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Dynamic Assessment: A Call for Change in Assessment

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Abstract

While the results of static testing -assessing current performance levels- indicate the already existent abilities of the students, dynamic assessment is believed to evaluate the ability of the students to learn from the interaction with a teacher. This learning ability, as Poehner and Lantolf (2003) suggest, may serve as a better predictor of the students' educational needs than the static scores if it can be evaluated properly. This paper aims at conducting a survey on the Iranian lecturers' attitudes towards the concept of dynamic assessment. Forty subjects, all of whom IAU lecturers, participated in this study. They were selected, using convenient random sampling. Next, a researcher-made questionnaire validated on the basis of the ideas underlying dynamic assessment was administered to them. Its reliability had also been computed through KR-21 formula. The responses to the questionnaire underwent data analysis, and the results revealed that the majority of Iranian lecturers appreciated the underlying ideas of dynamic assessment and found DA appealing. However, they mostly believed that its application to the existing educational system seemed so demanding that might turn this mode of assessment into less feasible one, compared with static assessment.

Keywords: Static assessment, Dynamic Assessment, IAU lecturers

Introduction

It is commonly believed that the assessment procedure should be the same for all those people who are assessed, and any interaction or assistance during the assessment, as Lantolf and Poehner (2004) argues, is generally assumed as unfair or even cheating. Dynamic Assessment (DA), however, takes a very different view and

claims that important information about a person's abilities can be learned by offering assistance during the assessment itself. In fact, not only can DA present a different picture of an individual's abilities, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) continue, it can actually help him/her to develop those abilities "by providing finely tuned instruction", called mediation, "while engaged in the assessment tasks" (p. 1).

The concepts that guide dynamic assessment, as Haywood and Lidz (2007) point out, originate from the tradition of cognitive developmental theories of Vygotsky and Feuerstein, who recognized that human beings are not static entities but are always in states of transition and transactional relationships with the world. It is actually this transaction with the world that provides them with cognitive growth.

Based on the theory of development outlined by Vygotsky (1934/1986), what the child is able to do independently represents a view of the child's past development, while what the child is able to achieve with mediation is related to the child's future development. Vygotsky (1986) described the distance between what a child can do independently and what the same child can accomplish with mediation, the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. For Vygotsky, as Lantolf and Poehner (2004) note, interaction in the ZPD was not just a way of predicting a child's future development; it was also a means of promoting that development. DA is founded on Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD and as such "it integrates assessment (understanding a person's current abilities) and instruction (helping the person develop these abilities further) into a unified activity". From a DA perspective, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) continue, "good instruction involves assessment, and good assessment involves instruction" (p. 1).

Since Vygotsky's time, DA procedures have been used for different purposes, including:

> "• Differentiating between people whose learning disability is primarily biological and those whose difficulties are the result of their social or cultural background
>
> • Offering a more valid and fine-grained assessment of students' general intellectual abilities as well as their potential for improving those abilities

• Identifying the underlying causes of poor performance in classes and on standardized tests

• Making recommendations for the placement of learners into appropriate instructional programs and making recommendation on the necessary instructional support they need to succeed. " (Lantolf and Poehner, 2004. P. 1)

Concerning the use of DA as an instructional support for both teachers and students, and the growing fame it is receiving for its appealing underlying ideas, the researcher conducted this study to evaluate *the Iranian EFL lecturers' attitudes towards the application of dynamic assessment as a teaching tool in the existing educational system.* She has also tried to investigate *how much they appreciate the need for a change in assessment by means of DA.* To achieve this purpose, the researcher first discusses the theoretical basis of DA and its development. Next, she contrasts DA with SA (static assessment). After that, she points out the criticisms of the current assessment practices that would lead to a call for change in assessment. And finally, she elaborates on the method she applied in order to come to the conclusion.

The Development of DA

Andre Rey (1934, cited in Minick, 1987) proposed, for the first time, basing the evaluation of students' abilities on directly observable learning processes. The concept of learning potential assessment was then developed by Vygotsky (1934-1986) and Feuerstein (1979) in the field of psychology to assess cognitive function, and recently the DA concept has been adopted (and adapted) for use in domains that depend on the use of cognitive strategies(Minick, 1987).

Dynamic Assessment and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Central to the ZPD is the concept of 'mediation'. Higher forms of thinking emerge as a result of our interactions with other individuals and with physical and symbolic artifacts (e.g., books, paper and pencil, computers, language, etc.) constructed by others in different places and at different times. In this way, as Poehner and Lantolf (2003) suggests, our relationship to the world is not direct but mediated. Vygotsky

(1998) insisted that what the individual is able to do one day with assistance, s/he is able to do tomorrow alone. Accordingly, as Poehner and Lantolf (2003) states, "observing a person's history (i.e., actual level of development) presents only part of the picture; the full picture emerges when we take account of his or her future (ZPD)" (p. 3).

Vygotsky's formulation of the ZPD was based on his observation that schooling frequently enhanced the IQ score of some but not all children (van der Veer and Valsiner 1991, cited in Poehner and Lantolf, 2003). The children who entered school with low scores most often improved over time, while those with already high scores generally did not show much improvement. To justify such a difference ,Vygotsky reasoned that that children with high IQs had already traversed the distance between their actual level of development*(ZCD)* and *potential* development *(ZPD)* prior to entering school. Their low IQ classmates, on the other hand, still had room for development to occur.

DA versus SA

The terms DA and SA are generally used as two different models of assessment. Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002, cited in Poehner and Lantolf, 2003) characterize SA as follows:

"The examiner presents items, either one at a time or all at once, and each examinee is asked to respond to these items successively, without feedback or intervention of any kind. At some point in time after the administration of the test is over, each examinee typically receives the only feedback he or she will get: a report on a score or set of scores. By that time, the examinee is studying for one or more future tests."(p. vii)

In contrast, DA is defined by them as a procedure whose outcome takes into account the results of an intervention in which the examiner teaches the examinee how to perform better on individual items or on the test as a whole. This way, the final score may be a learning score that represents the difference between pretest (before learning) and posttest (after learning) scores, or it may be the score on the posttest

considered alone. Put it another way, DA focuses on producing suggestions for interventions that appear successful in facilitating improved learner performance (Lidz, 1991), while in SA no attempt is made to change the examinee's performance (Haywood et al., 1990).

Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002, cited in Poehner and Lantolf, 2003) also enumerate three interrelated methodological differences between SA and DA. First, SA emphasizes the product of past development while DA promotes future development. In other words, SA focuses on already matured abilities but DA concerns functions that are maturing. The second difference between SA and DA deals with the relationship between the examiner and the examinee. In SA examiners should adopt a neutral stance that minimizes measurement error. In DA the relationship between the examiner and examