment they had undertaken. The instrument was a shortened and modified version of Cunningham's (2000) survey (37 questions) eliciting his participants' attitude towards the word-processing system. Once the researchers thought of administering this small survey in the form of a one-by-one interview, however, because of time constraints this idea was abandoned. The questions were as follows:

1) It was difficult to learn how to use the email system.
2) I feel I get more individual attention from the teacher in the email-writing course than I do in other, non-email-writing courses.
3) I get nervous in the email-writing course.
4) I pay more attention to choosing the right word when I use the email system.
5) When I write using the emails, I pay more attention to grammar.
6) I pay more attention to spelling when I use the emails.
7) When I write using the emails, I pay more attention to punctuation.
8) I think using the email system is interesting.
9) I would like to take another email-writing course.

Procedure

In the first session of the semester, the participants of both groups were provided with enough information about the expected type of writing and the meaning of different color codes (demonstrated below) in order to prevent any ambiguities during the treatment. In addition, the grading criteria were completely clarified for the participants. The teacher also explained the procedure of composing and sending an email to the participants of the experimental group, although the majority of them were familiar with the system. Afterwards, the topic list was given to the participants to tick those preferred ones. In the second session (because the teacher needed some time to go through the topics to choose the high frequent ones favored), the teacher asked the participants of both groups to write a descriptive paragraph about the first topic in the class. This was expected to act as the pre-test measure of the participants' writing. The teacher was concerned with the writing ability of the participants when they had nothing other than their own writing proficiency at their disposal. Therefore, this piece of writing was done by paper and pencil. If the first draft done at home was the measure of pre-test, the researchers could not ascertain whether it was the pure ability of the participants or the use of some other sources (e.g. dictionaries).
Grades (confidential) were given to this piece of writing by the teacher. Another teacher was also asked for help to score the pre-test papers of the participants. The inter-rater reliability was 0.97.

The treatment started when the second session had finished. The study required the participants in the experimental group to write a descriptive paragraph at home as homework and send it to the teacher through the email system. Each of the participants was expected to submit this draft on a specified time and wait until the teacher replied. As the teacher received them, she provided immediate feedback on the writings, coded them (indirect feedback) and sent them back to the participants. The codes were given through the highlighting device on the email page:

1) Vocabulary choice: blue
2) Grammar: green
3) Punctuation: pink
4) Spelling: yellow

After receiving the feedback, the participants were expected to send an improved version of their paragraph to the teacher immediately. Self-correction of the participants was of great value in the present research. If the participants were able to edit all the paragraph's errors according to the teacher's codes, a happy face was sent to them. However, if this was not the case, the teacher provided direct and elaborated feedback on their writings and sent them back to the participants as the finalized version. Consequently, the experimental group finished writing the paragraph and received feedback before the next session of the class started.

The participants in the control group were expected to write a paragraph about the same topic at home and submit it to the teacher the next session (third session) they came to the class. Since the aim of the study was providing delayed feedback for this group, the teacher restrained from providing any type of feedback for these participants. Therefore, provision of feedback was delayed up to the next session (fourth session) of the class when the teacher gave the papers back to the participants with coding colors like the experimental group. The participants of the control group were expected to take this coded piece of text home and bring the edited version back next session based on the teacher's codes (fifth session). Subsequently, if the participants had been able to handle their writing, a happy face sticker was attached to their paper. However, if the participants had difficulty in decoding the teacher's color codes, direct and elaborated feedback was provided for them and then given back to them the next session (sixth session). Each of the drafts for this group took 4 sessions to be completed and within the semester the participants were able to complete 5 drafts. Based on the useful remarks of Williams (2005) the participants' writings
were not scored in order to encourage their thinking (although the teacher kept a confidential record of their grades to track their progress).

In the last session of the class, the teacher asked the participants of both groups to write another in-class descriptive paragraph as the measure of their post-test. Since the gained ability of the participants without any help was the major focus of the study, this piece of writing was also done through paper and pencil. Again the inter-rater reliability was calculated (0.99). Afterwards, a very short questionnaire (9 questions) was administered to the mailing group to assess their attitude towards the new treatment they had undertaken.

**Results**

An analytic rating system was used for marking the written products. Each of the four aspects was given 10 marks and the maximum score was 40 for both pre-test and post-test. Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations of the pre-test scores of both groups [email and paper-and-pencil (control)].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.06</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.18</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistical analysis of the data was based on an independent samples t-test. In addition, for all the analyses the alpha level was set at .05. The results of the t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups at the beginning of the treatment (t (30) = -0.56, p = .956). Therefore, it was concluded that the participants were homogenous with regard to English writing proficiency at the beginning of the treatment.

The first research question was statistically analyzed by another t-test in order to compare the performance of both groups in the post-test. Table 2 makes an attempt to illustrate the means and standard deviations of the control and experimental groups at this time point.
The results suggested that there was a significant difference between the performances of the two groups at this point, since the p value was below the alpha level (t (30) = -4.15, p = .000).

In order to answer the second research question, a MANOVA was run to compare the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups concerning the four aspects of the study. The descriptive statistics of the performance of the participants in this respect are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 2 - Descriptive statistics of the post-test scores of the control and Email groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.12</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Descriptive statistics of the post-test scores of the control and Email groups regarding the four aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Choice</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>2.36</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.63</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The MANOVA results revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance was not violated ($p = .407$). In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the two groups with regard to the four aspects of the study ($F (4, 27= 13.19), P = .000$, Wilks' Lambda = 0.33, $\eta^2 = .66$). In order to spot the place this difference had occurred, tests of between-subjects effects are illustrated in table 4.

Table 4 - MANOVA results of the post-test scores of the control and Email groups regarding the four aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87.78</td>
<td>36.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101.53</td>
<td>51.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Table, it was concluded that the present experiment could have a statistically significant effect on both spelling ($F (1, 30) = 36.73, P = .000, \eta^2 = .550$) and punctuation scores ($F (2, 57) = 51.46, P = .000, \eta^2 = .632$). However, no significant differences were observed for the vocabulary choice ($F (1, 30) = .007, P = .933, \eta^2 = .000$) and grammar ($F (1, 30) = .007, P = .935, \eta^2 = .000$).

A small survey was carried out to answer the third research question concerning the attitude of the participants towards the course. The results of the administered survey are represented in Table 5.
Table 5 - The survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It was difficult to learn how to use the email system.</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>99%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel I get more individual attention from the teacher in the email-writing course than I do in other, non-email-writing courses.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I get nervous in the email-writing course.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I pay more attention to choosing the right word when I use the email system.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>When I write using the emails, I pay more attention to grammar.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I pay more attention to spelling when I use the emails.</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>When I write using the emails, I pay more attention to punctuation.</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I think using the email system is interesting.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I would like to take another email-writing course.</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Strongly Agree  2: Agree  3: Disagree  4: Strongly Disagree

*Percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

According to the survey results, the majority of the participants found the course interesting and non-threatening. Similarly, they perceived teacher's feedback to be more individualized in comparison with non-email courses. About 3/4 of the participants reported paying more attention to grammar in the email-writing course. In addition, the vast majority of the participants perceived their maximum benefit to lie in the spelling and punctuation aspects of their writing. However, the minority of the participants reported paying attention to choice of words while using the computer.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of the email-writing activities in EFL classes by comparing the performance of two groups: immediate feedback and delayed feedback groups using email and paper and

52
pencil respectively. In both conditions, the participants were provided with feedback on four aspects of vocabulary choice, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The analysis of the results indicated that the email-writing group provided with the immediate feedback could produce a more accurate written product than the paper-and-pencil group. Therefore, the first research question was answered in the affirmative. One possible cause might be the pattern of feedback provided for this group: immediate feedback. This can somehow corroborate the findings of Kulik and Kulik (1988) in their complete analysis of immediate and delayed feedback patterns: Applied studies usually find immediate feedback to be more beneficial than delayed feedback. Another possible explanation might concern the type of the task itself. Since the task type was new for the participants, they seemed to benefit more from immediate feedback (Clariana, 1999). Although the participants had done lots of writing before, they were never instructed to take into account the four aspects of writing in the present study.

Another probable cause might be associated with the mixture of the direct and indirect types with the immediate pattern of feedback provided. In other words, the positive points of each might have made a contribution to the overall successful performance of the participants in the email-writing group. The problem solving ability (Ferris & Roberts, 2001) and the great amount of engagement and attention to forms and problems (Ferris, 2003) put forward by the indirect feedback might be a possible cause in combination with the other aforementioned patterns. Indeed, these factors might be able to have long-term effects on the accuracy of the written product of the participants (Lalande, 1982). Although the mixture of the direct and indirect patterns was equal for both groups, it seemed that this mixture led to the best results when it was provided immediately for the participants of the experimental group in the present context.

Concerning the second research question, two of the four categories included in the present study could benefit more from email-writing activities, namely spelling and punctuation. The similar category of errors, to which they belong, might be the probable cause: "treatable errors." Indeed, they can benefit more from the indirect feedback pattern as Ferris (1999) suggests. This was also reported by Ferris and Roberts (2001), since their participants were more successful in self-editing "treatable" errors than the "untreatable" ones. Although both groups in the present study were equal in the mixture of direct and indirect feedback types, it seemed that the benefits associated with the indirect pattern of feedback became evident when it was mixed with the immediacy of feedback provision.

Another possible cause might be the check-spelling option on the email page that indicates the existence of spelling errors by underlining them. Furthermore, this option can provide the email writer with some suggestions about what might
be more appropriate. These two categories (spelling and punctuation) also seem to lend themselves more to memory skills than vocabulary choice or grammar that can be reinforced by immediate feedback (Brosvic & Cohen, 1988).

With regard to the third research question, the overall attitude of the participants seemed to be positive towards the email-writing course. This was in line with what previous studies had reported (Cunningham, 2000; Oliva & Pollastrini, 1995; Perez & González-Bueno, 2003), since the majority of the participants liked to have another email-writing course. The novelty of the experiment they had undertaken and the use of technology for educational purposes might be the probable cause in this respect. The results also corroborated those of Ferris and Roberts’ (2001) concerning the perception of the learners about their areas of strength and weakness. In the present study, the participants were also able to evaluate their performance regarding the expected aspects of writing accuracy.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study suggest that providing the immediate type of feedback through emails is likely to improve the overall performance of the participants along with varying degrees of effectiveness in different aspects of their writing. It follows that in this study, participants of the experimental group could outperform those of the control group in terms of accuracy of spelling and punctuation. This is apparently because of the similar category of errors, to which these two aspects belong: "treatable errors" (Ferris, 1999). Furthermore, these two categories seem to be associated with the memory skills that can be reinforced by immediate feedback (Brosvic & Cohen, 1988). The check-spelling option on the email page might also be a possible cause affecting the spelling ability.

Needless to say, this study suffers from some limitations as it is with the other research. The small number of the participants in both groups is the most important restriction of the present research. During the semester, the participants were able to complete 5 drafts, which is a small number for drawing comprehensive conclusions. However, the length of the course did not allow more drafts to be completed. In addition, the researchers focused their attention on four aspects of the participants' writing (vocabulary choice, grammar, punctuation and spelling) to avoid cumbersome calculations. To draw a more accurate picture of the participants' progress, more aspects need to be considered nevertheless. It is also preferred to administer a delayed post-test to the participants to measure the degree of the retention of what has been learned, however, in the present context, the length of the course was an obstacle to this aim. Furthermore, we were not able to hold the medium (email) constant across
both treatment groups because of practical limitations. Future research can put a step forward to bridge this gap.

Considering the implications of the present study, language teachers can provide any type of feedback on their students' writing out of the classroom and allocate the precious class time to other aspects of language learning (Belisle, 1996) that cannot be taught or reinforced by computers or the mailing system. However, it is important to understand that the computer is not a substitute but a tool that can be used as a supplement to the regular curriculum in teaching writing (Perez & González-Bueno, 2003; Ybarra & Green, 2003). It can also be used "as an additional way to incorporate authentic, real-life writing tasks into the foreign-language classroom" (Perez & González-Bueno, 2003, p. 872).

References


Clariana, R. B. (1999). Differential memory effects for immediate and delayed feedback: A delta rule explanation of feedback timing effects. A Presentation at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Houston, TX.


EFL Teachers' Self-efficacy and Control of Actions in Language Institutes

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TEFL, MA, ATU

Abstract
Teachers' personal sense of control and their beliefs in their capabilities are suggested as impacting on how they think, feel, and teach. This study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and control of actions through Bandura's teacher self-efficacy questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of seven parts: (a) efficacy to influence decision making, (b) efficacy to influence institute resources, (c) instructional self-efficacy, (d) disciplinary self-efficacy, (e) efficacy to enlist parental involvement, (f) efficacy to enlist community involvement, and (g) efficacy to create a positive institute climate. The study was carried out with 69 EFL teachers from Tehran English language institutes who had taught English for at least five years. After the administration of the questionnaire, the statistical analyses of the results revealed that almost all participating teachers were influential in decision making, choice of resources, parental and community involvements, and creation of positive climate. In addition, compared with other kinds of efficacy, their roles were more prominent in disciplinary issues and less prominent in instructional issues. However, they did not seem to be successful to help learners in difficult tasks and to encourage parents to be involved in institute activities.

Keywords: self-efficacy, instructional self-efficacy, disciplinary self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, internal/external control
Introduction

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), teachers are the ultimate keys to educational change and school improvement. Teachers do not merely act upon the curriculum; they define and refine the curriculum. They interpret and transform the curriculum in a way that makes learning more manageable for learners. It is what teachers think and do at the classroom level that eventually determines what learners learn in the classroom. Since teachers are the key roles in the classroom, it is imperative that professional growth becomes a top priority. Teachers and teaching have become subjects of debate by a wide range of interested parties.

Effective teachers should be qualified with several crucial characteristics including:

1. Survival: Teachers need to be able to survive the demands, threats, and challenges within the diverse circumstances of teaching. This is particularly, but obviously not exclusively, true for beginning teachers.
2. Resilience and Persistence: Teachers need the capacity to be resilient and to be persistent, even when the odds seemed stacked against them.
3. Innovativeness: Teachers need the capacity for innovativeness, a preparedness to generate new solutions and take on new teaching approaches, and they should be willing to risk failing.

Moreover, Brown (1994) offered a checklist of good language-teaching characteristics. It was composed of teacher's technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities.

Self-efficacy

The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in social cognitive theory, developed by former APA president (1974) and Bandura (1977, 1997). Bandura (2006) stated that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. From this perspective, self-efficacy affects one's goals and behaviors. It is also influenced by one's actions and conditions in the environment (Schunk & Meece, 2006). According to Bandura's (2006) view, efficacy beliefs determine how environmental opportunities and impediments are perceived and affect choice of activities, how much effort is expended on an activity, and how long people will persevere when confronting obstacles (Pajares, 1997). Social cognitive theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three
interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes.

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. Self-efficacy beliefs were characterized as the major mediators for our behavior. As he explained self-efficacy beliefs are explicitly self-referent in nature and directed toward perceived abilities given specific tasks; therefore, they are powerful predictors of behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs are educationally related to academic performance and self-regulated learning (Hackett, 1995, Pajares, 1996, Schunk, 1991, & Zimmerman, 1995).

Efficacy beliefs can help dictate motivation. In line with Bandura (1986), people can regulate the level and distribution of effort based on the effects they expect their actions to have. As a result, their behavior is better predicted from their beliefs than from the actual consequences of their actions.

**Teacher Self-efficacy**

According to Chacon (2005), teachers’ actions and behaviors are related to their beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and motivational levels. He believes that teacher's feeling of efficacy is significantly effective in students' outcomes and closely related to their achievement.

Efficacious teachers are more likely to agree that a weak student should be placed in a regular education setting and less likely to refer students for special education. Teachers with high efficacy are willing to experiment with methods of instruction, seek improved teaching methods, and experiment with instructional materials (Allinder, 1994, Guskey, 1988, Stein & Wang, 1988).

Based on Rotter's (1966) distinction between external and internal control, teacher self-efficacy may increase when teachers believe that the students' achievement and behavior can be influenced by education and it may decrease if they believe in the influence of external factors (e.g. students' abilities and home environments) on students' achievement.

Self-efficacy as a teacher is a powerful predictor of how and whether a teacher will act. Teacher self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of exercising personal control over one's behavior, thinking, and emotions. Effective teachers believe that they can make a difference in students' lives and they teach in ways that demonstrate this belief. Consequently, teachers’ beliefs about their capabilities can demonstrate their effectiveness. According to Trentham, Silven, and Brogdon (1985), believing in self-efficacy leads to satisfaction and more commitment. As Gibbs (1996) mentioned, there are some strategies to increase teacher's self-efficacy which help teachers think and reflect as they teach.
Research Question
Do EFL teachers have any effect on teaching and learning processes?

Methodology
Participants
The participants of this study were 69 Iranian EFL teachers from different English language institutes in Tehran. Most of them were female teachers and had taught English for at least five years. Forty-six teachers held a B.A. degree and 23 of them were M.A. holders in TEFL.

Instrumentation
This section tries to elaborate on the instrument which was used for data collection in the present study. The material utilized in the study was Bandura's teacher self-efficacy scale. It contained 31 questions, four of which were eliminated to be adjusted to the context of the present study. This questionnaire was organized in 8 sections: the first part was designed to record participants' demographic information, the second part was intended to explore efficacy to influence decision making (2 questions), the third part aimed to elicit efficacy to influence institute resources (1 question), the forth part was to investigate instructional self-efficacy (9 questions), the fifth part examined disciplinary self-efficacy (2 questions), and the last three parts investigated efficacy to enlist parental involvement (3 questions), efficacy to enlist community involvement (2 questions), and efficacy to create a positive institute climate (8 questions).

Data collection
As mentioned earlier, the data of the present study were collected through the employment of the questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed among EFL teachers (either via e-mail or hard copies). The participating teachers were supposed to complete the questionnaire based on what they do in their institutes.

Results
To examine the research question formulated earlier in this study, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of the questionnaire is shown in Table 1.
Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the teachers' self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>.689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 69

As Table 1 depicts, question 27 (4.77) and question 6 (1.61) are questions with the highest and lowest mean scores, respectively. With respect to question 27, the
majority of the participating teachers were influential in getting students to believe they could do well in their homework. However, they did not succeed in promoting learning when there was lack of support from the home. Table 2 illustrates the descriptive frequency of each question.

Table 2 Descriptive frequency of each question for the teachers' self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. No.</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
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Efficacy to Influence Decision Making

The first part of the questionnaire investigated teachers' influence on decision making. Based on the results, it was found that the majority of participants (82.6%) selected item 3 (some influence), 7.2% item 2 (very little), 5.8% item 4 (quite a bit), 2.9% item 1 (nothing), and only one of them selected item 5 (a great deal).

Regarding the second question:

*How much can you express your views freely on important institute matters?*

There was a significant difference between item 4 and the other items. 79.7% of the participants chose item 4; however, items 1 and 5 were selected by 2.9% of them and the rest selected items 2 and 3. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers are somehow influential in terms of decision making.

Efficacy to Influence Institute Resources

Concerning the third question which was related to efficacy to influence institute resources, 84.1% of participants stated that they can influence the selection of equipments and materials, 7.2% exercised very little, 2.9% a great influence, and 1.4% had no influence. Teachers’ opinions can play a crucial role in decisions made about materials since they are in close contact with language learners and know their needs better than anyone else.

Instructional Self-efficacy

Questions 4 to 12 examined teachers’ instructional self-efficacy. As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants (79.7%) mentioned that they had very little influence in choosing their class size. Issues like the selection of class size, color, or brightness are those in which teachers’ opinions are less taken into account.

Based on the results of question 5, more than 50% of participants could get through the most difficult students and only a few of them (1.4%) could not do so. Teachers’ ability to cope with different students may be dependent to both their knowledge and experience. More experienced teachers apply different strategies in comparison with less experienced or novice teachers.

The results of the sixth question revealed that most teachers (73.9%) could not do anything in case parents do not support their children. Only 11.6% of participants maintained that they could promote learning in such situations. Several factors are involved in language learning such as teachers, language
learners' characteristics, textbooks and materials, context. Although learners' parents are not key factors in learners' language learning, their support and collaboration can be of great help.

The results of question 7 indicated teachers' ability to help students on difficult tasks. Only 18% of them can keep students on difficult task assignments. With respect to teachers' ability to increase students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons, nearly most of them, i.e. 82.6%, could considerably influence students' memory and retention. Only a few of them had very little or no influence. According to the results of this question:

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in homework?

Above 80% of participants argued that they played a significant role in students' motivation. In Armor's (1976) view, students' learning and motivation can be under the teacher's control. In addition, the majority of the participating teachers claimed that they could make students work together, they can largely overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on students' learning, and they can get students to do their homework.

Consequently, what can be concluded from this part of the questionnaire is EFL teachers' instructional effectiveness in most cases except for matters like the choice of their class size, lack of support from children's parents, and students' performance on difficult assignments.

**Disciplinary Self-efficacy**

Based on the results of questions 13 and 14 which were related to teachers' disciplinary self-efficacy, most of the participants were able both to get students to follow classroom rules and to control disruptive behavior in the classroom. Therefore, these teachers did not face great difficulties concerning students' behavior.

**Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement**

Questions 15, 16, and 17 examined teachers' efficacy to enlist parental involvement. The results showed that 87% of participants could make parents feel comfortable coming to institute; however, they had very little or some influence on getting parents to become involved in institute activities and to assist parents in helping their children do well in the institute. This may be due to lack of relationship or contact between teachers and parents.
Efficacy to Enlist Community Involvement

In relation to teachers' efficacy to enlist community involvement, 82.6% of participants believed that they could get businesses, local colleges, and universities involved in working with the institute. This indicates EFL teachers' willingness and ability to collaborate with other businesses in order to improve their profession.

Efficacy to Create a Positive Institute Climate

Questions 20 to 27 considered EFL teachers' efficacy to create a positive institute climate. Based on the results, 81.2% of the participants had some influence on making the institute a safe place, 79.7% were somehow influential in making students enjoy coming to the institute, more than 90% of them could greatly get students to trust teachers, 81.2% were willing to help other teachers with their teaching skills, 81.2% could enhance collaboration between teachers and the administrative staff, and 82.6% could reduce institute dropout and absenteeism. Finally, more than 80% of the participating teachers could significantly increase students' beliefs in their abilities to do their homework.

Discussion

The findings of this study were in line with previous research studies in the field of teacher self-efficacy. According to Bandura's (1997) view, teachers' sense of efficacy is influential in the kind of the environment they create and the instructional practices introduced in the classroom. The results also support Gibson's study which revealed that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more willing in their classrooms and more successful in classroom management and creation of positive and trusting environment among teachers, learners, teaching staffs, and parents.

The findings of this research also confirm previous researches like Moore and Esselman (1992) who maintained that teachers' self-efficacy can affect students' motivation and achievement as well as school or institute effectiveness.

In another study, Gibson and Demo (1984) investigated the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their instructional behaviors. They found a high correlation between teachers' sense of efficacy and their persistence in the presentation of lessons, feedback presentation, and support scaffolding for weaker students.

In addition, Pajares (1992) conducted a study about teachers' self-efficacy in which he concluded that there is a strong relationship between teachers'
educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, classroom practices, and subsequent teaching behaviors.

In line with Allinder (1994), teachers' sense of efficacy play an important role in students’ attitudes towards school and subject matter. Students of teachers with high sense of efficacy are more interested in language learning and the school or institute in which they study.

Therefore, it seems that teachers’ sense of efficacy should be taken into account in the domain of the L2 context, especially language institutes where pair and group work and interaction are the norm.

**Conclusion**

Research findings suggest that teacher self-efficacy is reconciliatory in explaining how and whether teachers are willing to be motivated to act on what they know and what they can do. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that EFL teachers play a significant role in teaching and learning processes. In line with the results of different categories of teacher self-efficacy questionnaire, almost all EFL teachers were influential in decisions made about the selection of materials and choice of resources. Moreover, they could increase (a) learners' motivation and beliefs in their abilities to do homework, (b) the collaboration between learners' parents and teachers, and (c) the involvement of other businesses in the activities of the institutes. They were also leading in the creation of a positive environment in which learners, teachers, and other staffs feel secure. Furthermore, compared with other categories of teacher self-efficacy, their roles were more prominent in disciplinary issues, but less prominent in instructional one. However, they did not seem successful to help learners on difficult tasks and to encourage parents to be involved in institute activities.

In order to make teacher self-efficacy an indispensable construct in teacher education, it seems compulsory to equip teachers with teacher education and preparation programs focusing on improving the skills and perceptions of less experienced teachers and those of lower ages, to warrant exponential success and achievement. Therefore, there will be greater student satisfaction with teachers in particular and the educational system in general.

**References**


Appendix

Bandura Teacher Self-efficacy Scale

Teacher Background:
Name: University Degree:
Major:

Please check the appropriate option below:

a. Gender: Male □ Female □
b. Age: 20-25 □ 26-30 □ 31-40 □ 41+ □
c. Years of Experience in ELT: 1-2 □ 3-5 □ 6-10 □ 11-15 □ 16-20 □ 21+ □
d. Residence in an English-speaking Country: No □ Yes □ (for.....years)

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their institute activities. Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by circling the appropriate number. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be identified by name.

Part A. Efficacy to Influence Decision Making
1. How much can you influence the decisions that are made in the institute?
   Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)
2. How much can you express your views freely on important institute matters?
   Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

Part B. Efficacy to Influence Institute Resources
3. How much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need?
   Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

Part C. Instructional Self-efficacy
4. How much can you do to influence the class sizes in your institute?
5. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?

6. How much can you do to promote learning when there is lack of support from the home?

7. How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments?

8. How much can you do to increase students’ memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons?

9. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in homework?

10. How much can you do to get students to work together?

11. How much can you do to overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on students’ learning?

12. How much can you do to get students to do their homework?

**Part D. Disciplinary Self-efficacy**

13. How much can you do to get students to follow classroom rules?

14. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?

**Part E. Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement**

15. How much can you do to get parents to become involved in institute activities?

16. How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in institute?

17. How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to institute?
Part F. Efficacy to Enlist Community Involvement

18. How much can you do to get businesses involved in working with the institute?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

19. How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with the institute?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

Part G. Efficacy to Create a Positive Institute Climate

20. How much can you do to make the institute a safe place?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

21. How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to institute?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

22. How much can you do to get students to trust teachers?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal(5)

23. How much can you help other teachers with their teaching skills?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

24. How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and the administration to make the institute run effectively?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

25. How much can you do to reduce institute dropout?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

26. How much can you do to reduce institute absenteeism?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)

27. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in homework?
Nothing (1) Very Little (2) Some Influence (3) Quite a Bit (4) A Great Deal (5)
Teaching Idioms through Pictures

Fatemeh Mohamadi Asl
TEFL, MA, ATU

Abstract
In EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms, we can find learners who were taught idiomatic expression, yet they can still not use them effectively. This is because they did not have sufficient practice with them. However, teachers and learners should recognize the prominent role of idiomatic expressions in learning English. Knowledge of idioms is an essential component of becoming a fluent English speaker. In other words, in order to be native like, learners should master the knowledge of idiomatic expressions since native English speakers use them frequently. The aim of the present article, therefore, is to present a lesson plan to help teachers teach idiomatic expressions more effectively.

Keywords: idioms, picture, EFL
Introduction

It is a well-established belief among scholars that lexicon is not just single words but a dynamic system, which includes larger lexical items as well such as figurative expressions (Read, 2000) cited in Andreou, Galantamos, 2008). Idioms are figurative expressions whose meaning cannot always be readily derived from the usual meaning of their constituent elements (Cooper, 1999). As Cooper points out, comprehending and producing idioms present language learners with particular vocabulary learning problems as they are figurative expressions that do not mean what they literally state and are frequently encountered in both spoken and written discourse. Idioms are accepted phrases or expressions that are contrary to the usual patterns of the language and have meanings different from their literal meaning. Idioms add confusion and difficulty to the learning of the language and hence occupy a special place in the teaching of foreign languages (Bromely, 1984).

The idioms of the English language are often skipped over by TEFL teachers in an attempt to simplify things for their students. In other words, according to Lazar (1996) figurative language and the ways in which we can increase students’ awareness of it has perhaps been given less attention than it deserves. The sad fact is that no native English speaker uses standard English; we all speak using words and phrases that make little sense when the literal definition is used. An important question, therefore, is whether we should or should not teach English idioms to EFL/ESL students? Although it is uncommon for ESL/EFL students to use them effectively, if we choose not to teach them, they will be missing an important cultural element of the language they strive to speak fluently. This is because idioms are phrases that are commonly understood in a given culture or subculture and have a meaning different from their literal meaning. In short as Irujo (1986) mentions:

Learning idioms is, or should be, an integral part of vocabulary learning in a second language. Therefore it should not be put off until students reach advanced levels. Even at beginning levels, idioms can be added to the vocabulary being learned by including them in dialogues and stories which are created to supplement regular materials, and by providing idiomatic synonyms for vocabulary words which the students are learning (p. 240).

In order for the students of the English language to truly excel and have access to every place English is spoken, they must have knowledge of English idioms. The business world, casual conversation, and even the Internet are full of these words and phrases that will throw off anyone who is not prepared in class for them. To
not teach students idiomatic expressions is to rob them of a key part of the language. Lack of idiom knowledge will have an impact on the learners’ overall performance. Hence, it is essential for both teachers and students to deal with idioms in a well-defined environment. Students need to know that there are real people out there who actually speak like this, and say these things. Soon enough, they may feel ready to start using some idiomatic expressions themselves. In order for students to use idiomatic expressions with ease, they need adequate practice.

In reality, knowing idioms as well as how and when they are used is just as important for a student who wishes to speak English fluently. Thus, it stands to reason that idioms should be taught from the beginning levels, and individuals should be ready to take their English fluency from the beginning. The learning of idioms must therefore be considered an integral part of vocabulary learning. However, learning idioms has always been very difficult for second-language learners because when they encounter idiomatic expressions, they are faced with almost insurmountable obstacles, since idioms do not translate literally. Irujo (1986) argues that there are several explanations for difficulty in learning idioms:

1. **Non-literalness:** Idioms cannot be derived from their constituent parts. For example, the idiomatic meaning *under the weather* has nothing to do with weather in its literal sense.

2. **Exposure to idioms:** Native speech is simple, concrete and everyday vocabulary when it is addressed to second language learners, i.e. the use of idioms is avoided. On the other hand, idioms are mostly used in movies and on television. Yet, they do not provide the kind of interaction which is necessary for language learning. Thus, learners’ exposure to idioms appears to occur mainly in non-interactive situations where there is no opportunity for negotiation of meaning.

3. **Correct use:** correct use of idioms is very difficult to master. Idioms vary in formality from slang and colloquialisms to those which are used in formal situations. Most idioms are invariant and must be learned as wholes. It means that they have grammatical constraints.

4. **Teaching Materials:** Another reason and perhaps the most important reason is not teaching idioms very well. Many teaching materials ignore idioms or relegate them to other sections of vocabulary lists, without providing exercises. Generally, an idiom will appear in the introductory
Reading or dialogue, a definition, translation or example will be provided in the margin or notes, and the idiom will then appear again in the vocabulary list. These are obviously not sufficient for learning. In order to learn idiomatic expressions, learners should be, of course, provided with additional exercises. In some cases, it is possible to do the exercises without any knowledge of the meaning of the idiom. For example, Reeves (1975) as cited in Irujo (1986) provides dashes to show the number of letters in each word of the idiom which is to be inserted into a sentence. Or a teacher may ask students to answer questions containing idioms, but many of the questions can be answered simply by manipulating their structure, without any need to understand them. Exercises which involve understanding usually require comprehension only and do not ask students to produce the target idioms. These include matching the idiom with its definition or substituting one for the other. Some teachers may also use exercises which require production of idioms like an assignment to write a paragraph on a certain topic, using some specific idioms from the lesson. This is a difficult task, because the idioms are not related in any way. Thus, one of the difficulties in learning English idiomatic expressions is the lack of suitable materials for teaching them.

Therefore, how do we set about explaining idioms? Saying to a student that *to go bananas* means *to get angry* is like trying to teach Math without a blackboard! It seems to be more of a forlorn hope than a sound teaching strategy. The traditional view holds that idioms should be taught in alphabetical lists and as something separate. Thus, the participants could not master the idiomatic expressions since they could not make associations between the target idiomatic expressions to their prior knowledge. However, research (Adkins, 1968; Liontas, 2003) indicates that meaningful contexts facilitate the learning of the idiomatic expressions. It is, however, difficult for language teachers and materials writers to make principled decisions about the best way of teaching idiomatic expressions. As a result, teachers should provide adequate exercises and present idioms through examples to ensure that students both understand them and learn them effectively.

**Lesson Plan**

This lesson aims at teaching intermediate to advanced learners idioms in a new and exciting way. As mentioned earlier, lack of sufficient practice may result in poor learning. Thus, teaching materials need adequate exercises. This lesson plan can be included in any syllabus. It can be used for practice and consolidation.
The lesson takes about 50 minutes to conclude. The class size could be 12 or more.

**Materials**

The teacher should provide some pictures that are related to specified idioms before the class. In the Appendix, you can see some idioms with their related pictures that teachers can use. In order to have more practice, the teacher should compose a short story or a context with the idioms.

**Procedures**

**Step 1: Warm up activity (5 minutes):** Before the class, the teacher’s task is to provide some pictures that are perfectly suited for the specific idiomatic expressions. Thus, the teacher will stick the pictures all over the wall. Then, the class will be asked to talk about the pictures and brainstorm various ideas and words that spring to mind. This step will provide the learners with an imaginary link. Research with students learning vocabulary has generally indicated that the use of mental images is a more effective means of vocabulary learning than rote learning.

**Step 2:** In order to activate the students’ guessing power, the teacher will arrange students into small groups of three or four. Then s/he will assign each group different common idiomatic expressions that are accompanied by different illustrations where one is extra. S/he will tell students to identify which illustration represents the meaning of a specific idiom. Each group will follow the process the teacher models to match the pictures to their equivalent idioms. After about 15 minutes, each group will share their matching with the class.

**Step 3:** The teacher should provide opportunities for practice in the context. The context would enhance the learner’s progress in imprinting. Subsequently, the learner performs a mental action on the word-form, makes connections between the context and his/her own prior knowledge and thus establishes a cognitive foothold (Mondria & Wit-de Boer, 1991).

The teacher can either find some native dialogues with specified idiomatic expressions or write a paragraph containing an idiom in a logical context. S/he will bring them to the class with the idioms that are cut out. The students’ task will be to fill in the blanks with appropriate idioms which fit the context. Moreover, in order to do this task the students have interactions. When this has been done correctly, the teacher will ask them to explain how they have already inferred the meaning from the context. The teacher will finish this step in 15 minutes; however, it will depend on class size and the students’ level.
Step 4: This is probably easiest to do in small groups. In order to be exposed to the target idioms, the students will be divided into groups of two or three. Each group will get a slip of paper with an idiom written on it. These can be prepared by the teacher or by the students; in the latter case, each group thinks up the idioms to be acted out by the members of the other team. Each group will stand before their classmates and will act out the idiomatic expressions, while the rest of the class will try to guess it. The teacher times how long it takes to guess the idiom (time limits may be imposed) and the group with the shortest total time wins. The time that can be allocated to this step is 20 minutes.

References
Appendix

-Hello Mr. Photo, How’s your best friend Farzad?
-He’s alive and kicking.

Please get off my back!
I can’t do it for you.

I respect my wife’s views but I’m not a hen-pecked husband!
Julia promised to meet Rich outside the cinema at 8 o’clock, but she *let him down*. He waited for two hours and then he went home angrily.

No one will take the blame for the mistake. They keep *passing the buck*. 
Interview
An Interview with Dr. Shideh Ahmadzadeh Heravi on Shakespeare, Literary Criticism, and SBU Students

By Mehrdad Yousefpoori-Naeim

**THRESHOLD:** Let me start by thanking you for accepting our invitation to this interview. For the first question, I would like to ask you about your educational background. How did you get interested in English literature? Where did you do your undergraduate and graduate studies?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** Well, it is the same old story, I guess. Like many other youngsters whose parents entice them with their own special dreams, my father initiated my interest in English literature. He always wanted me to know a few languages so that I can pursue my carrier in these international organizations like one of his friends did. But I was carried away with literature and lost my way eventually in the Renaissance – not that he was disappointed by that. To cut the
long story short, I started my B.A. in Ferdowsi University which served truly as the backbone of my studies. I continued my studies in English literature in Tehran University and finally got my Ph.D. from Leicester University, Britain.

**THRESHOLD:** I think poetry and drama intrigue you more than other literary genres, and of course, Shakespeare is your favorite literary figure. Am I right so far?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** Yes, that is true. I guess the word 'intrigue' is the right word, here. Poetry works like a puzzle for me. More than any other genre, it creates ambiguity which is the most essential aspect of literary language. It offers different layers of meaning and because it is short, you enjoy the act of peeling. I enjoy reading plays, too, particularly when I visualize the possibilities of their representation on the stage. Shakespeare is also one of my favorite writers since he is a very enigmatic writer to me. Any time I reread him, he offers a different side of himself.

**THRESHOLD:** OK! I know this is a general question and can't be easily answered, but what makes Shakespeare Shakespeare? What qualities differentiate him from others?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** There used to be a time when Shakespeare was considered as an internationally iconic figure because both his poetry and plays seemed to celebrate universal human values and, therefore, a good subject to transport pillars of the British culture. Fortunately or unfortunately, this image of Shakespeare has been shattered by contemporary critics leaving the traditionalist fans with great disillusionment. Ironically enough, nowadays Shakespeare is still internationally celebrated but for the opposite reason. Now human values seem by nature the most inhuman. Contemporary readers of Shakespeare find this bard of Stratford more cynic than even absurdists. In a way, one can say that the contradictory nature of his texts is the key to his success. However, Shakespeare’s fame as a classic writer is more indebted to his particular use of language. By language, we do not mean his syntax or the number of words he introduced into English but a special literary language which emancipates it from a single meaning. And I think only god can play that. In one word, Shakespeare demystifies his subject matters and that makes him Shakespeare.
**THRESHOLD:** Do you think there's any truth in saying that Shakespeare wouldn't have achieved this level of fame or excellence if he had been born some time other than in the 16th century?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** Certainly, there is a sense of truth in your statement. Shakespeare is the product of his time and his literary pieces or rather masterpieces are evidence of that. The society he is presenting in his plays is necessarily early modern period with all its complexities and dilemmas. It is, in fact, an important phase in history when the individual is perceived differently. Despite all the cliché ideals endowed to this period of history, nowadays we tend to look at its conflictual overtones with a sense of dynamism. This, however, does not defy his originality. If he existed at any other time, his unique attitude to reality would have been magical.

**THRESHOLD:** All right! Now let's talk a little bit about the courses that you teach, especially History of Literary Criticism, formerly known as Literary Criticism 2. I remember there was some doubt as to whether this course or Approaches to Literary Criticism should come first in the curriculum, and finally, it was agreed that it would be better to put the history course first. I'm one of those who found this new arrangement a little surprising. Were you for or against this change? And why?
**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** History of Literary Criticism is a very boring and yet helpful course for students. As a result, I try to make it an interesting and at times a challenging course for students. There was this debate in the Department that history of a topic usually precedes its application or deep analysis. This is certainly true; any investigation of a phenomenon in a scientific field is preceded by its history. And that has been the logic behind the new arrangement in the curriculum. In practice, however, I have noticed that students who have passed a course in critical approaches (which is primarily on twentieth century approaches) respond better to the understanding of its history. But the debate is still open!

**THRESHOLD:** A question that I usually ask at the end of my interviews is: How have you found SBU students throughout all these years? Do you think they are getting better or worse year by year? Is there any specific problem that you think most BA students have? If yes, how do you think they can best handle that problem?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** Generally speaking, I presume that students at Shahid Beheshti University have improved over the past few years. Obviously, some of the reasons are played by outside factors, such as Entrance Exams, popularity of the English language, and others. I find the students more enthusiastic at least to my witness in their last terms. Over the last few years, going for higher graduate levels has increased and English Department is not an exception here. Nevertheless, we have always faced problems in students’ speaking and writing skills particularly in last year courses. As usual, students seem to fail the B.A. requirements in these two skills and they do not notice the seriousness of this failure. As an undergraduate, they are expected to speak fluently and write in an acceptable standard English even if they do not have the ambition for higher education. This is an unfortunate epidemic problem and the solution cannot be dealt within a few sentences.

**THRESHOLD:** What about MA students, and specially their theses?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** I answer this question based on my experience with the students of literature. One of the most negative qualities about M.A. students which strike teachers is that they have not read enough literary pieces. Wherever they graduate from, they have only studied the assigned texts and nothing more.
than that. No matter how much enthusiastic and hardworking they appear to be, this is not acceptable for graduate studies and certainly influences the quality of work. I think students in general should improve this reading culture in themselves particularly as graduate students. Another point which bothers me is the percentage of plagiarism that one may notice in M.A. assignments. Part of the problem goes back to writing skills that M.A. students unfortunately have not improved before in undergraduate levels. The other reason, I believe, is again a cultural issue . . .

**THRESHOLD:** I hear you're very strict when it comes to supervising a thesis. Is that true?

**Dr. Ahmadzadeh:** Well, I am not sure how to take the word 'strict': a compliment or a criticism. I believe writing a thesis is a serious task and it certainly needs discipline. So in that sense, you may say that I approach it strictly. As the supervisor of a thesis, I do my best to persuade them for a satisfactory job based on their potentials. I offer them guidelines, draw the limitations, offer them the necessary sources, at times changing the proposal, highlighting their grammatical problems (God, I hate this part) and so on and so forth. I am, however, conscious of the fact that writing a thesis is a hard task for M.A. students simply because they have not practiced enough serious assignments before and all of a sudden they are supposed to make it happen in one hundred pages.

**THRESHOLD:** Thank you again, Dr. Ahmadzadeh!
Army of Letters
America

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate.
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred
Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

Claude McKay

Translated by Alireza Jafari
Assistant Professor, English Literature, Shahid Beheshti University
To America

How would you have us, as we are?
Or sinking 'neath the load we bear?
Our eyes fixed forward on a star?
Or gazing empty at despair?

Rising or falling? Men or things?
With dragging pace or footsteps fleet?
Strong, willing sinews in your wings?
Or tightening chains about your feet?

James Weldon Johnson

سخنی با آمریکا

ما را چگونه می خواهی، اینگونه که هستی؟
یا در حال شکسته شدن زیر بارهای بردوشمان؟
با جسمان دوخته به ستاره ای؟
یا خالی و خیره به پاس؟

در صعود یا سقوط؟ انسان یا چیز؟
با قدم های آهسته یا تند؟
عضلاتی قوی و آماده در بال هایت؟
یا زنجیرهایی بر پاهایت که هر لحظه سفت تر می شود؟

Translated by Alireza Jafari
Assistant Professor, English Literature, Shahid Beheshti University
آشنایی من و نازی

می‌اندیشیدم که گناه،
تکرار تجربه‌هایی است
و شیطان از دریچه صدف پوسیده سرک کشیده گفت:
«خداوند، اداره جهان را به انسان سپرده است!»
در ساحل بودم،
از مرغ دریایی ندا رسید
هیچ کلمه‌ی سفیدی حضور مرا آیینه نمی‌شد!
گوش دادم به سقوط بهتر،
در جنگل انبودی بیشت سرم...
و یاد، ندا داد:
«راز جاودانگی را در قوزک پایش بخوان!»
و نهال نو گفت:
«روز و شب حیات مرا کافی می‌دهد!»
زمستنی از پی زمستانی می‌گذشت،
تا در بامدادی سفید
شعله‌های زنی
دستش را بر شانه یسردم گذاشت...

Three Poems by Hossein Panahi
From Nazi & I (1993),
3rd vol. of The Dog's Left Eye

آشنایی من و نازی

می‌اندیشیدم که گناه،
تکرار تجربه‌هایی است
و شیطان از دریچه صدف پوسیده سرک کشیده گفت:
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دستش را بر شانه یسردم گذاشت...

93
I. My Acquaintance with Nazi

I was thinking that Sin
Is to repeat experimenting
And Satan peeped into a rotten shell and yelled:
God has entrusted man the whole world to handle.

I was at the seaside
When the seagull called:
No word would mirror my white presence!

Listening to the fall of an old oak tree
In the dense forest behind me,
I heard the wind holler:
Read the mystery of eternity on its ankle!
And the seedling was saying:
Night 'n' day would suffice my life!

Winter passed after winter
Until a white dawn a flame
Put her hand on my cold shoulder
In a woman's shape.
گفتگوی من و نازی زیر چتر

نازی: بیا زیر چتر من که بارون خیست نکنیم گر که خیلی نشته که بشر تونسته آتشو کشف بکنی و قشنگان اینه که یادگرفته گوچه را تو تابه ها سرخ کن و بعد بخوره راسی راسی؟ به روزی اگه گوچه هیچ کجا پیداشه اون وقت بشر چکار کنه؟ من: هیچ نازی دانشمندی نرن می دن تا یابه ها را بخوریم وقتی آنها هم نموم شته اون وقت بشر لباسی را کنه و با هلله از روبی آتشی می پرده نازی: دوربین کوچک مهربانه مو اگه یا هم بخوریم هلله های من تو جلوی شن من شه من: عشق من اب ها نزن مبار می بردند اگه وارونهیتی می کنند عکسون تو اب برکه تا قبایلم می مونه نازی: رنگی یا سیاه یا سفید؟ من: سیاه و تو سفید نازی: آتشی چی؟ تو ابا خاموش؟ نمی شن آتشا من: نمی ندمو ولادت چتر رو پیش پریم من نازی: اون کسی که چتر رو ساخت عاطق بود من: عزیز دل من، ام بود
II. Nazi and Me Conversing under an Umbrella

Nazi: Get under my umbrella or you’ll be soaked in rain.
    I say, how nice it is that mankind has discovered fire!
    And how nicer that they’ve learnt how to fry tomatoes in a pan
    before they eat it!
    What would have men done, indeed, if they’d ever run out of
    tomatoes?

Me: Nothing, Nazi. Then the scientists would develop a new thesis on
    how to eat the pans!
    And as the dog shut his eyes,
    As the cat’s hair stiffened,
    As the calf grazed all eglantines or dog roses,
    They’d say: as a matter of fact,
    Science proves that iron has got plenty of vitamins and proteins
    Then the Court would send a letter to Great Pope
    Only to inspire him –
    In the midst of his quarrel with wife –
    A midnight revelation from on high,
    And the morning after in the cathedral – that smells of oak –
    After the consumption of chime
    The message would spread amongst all fauna and flora:
    “*Do partake of metals –*”
    Sewing needles,
    Valve rods,
Chains, locks, keys,
Surgical scissors,
Tanks or gun barrels,
Windows, doors, fences,
Empty cartridges,
Magnetic compasses,
Ewers,
Rings and lighters,
Horseshoes and braziers,
Jingle bells,
Cameras...
And when they run out of iron
Man species get undressed
And merrily jump over fire!

Nazi: Then how'd we eternize our jubilees
If we eat the Lubitel you've bestowed on me?

Me: Waters got slanted lenses, my love
And shoot us upside-down
And the pond will keep our picture till eternity

Nazi: Colored, or black and white?
Me: Me black and you white
Nazi: How about fire? Ain't it put out in water?
Me: I swear I have no idea,
Hand over the umbrella.
Nazi: Whoever invented the umbrella must have been a good lover.
No, my sweetheart; he was just a good fella.
چهل و قال من و نازی سر هیچ

من: می تونی حسی بزنی برای چی پیدا کردم؟
نازی: سنگواره سنگافک؟
من: کهنه تره!
نازی: فسیل فسفری گل افتخارمودون؟
من: بشو ها بهش می گفتند بلبرینگ ماتین!
نازی: جه چندنگ! مثل زمین قوس داره!
من: زنجیرش رو با ساقه آخرین خوشه گندم باشم
اویزون کن گردندت!
نازی: کجا پیداش کردنی؟
من: زیر یک کوه بلند که الانه صحراست قبلاً هم دریا بود
نازی: نگاه که اینه می اد؟
من: ارده خیلی،
مثل زهره به فلک.

III. Nazi and Me and Much Ado about Nothing

Me: Guess what I’ve found for you.
Nazi: Fossil of a damselfly?
Me: Older!
Nazi: Phosphorous fossil of a sunflower?
Me: Man species used to call it car ball-bearings!
Nazi: How beautiful! Curvy – like the earth!
Me: I’ve woven the chain with the last cluster of wheat stalk. Wear it around your neck.
Nazi: Where did you find it?
Me: Beneath a tall mountain that is a desert now and used to be a sea once.
Nazi: Look now! It suits me?
Me: Yes, truly – as Venus suits the Zodiac!

Translated by Farzaneh Doosti

*English Literature, PhD Candidate, Islamic Azad University (Tehran, Central Branch)*
Here is a story about life
With its changes and its ups and downs.
On a high mountain plain,
Lived a lamb with a coat of remarkable sheen
That would glitter in the sunlight sparkly and clean.
Such a great source of pride
That it caused him to prim.
He danced and bounced and bounced,
With his high steps, I must say, he danced remarkably.
His neighbors found his dancing handsome and joined the play.
But alas, some people shaved his coat and left him
Naked in the buff one day.
He sat in a corner, since his friends laughed at him all the time.

Then one day, came a giant jackalope.
This sage of the sages, this heir of hope
Stumbled upon the lamb and checked him out:
“Hey kid, why so hopeless?!”
“I used to be something,” the lamb said, “I was covered with fluff
And danced in the sunlight and showed off my stuff;
But now, I am in the buff and my friends laugh at me, because they think
I’m ugly and ridiculous and so pink.”
“What’s wrong with pink?” the jackalope said,
“Sometimes, you are up, sometimes you are down. When you find you are down,
Well just look around. You still have a body, good legs and excellent hooves.
As for the dancing, you can do more. You can dance and bounce and bounce
And jump as high as the sky; you are lighter and can do this if you give it a try.”
So every year about May, they load him up and shave him all naked and bare. He did not care and just bounced and bounced, being light like a feather.

Now in this world, there are ups and downs. So nice to know there are jackalopes around.

Hossein Mohseni

*English Literature, MA, SBU*
Destiny

He would die very soon he was told...three months from then.

“The illness lets its victim live at most four months,” said the doctor inspecting the X-ray image, “and you have passed one month of it.”

His children were so shocked by this that they heard almost nothing of the second part of the doctor’s speech. But he himself was listening carefully, with absolute silence.

“We don’t find it a good idea to give our patients any false hope,” the doctor added without any emotion in his eyes. “We try to be realistic and also honest with them.”

“But there should be something to be done,” said the daughter, “something...something...”

“There isn’t any something for this illness, at least till now.”

“What about a kind of a special surgical operation?” said one of the sons. “There is no worry about the money, and it can be performed anywhere in the world; we won’t have any problems with these sort of things.”

“Listen, everybody!” said the doctor firmly. “ Anything you can think of, we have already thought of, discussed, and calculated the prerequisites and results of. We have done everything possible, everything. Your father is not the only person suffering from and struggling with the case. We have worked on several other cases, but unfortunately we’ve found no more than what I told you. And you are in one of the best clinics dealing with the disease, and the best, most experienced physicians are either working here or assisting us through telecommunications. Anyway, you may go to other places too, BUT, try not to tell me what to do, please.”

“How callous you are, doctor!” remarked the daughter. “You’re saying...”

“The doctor’s right, Emilia,” he interrupted her, and everybody turned to him suddenly. “My life has come to its end.”

“But we’ll definitely see other doctors, other hospitals...We’ll not give up, Father. You’ll not give up.”

Without paying attention to her, he left the room absent-mindedly.
Some time later the doctor was left alone. When the children arrived at the man’s house, he was sitting on a chair, smoking a cigarette. There were also a couple of crushed butt-ends in the ashtray.

“Dad!” cried the daughter, “smoking is deadly for you, don’t you know that?!” And reached to take the cigarette. Without looking at her, he stopped her by raising his left hand to her face.

A few moments passed in silence before the older son started talking.

“Dad you know these doctors well,” said he. “They express only their guesses. I personally have never trusted them. As she said, we’ll try other options, from the very tomorrow.”

“Yes, he’s right,” said the other son. “Only God knows when we’re gonna meet our...” His siblings turned suddenly to prevent him from uttering the word “death”. But an expression in their father’s face ensured them that he had got the word himself. Having pushed his cigarette down on the ashtray, he immediately picked up his lighter and the cigarette box from the table to light another one. Emilia took some quick steps towards him, and this time she succeeded in grabbing them from his hands and flew into a sudden rage.

“You’re killing yourself right at once in this way. You’re killing yourself and us. Why have you lost your hope? Just because they say you’re gonna...” A sob stopped her and she walked to the kitchen. Then she continued, “You shouldn’t give a damn to what they think. Don’t lose hope. We are your hope, here beside you. Doctors are never right.” She lowered her voice, sighed once, and then mumbled, “Almost never.”

She came back with a bowl of fruit in her hands, placed it before him and said tenderly, “Try these instead, please. These are good for you and these are bad,” and put the lighter and the cigarette box beside the bowl. The man stood motionless for a minute, gazing at the things on the table. He then pointed to the door with his hand. They looked at each other; they knew whenever he asked to be alone, they couldn’t resist, so left one by one.

That night the man sat awake in the darkness. He was thinking. He was thinking and smoking. “I wish I didn’t know about it,” he thought. “How hard it is to know you’re going to die...very soon. You feel closer to it every second that passes. I never knew it was that terrible to face death, to know you are finished, to leave everything and everyone you have and go away! Oh, it’s not bearable! It’s not bearable!!”

He then rose from his seat and began to pace in the hall. The doctor’s words did not leave him alone.
“‘The illness lets its victim live at most four months.’ My life reached its end all of a sudden! Just all of a damn sudden! The fear of death is even more of a killer than death itself. Three months! Three months of hard life. Overwhelming life! How can I endure? How can I tolerate? I don’t like it.” Now he was walking back and forth quickly.

“I don’t want to be killed little by little,” he murmured. “I don’t want to be tortured by death. Damn it!” And threw the cigarette away and cried, “God! Kill me at once. I beg you.” And held his head in his hands, sitting down before a wall. Having sat, he let his head fall between his knees, weeping. A few minutes passed. Then he raised his head slowly. A sudden idea had come to his mind. “But no one dies without a cause,” he mumbled.

In the morning, the children came back. They had set an appointment with a doctor. They knocked on the door and waited, but it did not get opened.

“He may have not gotten up yet,” said the daughter. “Knock again.”

It was not opened again; this time they knocked quickly and repeatedly.

“Dad, Dad! Open the door; it's us. Open up,” they cried. But no response came. They got more worried, and decided to break down the door. When they entered the house, it had been filled with smoke. There were three rooms in the house and each went to a different one.

“Dad is here...,” cried the younger son, “on his bed.” They rushed towards him. The older, hurriedly, put his ear on his chest.

He had died very soon...as he had been told.
I’m Dr. K. S. the Wonderful, the Great.
Stupid, ringing cell phones I do confiscate.
And then all the life that you have will be mine.
What? I care a lot for the peace of your mind!
That’s why I share my discoveries with great pleasure
With the whole class—with coffee it feels remarkable!
You can enjoy my class from the very first day,
When the whole college is still on holiday.
But sadly all this will relentlessly fade,
When all of you pass with a very good grade.

Zahra Golesorkhi

*English Language and Literature, BA, SBU*
Translation Challenge
Profile

Mohammad Reza Shafeei Kadkani, one of the great authors and poets of Iran, was born on October 12th, 1939, in Kadkan of Torbat Heidariie. His pseudonym is M. Sereshk. Mohammad Reza never went to school, but he started studying Arabic language and literature under the guidance of Adib Neishapouri II. He got his BA in Persian literature from Ferdowsi University in Mashhad and also his PhD from the University of Tehran. He has been teaching at the University of Tehran since 1969. Shafeei Kadkani used to compose classic poems in his youth and then turned to composing in Nimayi style.

His works include:

Authored books: Musicality of Poetry, Imaginative Forms in Persian Literature, and With Light and Mirror

Corrections: Asrar Al-Tohid, Tarikhe Neishabour, Attar Neishabouri's works, Mokhtar Name, Manteghotteir, and Asrar Name

Poetry collections: In Garden Allies of Neyshabour, Murmurs, Heraldry at Night, In Leaf's Opinion, Odour of Moulian River, On Existence and Composition, Like a Tree on a Rainy Night

Translated by Kobra Moradi
Persian Literature, PhD Candidate, ATU
خانه ام ابری است

یکسره روی زمین ابری است با ان از فراز گردنه – خرد و خراب و مست

بتا می پیدا

یکسره دنیای خراب از اوست

و حواس من:

ای لن زن. چه تو را اوای نی برده است دور از راه – کجا؟

خانه ام ابری است اما

ابر باران غرفته است:

در خیال روزهای روشتم کزدست رفتندم –

من به روی افاق

می پرم درساخت دریا نظره –

و همه دنبال راه و خرد از باد است.

ویه راه لن زن که دائم می نوازد نی –

دراین دنیای ایرانی

راه خود را دارد اندر پیش

نیما یوشیج

My Home’s Cloudy

My home’s cloudy
All the grounds are cloudy by that.
Wind blows
Coming tired and ruined and drunken from the pass.
All the grounds are ruined by that
And my senses too.
You, flutist, whose flute tune has sent away from the way, where are you?
My home’s cloudy but
The cloud is rainy.
Dreaming over the gone happy days,
In the presence of sea, I’m looking at my sun.
And all the world is ruined and tired by wind,
And the flutist, who always plays flute, is in his way,
In this cloudy world.

Nahid Jamshidi Rad

English Literature, MA, SBU
My Home Is Cloudy

My Home is cloudy,  
Permanently, burdened by clouds over the land.  
The wind, broken, desolate and befuddled,  
Gushes over the pass.  
The world is spent by it  
And my senses too!  
O piper!  
Whom has been enchanted from his path by the melody of the pipe, where are you?  
My Home is cloudy, but  
The cloud is imbued by rain.  
Doted by the illusion of my bright days,  
I stand in the sun rays  
Casting my gaze upon the sea.  
While the entire world has been desolated and ravaged by the wind,  
The piper, permanently playing, keeps going onto the path  
In this cloudy world.  

Hossein Mohseni  
English Literature, MA, SBU

My home is surrounded with clouds

My home is surrounded with clouds  
Everywhere on its ground squats a cloud.  
From over the pass petty, poor and drunk  
Comes the wind.  
Everywhere in the world is ruined by it.  
And my conscious,  
Hey fifer, that fifes' sound took you away, where are you?  
My home is surrounded with clouds, but  
It's going to rain.  
With memory of lost bright days,  
I face the sun,  
I take my eyes to the sea,  
And the whole world is petty and poor by the wind.  
And on the way the fifer who always plays the fife in this cloudy world  
Has his own way upon him.  

Shadi Hatamihanza  
English Language and Literature, MA, SBU
My House Is Cloudy

My house is cloudy
The earth, all over, is cloudy with that.
From above the defile, shattered, desolated and drunk,
The wind sways.
The whole world is desolated by that.
And my senses
Oh the piper! You that are straying away from the way through the tune of the pipe, Where are you?
My house is cloudy but
The cloud is close to rain.
In the memory of the bright days which are gone away
I’m toward the sunlight
And onlooker of the sea gamut.
And the whole world is shattered and desolated from the wind.
And on the way, the piper who incessantly pipes,
In this clouded world
Has taken his own path.

Sahar Mehrjouy

*English Literature, MA, SBU*
غزل برای گل آفتابگردان

نفست شکفته بادا و
ترانه ات شنیدم
گل آفتابگردان!

نگاهت خجسته بادا و
شکفت تو نیمی
گل آفتابگردان!

به سحر که خفته در باغ، صنوبر و ستاره،
تو به آبها سپاری، همه صبر و خواب خود را
و رصد کنی ز هر سو، ره آفتاب خود را.

نه بنفشه دانی این راز، نه بپت و رازیانه
دم همی شگرف است تو را دریب میانه.

تو همه دریب تکایو
که حضور زندگی نیست
به غیر اروه‌ها
و به راه اروه‌ها،
همه عمر.
جست و جوها.

من و بیوی ی رهابی،
و گرم به نیبیت عمر,
رده‌ی به نیش
تو و جست و جو,
و گر چند، رسیدنی نبایند.

چه دعات گویم ای گل!
تویی این دعای خورشید که مستجاب گشتی
شده اتحاد عشق بعیش از تو، هر رمزی
نگه‌ی به خویشتن کن گه خود آفتاب گشتی!

محمد رضا شفیعی کندکنی
Views and Reviews
Essential Study Skills
The Complete Guide to Success @ University

Tom Burns & Sandra Sinfield

Sage Publications

Sofia A Koutlaki
Pragmatics/Discourse Analysis, Guest Lecturer, SBU

Written by two experienced lecturers at the London Metropolitan University with a wealth of experience in study skills courses and the development of resources at all levels, this book provides a solid grounding on all aspects of the university experience.
This is a practical, comprehensive guide to academic success, containing activities and suggestions designed to help students develop into confident, reflective learners, who can take learning challenges in their stride by adopting positive attitudes towards learning.

The material is organised in ten chapters: how to learn and study; how to organise yourself for study; how to research and read academically; how to use the overview; how to pass exams; how to learn creatively; how to build your confidence; how to succeed in group work; how to prepare better assignments; and how to be reflective.

Essential Study Skills includes information, activities, advice, and step-by-step guidelines on:

- Organisation and time management
- Learning and studying
- Targeted research and active reading
- Memory and learning style
- Revision and exam techniques
- Active, creative and reflective learning
- Successful notemaking strategies
- Ways of overcoming fear and building self-confidence
- Assessment procedures
- Successful communication techniques
- The what, why and how of essays, reports, presentations, seminars and exams.

It also contains a comprehensive index for ease of use.

This book is essential reading for all undergraduate students who want to make the most of their studies, and for those in particular who will go on to teaching. Now that learner-based learning is phased in the Iranian educational system, today’s independent, creative students will become the inspired and inspiring teachers on whose work the success of the changes depends. Essential Study Skills is an important aid towards this goal.

Since the chapters are arranged progressively so that each one builds upon the material presented in previous chapters, I would recommend that the book be read sequentially. However, here I would like to focus more closely on a couple of chapters which, in my view, have particular relevance to our students.
Chapter 5 (How to pass exams (big picture – small steps)) contains useful information on the concept of exams and on learning styles, revision and exam technique.

[...]the problem is not necessarily with exams at all, but often lies in approaches to teaching and learning, and in how we are taught, at school, college and university. That is, whilst we are taught subject content we are not necessarily taught how to learn that content. (p 93)

The writers make the point that the problem with exam failure lies in the fact that students have not been taught how to learn for exams, not because they are lazy, unintelligent, uninterested, careless or whatever. Among the necessary ingredients for exam success is the ability to gather, record, organise, understand, remember and use information; if one or more are missing, and you also add exam conditions (stress and time limitations), the whole cake flops. This chapter gives useful, practical ways of how to go about optimising the whole process to ensure exam success.

I also found the section on affective factors in learning (Chapter 7: How to build your confidence) particularly interesting. This chapter deals with an aspect of learning that unfortunately does not receive the attention it deserves in our educational system. In particular, the section on new students’ fears and positive thinking can be a great way in for term 1 students, and I have used some of this material for the introductory session of my Language Learning Skills course (autumn term 1391-92).

I particularly recommend this book to all English students at all stages of their undergraduate degree. I used it as supplementary reading in my Language Learning Skills course (autumn term 1390-91), telling my students to use it as their constant companion throughout their studies (I hope they are doing so!) Apart from its practical suggestions, the writers’ direct, friendly style makes it a pleasure to read. This means that its careful reading will also help English students improve their writing skills.

Look out for the Persian version of this textbook, forthcoming later this year by Entesharat Elmi Farhangi, in a brilliant translation by our very own Seyed Kourosh Shahhosseini (English Lang. and Lit, term 3). (But that’s for non-English students, so our own students had better not cheat!)
From Potentiality to Actuality: Shakespeare's As You Like It

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This paper would look at the different phases of Shakespeare's pastoral comedy, As You Like it, in terms of the defining milieus inhabited alternatively by the characters. It will be seen how these places can turn into one another and the rationale behind such conversion of context will be discussed. Furthermore, the way through which the potential inspirations of this work have influenced the playwright's formulation of his characters and setting are considered as a means to see how the presented elements are founded on the potential state while at the same time they skillfully go into different directions and gain multiple associations.

In his play, As You Like It, Shakespeare presents a circular trajectory wherein characters inhabit various worlds which clash with each other while being at the same time complementary to one another. The inaugural phase is presented as a "rugged and disagreeable" (Snider, 1873, p. 75) reality wherein one can witness ample presence of enmity and persecution in the hands of family members and relatives which inevitably leads to forced or voluntary exiles from one's civic roots. Within such primary locality, one can perceive the very instrumentality of State and Family in afflicting injustice (p. 77) notably in the case of Orlando's unfair treatment in the hands of his elder brother Oliver and Duke Fredrick.

The second milieu giving refuge to the outcast characters is the Forest of Arden, which is construed as a "resort to which all intelligence flees" (p. 75). This alternative climate becomes an innocent spatial and mental state which enchants the characters and enhances their senses and their appreciation of the humane relations between them. This poetic zone which is given an idyllic and tuneful countenance is bereft of superficial communal and social orders. In fact, this sphere negates all societal organizations and operates based on uniform and natural inter and intra subjective liaisons and human passion which subtly justify the ambiance accommodating the marriage scenes and in turn paves the way for the resurrection of the state. The poetic glow of these scenes is a result of the imaginative canvas on which the nature and the beloved are drawn with equal
perfection (p. 80). However, the significant element here is the transmundane and ethereal essence of this second stage. Although the presence of such milieu is deemed necessary as a culturally and personally sanative chapter in characters' lives, it is only essential and inevitable that it should eventually melt into a much more solid actuality in a world which certainly demands a more civic basis to stage its variegated gamut of interactions between the involved personages. Therefore, the mere depiction by the playwright of this space is a betrayal of its state of potentiality which safeguards the possibility of its existence, since the very realization of this exemplary microcosm would surely herald its "annihilation" (p. 75).

Therefore, one sees the indispensable return of the characters to their civil society which would still bear the traces of the previous aerial phase in which they were momentarily embedded. It is seen that with the increase of injustice done by Duke Fredrick, the majority of people are driven to the Forest and thus the "idyllic realm is at once converted into the same state from which they have fled, lacking only the soil and the usurping Duke" (p. 82). Thus, it is evident that the idyllic and ideal forest has performed a critical mediatory function as a means of "regeneration" (p. 82) towards the higher state of society which restores man into reality (p. 84).

Nevertheless, the above mentioned progressive path undertaken by characters alongside the two intertwined and alternative locales in this play by Shakespeare is not undertaken as such by everyone. One may name Jaques as the representative of such an attitude. Indeed, his cynical character would only allow him to detect "discord and evil" (p. 78) even in a nature idolized by other characters. He is assured of brutality of man and animals alike; a belief which is exemplified by the case of deers leaving their "wounded neighbors to perish" (p. 78). The depth of his gloomy perspective can be sensed in the extremity of his conviction that getting rid of life would help them go back to the primal state from which the characters had fled in the first place. This line of reasoning prevents him from going back to society again. In fact, Jaques "snarls at all reality [and believes that] … mere existence is sufficient for condemnation" (p. 82). The only source of delight for him would be the fool whom he sees as the only wise man. Greenlaw quotes Hudson stating that Jaques himself is "a philosopher with something of the fool in him" (p. 130).

In furtherance of the previous argument, one might notice how in creating such discordant character as Jaques who is disconnected from the main plot (p. 131), Shakespeare has been influenced by Sidney's pastoral romance Arcadia. In Arcadia, Philisides who actually represents Sidney himself does not have any part in the action and his melancholic character mirrors the "melancholy and moral Jaques" (p. 131). Both Shakespeare and Sidney create "sentimental" (p. 133) characters in Jaques and Philisides who are incapable of
fully functioning as propellants of the progressive line of the story. This matter is in particular, exemplified in description of Jaques being easily intrigued to weep even for a "sobbing deer" (p. 133). As a matter of fact, these two characters not only block the expected course of action, but also act out of place as is apparent in Philisides' strange song. Greenlaw informs us how:

the song of Philisides is not of the type expected from shepherds ... He is called a shepherd, but he is not really living the life of a shepherd … he has had an unfortunate love affair; he is, however, a moralizer or philosopher rather than a Daphnis. So also Jaques, who has had experience with women, has travelled, and has acquired a brand of melancholy as individual as that of Philisides. (p. 134)

Although in this play, Shakespeare may have been under the influence of Sidney for the creation of his character Jaques, he was much more indebted to Sir Thomas Lodge's prose tale *Rosalynde*. However, one needs to know that Shakespeare has remodeled and "manipulated" (Tolman, 1922, p. 65) many of its borrowed elements. Suffice to say that he did not follow the novel slavishly, but "chose from the tale … those incidents which would be of special dramatic value to the play" (Smith, 1920, p. 494). This issue is specifically seen in his presenting a "single, definite quarrel and its results, while in Lodge there are three outbreaks of hostility between the brothers" (Tolman, 1922, p. 66). Such discrepancies are present everywhere between Shakespeare's play and Lodge's story. For instance, Shakespeare does not follow Lodge in "making the usurping King meet death in battle" (p. 68), instead Oliver encounters a religious and devout man and in turn, is reformed into a religious recluse giving the right of kingship back to his brother, Duke Senior (p. 68).

Another illustration of this case would be Shakespeare's adding the character of Jaques to his narrative, who advances "pungent comments upon those about him and on human life" (p. 70). There is no such character found in Lodge's *Rosalynde*. By means of this character, Shakespeare is able to expand the world view present in his play. As was previously mentioned, Jaques is a complex and round character who is "misanthropic and genial, sensual and refined, depraved and elevated, cynical and liberal, selfish and generous … [with] symptoms of incipient insanity" (p. 70). Even Shakespeare manipulates the setting of Lodge's story. His setting is:

at a romantic distance from any known or definitely locatedplace. Not a creature troubles its stillness save one lonely lioness who is so obliging as to come out from hiding at precisely the moment she is needed, and at no other. Lodge's forest of Arden, on the other hand, is definitely located, not far from the city of Bordeaux and within easy access of Paris. (Smith, 1920, p. 499)
Shakespeare also gives a more thorough air of reality to his characters than Lodge whose shepherd Corydon "quotes Latin glibly, writes sonnets in French and thoughtfully philosophizes on the envy of degree and the vicissitudes of fortune!" (p. 500). Shakespeare's Corin's only philosophizing is that "good pasture makes fat sheep" (p. 500).

Although Shakespeare's borrowed elements and characters are taken from states of potentiality already latent in others' works and characters, he gives them a twist and makes them unique through an aesthetic actuality in his plays. This argument can undoubtedly be presented in the case of Lodge's Rosalind who has a "morbidity … [and] forwardness" (p. 501) as opposed to Shakespeare's Rosalind who is "coy yet independent" (p. 501). The same thing applies to Celia/Alinda:

In Lodge, Alinda is pushed forward on a level with Rosalynde, and as a result neither is entirely distinct. Bashfulness is unknown to her. It is she who accosts the shepherd and arranges their lodgings while her page stands to one side. [Shakespeare's] Aliena who cannot say the words when Rosalind proposes the mock marriage is quite differently conceived from her who, in Lodge, herself suggests the wedding. (p. 502)

It can be seen how different the characters become at the touch of the artist when Alinda's assertiveness is transmuted into Aliena's shyness. Thus, Shakespeare gives his personages a state of actuality within a play which itself deals with the very notion of transitory and mediatory phase of an ideal circle (potential state) concretized as a forest which touches every character and renovates, remodels and reforms them.

In the end, it should be mentioned that many critics like Professor E. E. Stoll disagree with Jaques being inspired by Sidney and contend that "Jaques was suggested by the character Malevole, the Malcontent, the title-hero of John Marston's play The Malcontent" (Tolman, 1922, p. 71). It may partly be true. Nevertheless, there are noticable differences between the two characters. For instance, Malevole is central to the action, while Jaques is an outsider to it. Shakespeare's Jaques is a "purely contemplative character" (Smith, 1920, p. 506) who is dissatisfied with the whole world without blaming any one person, whereas Lodge's Malevole is a "true villain and prosecutes his schemes for the downfall of others" (p. 506). In Jaques one can see "tenderness, even a certain human sympathy, overspreading his cynicism" (p. 507), however such emotions are alien to Malevole. Thus, it is seen that in passing through the transformative tunnel of potentiality to actuality, the affiliations of characters are gently refined, while their inner essence is kept in a way.
References


A Review on Mimesis and Modern Art

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“This is not a pipe.”
“The Treason of Images”
By René Magritte

Introduction

In the modern times, people are striving to compete. The competition itself is a representation of mimetic act for we strive to get better in a specific aspect than others. But, another side of the competition is that at the same time we are trying to distinguish ourselves from others by avoiding mimetic behavior. The same competition has happened in contemporary art and has somehow reached its catharsis in abstract art. The modern artist caught between the past and the future tries to resists repeating what already created; nevertheless, in following specific rules of acceptation, the artist is obliged to create a kind of balance between resemblance and difference. Mimesis is a dynamic concept several representations of which have been offered from the ancient time to the present. The very temporality of the definitions of mimesis proves the liberal nature of this concept and its suitability in analyzing modern art which tries to get loose of the bonds of representation and at the same time it is the very ambiguity of the
mimesis which is comparable to the ambiguity and hybrid nature of contemporary modern art. In this review, after a brief introduction to the classical history of mimesis, the contemporary notion of mimesis and its impact on the visual creation shall be analyzed.

The term *mimesis* is derived from the Greek *(mīmēsis)*, from μιμεῖθαι *(mīmeisthai)*, meaning to imitate (Edward, 1967). The OED defines mimesis as a figure of speech, whereby the words or actions of another are imitated and the deliberate imitation of the behavior of one group of people by another as a factor in social change. Mimicry is defined as the action, practice, or art of mimicking or closely imitating the manner, gesture, speech, or mode of actions and persons, or the superficial characteristics of a thing. Both terms are generally used to denote the imitation or representation of nature, especially in aesthetics (primarily literary and artistic media).

**Classical Definitions of Mimesis**

**Plato**

Plato first used the word mimesis in his *Republic*. Since Plato believes truth is only a concern of philosophers, he did not consider the truth may be conveyed by the medium of mimesis. In second book of *The Republic*, in a dialogue between Socrates and his pupils, Socrates warns we should not consider poetry as being capable of conveying the truth and that as listeners to poetry we should protect ourselves against its deceptions. (Plato, 2008).

In the fifth book of *The Republic*, Plato utters Socrates' metaphor of the three couches: one exists as an idea made by God (the Platonic ideal); one is made by the carpenter, in imitation of God's idea; one is made by the artist (for example, the painter) in imitation of the carpenter's couch (Plato, 2008). Therefore, the painter's bed is twice distanced from the truth. The painter, as imitator of reality, only produces copies of copies of reality. Thus, we may not attain the ultimate sacred truth through the mimetic process.

**Aristotle**

As Stephen Halliwell in *Aristotelian Mimesis between Theory and Practice* puts it, Aristotle’s *Poetics* helped codifying the “fine arts” and unifying the concept of “art”. *Poetics* is his treatise on the subject of mimesis. Aristotle stated that human beings are mimetic creatures, feeling an urge to create texts (art) that reflect and represent reality. Therefore, unlike Plato, Aristotle believed imitation to be a natural phenomenon which is not only harmless for human beings, but also provides a good knowledge about nature.
In Aristotle's *Poetics*, the "natural" human inclination to imitate is described as: "inherent in man from his earliest days; he differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative of all creatures, and he learns his earliest lessons by imitation. Also inborn in all of us is the instinct to enjoy works of imitation" (Durix, 1998). Michael Davis, a translator and commentator of Aristotle, writes:

"At first glance, mimesis seems to be a stylizing of reality in which the ordinary features of our world are brought into focus by a certain exaggeration, the relationship of the imitation to the object it imitates being something like the relationship of dancing to walking. Imitation always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what really has no beginning or end. Mimēsis involves a framing of reality that announces that what is contained within the frame is not simply real. Thus the more "real" the imitation the more fraudulent it becomes." (Aristotle in Davis 1999, p. 3)

**Contemporary Definitions of Mimesis**

**Walter Benjamin**

Walter Benjamin is reintroduced the concept of mimesis as a fundamental human property in his "On the Mimetic Faculty". He believes that the repression of the mimetic relation to the world, to the individual, and to others leads to a loss of sensuous similarity. In Benjamin’s view, the mimetic faculty is evident in all of man's higher functions. Children's behavior is a prime example of the manner in which mimetic behavior is not restricted to man imitating man - in which the "child plays at being not only a shopkeeper or teacher but also a windmill and a train" (Jennings, M.W., Eiland, H. & Smith, G., 2005). In “On the Mimetic Faculty”, Benjamin utters:

"Nature creates similarities. One need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man’s. His gift of seeing resemblances is nothing other than a rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else. Perhaps there is none of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role.” (1933)

**Adorno and Horkheimer**

In Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, mimesis (once a dominant practice) becomes a repressed presence in Western history in which one yields to nature to the extent that the subject loses itself and sinks into the surrounding world. They argue that, in Western history, mimesis has been
transformed by Enlightenment science from a dominant presence into a distorted, repressed, and hidden force. Artworks can "provide modernity with a possibility to revise or neutralize the domination of nature" (Kelly, 1998). Socialization and rationality suppress the "natural" behavior of man, and art provides a "refuge for mimetic behavior" (Kelly, 1998). Aesthetic mimesis assimilates social reality without the subordination of nature such that the subject disappears in the work of art and the artwork allows for a reconciliation with nature.

Derrida

Derrida uses the concept of mimesis in relation to texts - which are non-disposable doubles that always stand in relation to what has preceded them. Texts are deemed nondisposable and double in that they always refer to something that has preceded them and are thus never the origin, never inner, never outer, but always doubled. The mimetic text (which always begins as a double) lacks an original model and its inherent intertextuality demands deconstruction. “Differéncé is the principle of mimesis, a productive freedom, not the elimination of ambiguity; mimesis contributes to the profusion of images, words, thoughts, theories, and action, without itself becoming tangible” (Kelly, 1998). Mimesis thus resists theory and constructs a world of illusion, appearances, aesthetics, and images in which existing worlds are appropriated, changed, and re-interpreted. Images are a part of our material existence, but also mimetically bind our experience of reality to subjectivity and connote a sensuous experience that is beyond reference to reality.

As we follow the definition of mimesis throughout the history, we come to realize that it has gradually transformed from an objective to a subjective notion. In classical view, mimesis is associated with the nature and representation thereof, but in contemporary definition of mimesis, the subordination of nature loses color; therefore, contemporary artists feel free to create their own personal expression of nature; thus, a modern piece of art is created through modifying or even nullifying the dominance of nature. In refusing to accept the modern products at the “age of mechanical reproduction” and to escape the consumerism of the modern society, modern artist tends to ignore objective representation in favor of a subjective and mental expression of reality. To the contemporary artist, mimesis is no longer a shot from the reality, but rather a mental and personal perception of reality. Another concept which is closely linked to mimesis is the notion of influence i.e. the unavoidable consideration of the past phenomena. It seems that when the load of influence reaches a certain point i.e. the eve of modernism, the art under the pressure of so much an anxiety of influence and posterior to so much great arts, in an attempt to avoid mimetic behavior, inevitably tends to abstraction. In refusing the influence, modern art follows an
anti-historical movement which would inevitably lead to secession, decomposition and inconsistency.

An appropriate example to clarify the modern condition of representation is René Magritte’s *The Treason of Images*, a painting of a pipe with a sentence saying “This is not a pipe.” as Magritte himself explains it: “The famous pipe. How people reproached me for it! And yet, could you stuff my pipe? No, it’s just a representation, is it not? So if I had written on my picture “This is a pipe.” I’d have been lying! (Torczyner, 1977)

References
Suffering in Unresolved Anguish: A Brief Comparative Review of the Movie The Fountain and John Donne’s “Songs and Sonnets”

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The Fountain is a 2006 American film, which blends elements of fantasy, history, religion, and science fiction. It is directed by Darren Aronofsky, and stars Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz. The film comprises three storylines where Jackman and Weisz play different sets of characters: a modern-day scientist and his cancer-stricken wife, a conquistador and his queen, and this nameless strange character in the space who hallucinates his lost love. The storylines—interwoven with use of match cuts and recurring visual motifs—reflect the themes of love and mortality.

The film opens with the conquistador in New Spain fighting a horde of Mayans to gain entry into a pyramid, where he is attacked by a Mayan priest with a flaming sword. Through flashbacks, it is revealed that the conquistador has been commissioned by Queen Isabella of Spain to travel to the New World in search of the Biblical Tree of Life. If he can find it, she is convinced that she can
put an end to the struggle between herself and an influential cleric during the Spanish Inquisition who is attempting to usurp the throne. Isabella vows to wed the conquistador upon his return, citing a correlation with Adam and Eve and gives him a ring as the token of promised bond. He is supposed wear it as soon as he finds the tree. When the conquistador arrives at his destination, he finds that his fellow knights are exhausted and refuse to continue searching for the Tree of Life. A Franciscan monk discovers the location of the temple, but is accidentally killed while the conquistador represses the mutiny amongst his officers. As the priest dies, he gives the conquistador a ceremonial dagger and directs him towards the pyramid. Once he arrives at the pyramid, the conquistador and his men are ambushed and the conquistador is captured. He is forced to the top of the pyramid, and engages in hand-to-hand combat with a Mayan priest. The conquistador is stabbed in the stomach, but the priest narrowly avoids killing him when he notices that the conquistador is carrying the ceremonial dagger that fulfills a Mayan prophecy.

The priest believes the conquistador is the space traveler, whom we are going to be introduced later, apologizes and asks the conquistador to sacrifice him by slitting his throat. The conquistador kills the priest and proceeds to a garden with a large tree; convinced this is the Tree of Life. The conquistador applies some of its sap to his torso and is cured of his stab wound. He drinks the sap flowing from the bark. But in a reenactment of the Mayan creation myth told earlier in the film, flowers and grass burst forth from his body and he literally gives rise to new life.

Tommy is a doctor working on a cure using samples of a specific tree, found through exploration in Central America, which are being tested for medicinal use for degenerative brain diseases in his lab. He is motivated by his wife Izzi's brain tumor, which has caused a rapid decline in her health. Izzi has used this time to assess the meaning of life and come to terms with her mortality,
but Tommy refuses to accept that she might die and has increasingly resolved to find a cure. She has written a book which apparently tells the story of the conquistador and the space traveler. When she collapses, she becomes convinced that she won't live long enough to finish the book and asks Tommy to write the final chapter. She dies shortly thereafter and Tommy dedicates himself to curing not only her disease, but death itself. His colleagues fear that this drive has made him reckless, but they try to support him emotionally at Izzi's funeral. As a final act of love and devotion, Tommy plants a tree seed at Izzi's grave in the manner of a story she told him relating how a Mayan guide's dead father lived on in a tree nourished by the organic nutrients of the buried body.

The narrative for the space traveler is set entirely in deep space in a small, self-contained biosphere bubble. Jackman's character in this plot is alone flying in outer space toward the golden nebula of Xibalba with a large tree and a few personal effects inside his ship. While traveling, he meditates, performs t'ai chi, tattoos himself, with the ink pot Izzi left for 21st century Tommy to finish her story; and carries on a conversation with an apparition of Izzi. It is implied that she is somehow alive inside the tree; but, it is dying and they need to reach Xibalba in order to bring it back to life.

At the climax of the film, the tree dies and the star goes supernova, engulfing the traveler's ship. His body is incinerated, but the tree is brought back to life. Izzi's apparition picks a fruit from the new tree and hands it to Tommy the present day neuroscientist, who plants it in Izzi's grave.
Now after having this summary, which could not equal the sensation of Aronofsky’s masterpiece at all, I want to share my impressions and how John Donne’s “Songs and Sonnets” helped me to have a better and easier understanding of the movie. Let me divide the remaining of this humble account of mine into some headings. Bear this in mind that at the end, I will not try to conclude any thing, since it is just the impressions I wrote down on the very night that I had watched the movie for the second time:

Space Traveler Lack of Knowledge and John Donne’s “Songs and Sonnets”
There is this scene in the movie when he is asked, after the tree dies, making his biosphere bubble shrunk and the space traveler hopeless, by both Izzi and Queen Isabella: “could you prevail?” “I don’t know, I’ve tried, but I don’t….“he answered.

This bit reminds me of John Donne’s “Songs and Sonnets” and the kind of reading Stanley Fishes has had in his “Masculine Persuasive Force: Donne and Verbal Power”. John Donne composes his love sonnets on the very basis of the concept of desire, which is the principle of lack of fulfillment, lack of certainty and undecidability. That is why in “The Relic”, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Negative Love”, we see:

My Love, though silly, is more brave,
For may I miss, whenever I crave,
If I know yet, what I would brave. (“Negative Love”)
First, we loved well and faithfully,
Yet know not what we loved and why; (“The Relic”)
But we, by a love so much refined
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss. (“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”)

The narrator in these poems does not know what the definition of love is and how much he has sacrificed to reach to this point, where he realizes that he is lost. He knows in “The Negative Love” that it is much better to abandon all faculties of customary procedures of courtship and love rather than:

I never stooped so low, as they
Which on an eye, check, lip can prey;

Unlike Petrarchean sonnets, the narrator does not know what he really wishes for and he knows whatever it is, it should not require the narrator to lose its agency to attain it.
So as Stanley Fish says in his article, the very cost of molding such a discourse that could make the presence of love eternal is to lose your authenticity and consistent voice that wanted to save and define the beloved in its contained sphere. In other words, death of the discourse of the author makes the very signification of love possible. Fishes writes:

A consciousness that can rewrite its own grounds in the twinkling of an eye is not a consciousness at all, but a succession of refiguring; that is why the speaker of the sonnet “Oh, to vex me”, is worried, not because of cultivating the virtue of constancy, which would be the most natural way of handling his internal conflict; he has made inconstancy itself into a constant habit; a habit which was regarded a sign of melancholy and by some, a fundamental necessity for the practice of meditation. (223-252)

In the movie, the very moment the space traveler forgets his agency and his very being, he makes the impossible, the fly to the golden nebula Xibalba, possible. He does not make this decision, having edenic knowledge as a certain backbone, but on the very moment that everything has been clouded with utter despair. Here he learned the truth about despair: there can be no hope without true despair. While such a narrative is happening in the movie, the conquistador is pursuing with certainty his path and this over reliance on logical reasoning in the path of achieving the extra ordinaries costs him his life, his loyalty to his Queen and his love, which turns into vegetation.
Significance Tattoos on the Body of the Space Traveler and Tommy, the Scientist

Both of the characters inscribed some signs (in the case of Tommy, it is the print of a ring in his ring finger) on their bodies. In the case of Tommy, the ink has been given to him by Izzi and in the case of the space traveler, the black liquid for his tattoos is a substance which he has made from the tree. These inscriptions are a reminder that in order for the lover to transgress the shackles of the earthly structures, he has to forget about his own agency, so that a transcendental agency could be shaped, which is based on a mutual sovereign. Both of them are in a traumatic state and the only way to prevail in such a state is to keep at hand the things you fear most; fear of dying without any significance, fear of being tormented without being blessed with the grace of love and fear of darkness. That is why they are inscribing the darkest fear on their body, which is the idea of losing their beloved, so that they could be mold and reborn by it; adopting the darkness is not just enough, since the shadows will betray the men from the privilege.

Let me finish this account by referring you John Donne’s sonnet “The Triple Fool”. In that sonnet, adopting a sardonic tone suitable for the discussion of the faculties of love, the persona believes it is foolishness to love and to announce that you are in love. Much greater foolishness comes when he materializes this tormented pain in verse; however is it not the thing that makes him eternally inscribed in history?

Reference


A Review of *Hamlet's* Adaptation in Tehran

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The play starts with Ophelia walking on rows of tiles and having the sound of bells of Iranian Zurkhaneh in the background, which are hanging from the ceiling of the stage, strike the Iranian audience with an immediate familiar setting. There are four beds at the background with red coverings on which four characters if not on the stage sleep during the play. The color red is dominant on the stage; actors’ red costumes or the color of the shelters which they are trying to hide under are symbolically meant to assert the image of blood on the minds of the spectators. This symbolic over-loaded adaptation betrays expectation of the audience in being more about Ophelia and Gertrude, the female characters of the play, rather than the famous Prince Hamlet of the English literature. There are only five main characters of the original play included; Hamlet, Ophelia, Queen Gertrude, Claudius, and Polonius. Yet, the dilemma of distrust and uncertainty in which Hamlet is trapped is best magnified by the presence of a sixth character, a woman, on the stage who acts as a shadow for Hamlet; she demonstrates the dualities and struggles of Hamlet acting as a voice within him mirroring anything he has in mind and anything he does on the stage. Mohammad Charmshir’s creative decision to embody Hamlet’s indecisions and vacillating self through another character who writhingly mirrors his movements is visually effective; and with the help of this shadow, Hamlet’s quavering self gets painted in front of our eyes. This modern version of Hamlet, filled with familiar Iranian elements, is identifiable for the Iranian observer. However, due to the abundance of symbols in the play, each scene over-weighs with signs and movements and is rapidly followed by next scenes which do not, at times, occur in a chronological order. Thus, the fast pace of the scenes and the play’s vertiginous flow can make the spectator dizzy with confusion. Therefore, I have decided to dedicate this piece of writing to the exploration of some of the memorable scenes and concentrate it on some of the important symbols of the play.

Throughout the play we are encountered with the attitudes and dilemmas of the main characters. Nobody is capable to talk to Hamlet in person, except Ophelia who manages to find him alone and start a conversion with him; a conversation which is highlighted with the presence of Hamlet’s shadow on the stage who, at times, runs across the stage or crawls on floor.

Ophelia commits suicide in the first scene of the play after she delivers a long speech with an underlined theme of death and life. While she is delivering, the absent drippings of water and branches of trees, surrounding her, are heard which render the horrendous scene of her suicide more dreadful. Ophelia ties her hands, puts a plastic round her head and like a fish struggles breathing until she is still and dead. With her last attempt to breathe a dead fish is thrown onto the stage, which is one of the many symbols running through the whole play. This very first scene sets the claustrophobic atmosphere by which Ophelia and the queen as much as Hamlet feel themselves strangled.
Ophelia is treated badly by the queen and like a maid is demanded by her to clean the floor and the tiles which cannot be easily cleared of the stains. The queen is obsessed with her nails and throughout the play is occupied with cleaning them. There is one specific scene in which she declares that the castle is filthy as if it is filled with nails, hair, and blood. Both she and Claudius are obsessed with their hands; Gertrude demands Ophelia to hit her on her palms which is a sign of her masochistic self-punishment for the committed murder of the king, her late husband. Claudius, though seems indifferent about the murder, engages in the same flagellatory act while Polonius is recounting the events of the day, highlighted with strange things who have been uttered and done by Hamlet and at the same time hitting Claudius on the palms to which he does not protest.

Claudius’s hypocrisy is depicted when he comes on the stage alone in a memorable scene having an instrument with which traditionally Iranian athletes and heroes used to show their strengths in the centre of Zurkhaneh. The scene is very ironical, since Claudius delivers a version similar to his famous speech in the beginning of scene II of the first act of the original play when he says that family is what is important to him and power is a trivial matter when family is concerned. The irony underpinning his speech is shown when he is manifesting the extent of his power with that tool while negating the importance of such power. The existence of tools and instruments employed in the traditional Iranian martial art (Varzesh-e Pahlavani) hits the consciousness of the audience with familiarity and inserts meaning with the help of already-made association of these objects with boastful exploitation of power and exhibition of strength. The juxtaposition of his veiled ambitions behind a speech signifying his power-seeking attempts with an Iranian agonistic gesture symbolizing grandiloquence and strength describes his character and the main motif of the play, which is the corrupting nature of power. All these scenes of self-tortures and conflicting sides residing in selves heighten the question: “who is truly mad amid these people?” Hamlet’s deterioration and self-debasement is witnessed while the other’s evident madness goes unnoticed. Most of the dialogues are delivered without the characters facing each other, suggesting the lack of communication and understanding; the chances of Hamlet confiding in his mother and Gertrude in her son is constantly mistaken and ruined by Ophelia’s presence. The play is focused on Ophelia and she seems the only sane character bearing the knowledge of other’s sins and insanities on her shoulders. Gertrude’s and Claudius’ lunacy and cruelty is augmented to the end of the play due to Gertrude’s wish to talk to Hamlet and her eventual failure to do so. Sewing Gertrude’s mouth is an appalling scene, stirring the emotions, preparing the audience for the next scene in which Gertrude expresses her plight and dilemmas as a woman, a mother and a queen. The interwoven confusion of these
roles emphasizes the difficulty of conforming to either role; as a result, the exhausting wavering between the restrictions imposed on women and responsibilities demanded of a queen have been materialized in this scene. Towards the end of the play while a long time has passed from the first harsh encounter between Gertrude and Ophelia, their second scene together is more affectionate as if more understanding and sympathy exist between the two women; especially, when Ophelia expresses her wish for death because she does not want to grow old into a woman like Gertrude. This scene between the two major characters of this play sets the theme of the whole adapted play in conflict with the theme of power in Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The gender issues, the restrictions and expectations, underlying the play are reverberated through this scene.

Another powerful scene is when all the characters start walking from one side of the stage to the other, their movement is analogous to the movement of pieces of chess. This symbolic scene is significant in emphasizing the game-like, risky nature of power in which even the lord of chamber is not wholly secure. Polonius is stormed by Hamlet’s questions; his incapability and lack of authority is pictured when he does whatever silly thing Hamlet demands him to do, and at the end of this scene he is deflated like a balloon adding to his inefficacy and guinea pig-like nature. All of these characters are involved in this filthy game which does not have a winner.

The play shrewdly discloses the underlying themes and motifs of Shakespeare’s play. Even the signs implying the themes of memory and forgetfulness, lunacy and insanity which exist under layers in Shakespeare’s play run through the whole play by Charmshir. The author’s choices of dismaying images are like the lexical choices of a poet who brings the arrays of vision to life and pictures the inner conflicts alongside the outer squalor. Nevertheless, the play’s main protagonist is Ophelia, instead of Hamlet, with her restraining feminine issues femininity, leading to her suicide. It must be said that if an observer is familiar with the story of Hamlet, she could find this innovative adaptation of the play mind blowing, thrilling and awe inspiring.
Outside the window where the crows are flying and singing an ominous tune, a strong wind is shaking and bending the bare and weak branches of the trees. He feels the chill through his veins as if cold has already lodged inside his body. If there is anything his friends knew about him, it is that he can’t get along with summer; a sickening and hot season that he could never force himself to like. He is reminded of all the past falls and all the great scenes from the great books he has read about the fall and now he is desirous and nostalgic. A reminiscence of the old times and unknown moments drives him towards his closet where he keeps his belongings. It has been a while since the last time he had been holding that camera in his hands when he used to go to a nearby park a couple of streets down the road. He is filled with a delightful and strange feeling when his favorite
season of the year finally arrives... Autumn is a time when the dim light of the sun showers him with all the beauties he wishes. And thus begins the spiritual journey which the photographer embarks on to feel good (and maybe different) about himself, life, and others. For him photography is where (or possibly when) life and death are tied together, as is autumn – a transition between those two. The photographer takes the burden and responsibility of connecting past and present by telling the story of departed times. The nostalgia is born when he sees the people running, walking, or sitting inside the pictures and he wonders if they still live there, wear the same clothes, or are alive or not. Of course, one thing is for sure: they have changed, become older and certainly moved from their immediate location to another place. Autumn is the story of the people, the alienated citizens of a metamorphosed earth, shifting and changing into a different version of themselves, rushing toward an unknown destination. (Maybe death?) When the photographer proceeds to the corners of the city to find the images roaming in his mind, he is truly facing his duty in the face of an innocent child or a senior in his seventies or even a lifeless rock in an indifferent street; a fascinating encounter that gives him a meaning for life and death. He sees them all: Vague and unfamiliar objects that through his lens become familiar.

There are people rushing through the wet and leaf-littered streets, and also people in their iron-clad cars pushing their way through the heavy traffic, deprived of the scented air of autumn, and looking blindly and sadly through the misty windows. Previously lightly-dressed people change into warmer clothes, and the formerly
blithely-clad faces of the energetic people turn into the sad phantoms. He sees the season when it cruelly changes the nature into what it desires, into bleak and lonely patterned patches of the colors splashed on the trees and pavements.

Fall forces the nature and people through such a metamorphosis, and one that turns every green leaf into a yellow one and every human being into what they fear most: A season full of life and death that fascinates him more than anything else. Among these changes, the photographer goes through some of his own. He sees and feels the victims and hopefully sympathizes with them having a smile on his lips. He knows he is one of them when he walks in the streets, when he thinks about his old age, when he is lost among the multitude. This is how it feels to be living among millions. But he lives every life that he captures and at times he is imprisoned inside his pictures. A sense of inspiring aura abounds in whatever he sees and wherever he goes. Autumn for him is a season full of pure moments that can be frozen into his rightly-framed, suitably exposed, and highly self-approving pictures.
But finally he would come to the end of it. When he has to say goodbye to the dry or wet leaves he could walk on in the empty streets in the gloomy evenings when he felt like taking a walk. Now that the weather is colder and the ground is covered with snow he feels that he needs to put his camera back into his closet, where he hides all his long-forgotten memories: those he thought he would look at once more but never did.
Threshelf
Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction


Post colonialism explores the political, social, and cultural effects of decolonization, continuing the anti-colonial challenge to western dominance. This lively and innovative account of both the history and key debates of post colonialism discusses its importance as a historical condition, and as a means of changing the way we think about the world. Key concepts and issues are considered, with reference to particular cultural and historical examples, such as the status of aboriginal people, cultural nomadism, Western feminism, the innovative fiction of Garcia Marquez, and the postcolonial cities of London, Bombay and Cairo. The work of theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Gayatri Spivak are woven into the discussion, making this fascinating subject relevant and accessible to a wider audience.

This book is surprisingly good for such a short read. It opens up some new directions in the field by exploring connections between American and African colonialisms, it has clear and useful ways of characterizing what postcolonial studies is about, and it is one of those books that gives you ideas for research projects you want to take on for yourself. Young suggests he wants to begin this by working from examples and contexts rather than theories, and this may be why this book is so refreshing and innovative. This is the best of the various introductions and (longer) short studies of the field.

(Source: Amazon.com)
The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post Colonial Literature


The experience of colonization and the challenges of a post-colonial world have produced an explosion of new writing in English. This diverse and powerful body of literature has established a specific practice of post-colonial writing in cultures as various as India, Australia, the West Indies and Canada, and has challenged both the traditional canon and dominant ideas of literature and culture.

The Empire Writes Back was the first major theoretical account of a wide range of post-colonial texts and their relation to the larger issues of post-colonial culture, and remains one of the most significant works published in this field. The authors, three leading figures in post-colonial studies, open up the debates about the interrelationships of post-colonial literatures, investigate the powerful forces acting on language in the post-colonial text, and show how these texts constitute a radical critique of Eurocentric notions of literature and language.

This book is indispensable not only for its incisive analysis, but for its accessibility to readers new to the field. With an additional chapter and an updated bibliography, it is impossible to underestimate the importance of this book for contemporary post-colonial studies.

(Source: Amazon.com)
What does it mean to view literature as art? Why are some novels, poems, and plays works of art and not others? When does a written text become literature, and what significance attaches to that? Standard literary criticism often attempts to address such questions, but a philosophical approach allows us to probe deeper and gain richer insights into the fundamental nature of the literary realm and why literature matters to us.

*Philosophy of Literature* provides a comprehensive exploration of this relatively new and increasingly influential branch of aesthetics. Peter Lamarque, a pre-eminent international scholar and one of the field’s leading exponents, lends his distinct and authoritative voice to this original work. Central issues in the philosophy of literature are explored in depth, including the idea of literature as art, the nature and ontology of literary works, the modes and assessment of literary interpretation, the role of truth and knowledge in the appreciation of literature, the basis for literary evaluation, and much more. Throughout the text, philosophical insights on these themes are illustrated by a wide variety of literary genres, including excerpts from well-known works of literature as well as works of literary criticism. *Philosophy of Literature* will engage philosophers and literary critics alike with a wealth of stimulating new ideas on the nature and aesthetics of literature.

(Source: Amazon.com)


This book presents an informative guide to research design and methodology for graduate students and scholars. Each chapter of this volume offers background, step-by-step guidance, and relevant studies to create comprehensive coverage of each method.

Moreover, the volume includes chapters by expert scholars on an array of topics, including second language writing and reading, meta-analyses, research replication, qualitative data collection and analysis, and more. Feature boxes in each chapter highlighting relevant research studies, discussion questions and suggested further readings are also covered. Utilizing research methods and tools from varied fields of study including education, linguistics, psychology, and sociology makes this book essential reading in the field of second language acquisition.

(Source: amazon.com)


Incorporating both socio-cultural and cognitive perspectives, the book maps the diverse and constantly expanding range of theories, methods and issues faced by students and practitioners alike. Practically oriented and ideally suited to students new to the subject area, the book provides in-depth coverage of:

- language teaching and education, literacy and language disorders
- language variation and world Englishes
- language policy and planning
- lexicography and forensic linguistics
- multilingualism and translation.

Including real data and international examples, the book features further reading and exercises in each chapter, fieldwork suggestions and a full glossary of key terms. An interactive Companion Website also provides a wealth of additional resources.

This book will be essential reading for students studying applied linguistics, TESOL, general linguistics, and education at the advanced undergraduate or master's degree level. It is also the ideal gateway for practitioners to better understand the wider scope of their work.

(Source: amazon.com)


The field of second/foreign language teacher education is calling out for a coherent and comprehensive framework for teacher preparation in these times of accelerating economic, cultural, and educational globalization. Responding to this call, this book introduces a state-of-the-art model for developing prospective and practicing teachers into strategic thinkers, exploratory researchers, and transformative teachers. The model includes five modules: Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Doing, and Seeing (KARDS). Its goal is to help teachers understand:

- how to build a viable professional, personal and procedural knowledge-base,
- how to analyze learner needs, motivation and autonomy,
- how to recognize their own identities, beliefs and values,
- how to do teaching, theorizing and dialogizing, and
- how to see their own teaching acts from learner, teacher, and observer perspectives.

Providing a scaffold for building a holistic understanding of what happens in the language classroom, this model eventually enables teachers to theorize what they practice and practice what they theorize. With its strong scholarly foundation and
its supporting reflective tasks and exploratory projects, this book is immensely useful for students, practicing teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers who are interested in exploring the complexity of language teacher education.

(Source: amazon.com)
Persian Abstracts
بررسی شخصیت سو و درماندگی وی در داستان توماس هاردی از دیدگاه فردیت فوکو

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چکیده
این مقاله شخصیت سو را در داستان توماس هاردی به نام جود گمنام بررسی می نماید. برای یافتن علل درماندگی سو در ارتباط با زندگی شخصی و اجتماعی اش، این شخصیت از دیدگاه روابط قدرت و دیدگاه فردیت مشل فوکو بررسی می شود. طبق نظریه آی که فوکو در مورد روابط پویای قدرت عرضه کرده، فرد یا همان سوزه در هر جامعه ای آزاد و پویا است و قدرت سوزه ها باید را ایجاد می کند که بتوانند در جامعه، رفتار مستقل اجتماعی خود را داشته باشند و فقط مفعول رفتار دیگران نباشد. سوزه ها در روابط قدرت یک جامعه تغییر می نماید و حالات گوناگونی به خود می گیرند. همین حضور در روابط قدرت است که هویت ما را ایجاد می کند. به عبارتی، افراد در روابط قدرت جوویونه مختلف خودت نسبت می دهند و می توانند در مقابل خواسته های ای از روابط مقاومت کنند و از گریزت های پیش رو خود برای ایجاد اگه های مستقل بهره بگیرند. نوشته های فوکو، شخصیت زن داستان توماس هاردی، اصول اولیه برای ایجاد هویتی جدی در ساختار های کلیه قدرت جامعه را دارا است. شکست و درماندگی وی در پایان داستان، گواهی می دهد که وی از هویت آن باعث شده است و علت شکست غلیظ او را می توان در عدم موفقیت وی در فرار از بیش تعین شده شگردهای بد و غیرنظامی کنترل کرد.

واژه های کلیدی: فوکو، فردیت، هاردی، آزادی، روابط قدرت

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«حیرف شب‌های تار» داستان کوتاه گلشیری

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چکیده
در این مقاله، داستان کوتاه هوشنگ گلشیری با عنوان "حیرف شب‌های تار" با توجه به تئوری‌های فروید بررسی خواهد شد. هدف اصلی که این مقاله را می‌توان به سه قسمت تقسیم نمود. ابتدا، رفتار و گفتار شخصیت اصلی و راوی از سویی ساخته بوده و همیشه، هویت شخصیت اصلی داستان را کشف نموده‌است. تعریف فروید از مفهوم رانش مرگ بررسی می‌گردد تا معلوم گردد چه در این داستان تعریف را نقض کرده باشد. در این مقاله، اهمیت زیادی جواد داشت و چون که مفهوم مرگ در این داستان به طور وسیعی مورد بحث قرار گرفته و راوی آن را به طور کامل بررسیده است. سوماً، سعی می‌گردد تا روزی بزرگ که شخصیت اصلی با ضمير ناخودآگاه از دنیا رفته و به طور زیادی مورد توجه قرار گیرد، جواد که مفاهیم تمایلی در این بازی ییه بررسی شده است. این مقاله در صدد است که با استفاده از تئوری‌های فروید، که امروزه کم‌توجهی و بسیار کم‌توجهی به آن می‌گردد، خوانش روانشناسی را از این داستان کوتاه داشته باشد.

واژه‌های کلیدی: فروید، رانش مرگ، بازی، هویت، شخصیت اولی، ضمير ناخودآگاه
خلاصه ساختارگرایی‌های از افرا یا روز می گذرد

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چکیده
مقاله پیش رو سعی در ارائه خوانشی ساختارگرایی‌های از نمایشنامه افرا یا روز می گذرد اثر بهرام بیضایی دارد. افرا نمایشنامه ای است که به زندگی شخصی به همین نام در ارتقاء با خانواده و اجتماع اجرا می‌شود. این نمایشگرها درگذشتی از زندگی و خانواده اش، شخصیتی دیگری بر می‌دهند. در این مقاله، در ابتدا تعریف های گوناگونی از ساختارگرایی و بویژه مفهوم تقابل های دوگانه (binary oppositions) توسط منتقدان این حوزه از جمله آرت برمان، جاناتان کالر و غیره ارائه می‌گردد. سپس با آنالیز معنایی از نمایشگرها، این اثر مورد خوانش قرار می‌گیرد. فراوانی تقابل های دوگانه در این اثر بر اهمیت آن‌ها صحه گذاشته و بخشی از درک اثر را در گرو درک و شناخت اثر آن قرار می‌دهد. بنابراین تقابل‌های کلیدی از این نمایشگر، تقابل‌های افرا یا روز می گذرد، ساختارگرایی‌های دوگانه این اثر است.
تأثیر بازخورد فوری بر صحت نگارش زبان اموزان ایرانی

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چکیده
ارائه دادن بازخورد درباره نگارش زبان اموزان، همیشه یک نیاز مبرم و عنصری اساسی در فرآیند آموزش زبان تلقی شده است. بنابراین، هدف مطالعه حاضر تأثیر بازخورد فوری و بازخورد تركیبی بر صحت نگارش زبان اموزان ایرانی بود. برای دستیابی به اهداف مورد تحقیق، ۲ گروه از پیش گرفته که در گروه اولیه ۲۲ دانش آموز مرحله متوسط باشند، در بررسی کنونی شرکت کردند. برای حصول اطمینان از اینکه شرکتکنندگان درسطحی مشابه از لحاظ مهارت نگارش زبان انگلیسی باشند، آزمون اولیه، پیش از شروع مطالعه به انجام رسید. در طول جلسات مطالعه، زبان اموزان گروه آزمایشی ۱۳ از اتیام تمرین بازخورد فوری دریافت کرده و در گروه کنترل بازخورد با تأخیر دریافت نمودند. توانایی انتخاب واژه ها، گرامر، نشانه‌گذاری و املاء زبان اموزان چهار جنبه مورد اهمیت بودند. در پایان دوره، به گروه ازامایشی یک نظرسنجی بر عمل امد. تحلیل داده‌های آزمون نشان داد که گروه آزمایشی، در چهار جنبه انتخاب واژه، گرامر و نشانه‌گذاری و املاء زبان اموزان بهتر عمل کرده‌اند. با وجود تفاوت معنی‌دار در انتخاب واژه ها و گرامر مشاهده نشد. علاوه بر این، نگرش مثبت نسبت به دوره آموزشی از سوی زبان اموزان گروه آزمایشی گزارش شد.

واژه‌های کلیدی: بازخورد فوری، بازخورد با تأخیر، نظرسنجی

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میزان تأثرگذاری و تسلط بر فعالیتهای مدرسان زبان انگلیسی در آموزشگاه‌های زبان

سمانه قیاسی‌پور، کارشناس ارشد آموزش زبان انگلیسی، دانشگاه علامه طباطبایی

چکیده
تصویر بر اینست که حس کنترل و باور مدرسان به توانایی‌ها و احساس، و تدریس آنها تأثیرگذار است. تحقیق حاضر با عنوان میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرسان تحت عنوان بند بی‌رویهای حاضر، به بررسی میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرسان به فعالیت‌هایانشان توسط بررسی‌هایشان می‌پردازد. بررسی‌های مذکور شامل هفت بخش می‌باشد: میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرس، میزان تأثیرگذاری انضباطی مدرس، میزان تأثیرگذاری انضباطی مدرس بر تصمیم‌گیری‌ها، میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرسین در انتخاب منابع و تجهیزات آموزشگاه، میزان تأثیرگذاری آموزشگاه در تأثیرگذاری، میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرسین در شرکت والدین در آموزشگاه، و میزان تأثیرگذاری آموزشگاه در شرکت جامعه و سایر ارگان‌ها در آموزشگاه. پرسشنامه مذکور شامل هفت بخش می‌باشد: میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرس در تصمیم‌‌گیری‌ها، میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در انتخاب منابع و تجهیزات آموزشگاه، میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در شرکت والدین در آموزشگاه، و میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در شرکت جامعه و سایر ارگان‌ها در آموزشگاه.

این تحقیق با ۶۹ مدرس زبان انگلیسی مشغول در آموزشگاه‌های زبان انگلیسی تهران انجام گردید. شایان ذکر است که هریک از مدرسان حداقل پنج سال سابقه تدریس داشته‌اند. در این تحقیق، به بررسی میزان تأثیرگذاری آموزشگاه در تأثیرگذاری مدرسین در تصمیم‌گیری‌ها، میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در انتخاب منابع و تجهیزات آموزشگاه، میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در شرکت والدین در آموزشگاه، و میزان تأثیرگذاری آنها در شرکت جامعه و سایر ارگان‌ها در آموزشگاه تاکید شده است. همچنین، بررسی اثرات دیگر میزان تأثیرگذاری مدرسین در فعالیت‌های آموزشی و تربیتی می‌باشد. در نهایت، نقش مدرسین در تأمین شرایط و محیط آموزشی و تربیتی مناسب برای دانش‌آموزان به عنوان یکی از مراحل پرتره‌برداری آموزشگاه‌ها بررسی می‌شود.

واژه‌های کلیدی: تأثیرگذاری، میزان تأثیرگذاری، تسلط بر فعالیت‌های مدرس، تسلط و کنترل درونی-بیرونی
آموزش اصطلاحات از طریق تصویر

فاطمه محمدی اصل
کارشناس ارشد آموزش زبان انگلیسی، دانشگاه علامه طباطبایی

چکیده
در کلاسهای انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی با زبان آموزانی مواجه می‌شویم که عبارات محاوره ای را اموخته اند اما هنوز نمی‌توانند به شکل موثر از آنها استفاده نمایند. این به دلیل عدم تمرین کافی زبان اموزان می‌باشد. به رغم این، معلمان و زبان آموزان باید از نقش بسیار مهم اصطلاحات در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی بیشتر بهره ببرند. اصطلاحات عامل ضروری برای روند صحبت کردن به زبان انگلیسی می‌باشد. به تعبیر دیگر برای صحبت کردن شبیه به یک انگلیسی زبان، فراگیران باید به اصطلاحات زبان انگلیسی مسلط شوند. زیرا اصطلاحات به عنوان یکی از آنها استفاده می‌کنند. لذا هدف از تدریس اصطلاحات می‌باشد.

واژه‌های کلیدی: اصطلاح، تصویر- انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی
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- تقابل مسئول خود آگاه و ضمنا نا خود آگاه در داستان کونه کلیبری
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کنکاش
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بره و خرگوش چلک / حسن محسنی
تقدیر / حمید ازدای
دکتر ک.س / زهرا اکرمی

چالش ترجمه
پرودن: محمدبافا شیعی کدکنی / کرما مرادی (مترجم)
- ناهید جمشیدی راد
- حسین محسنی
- شادی خطیبی
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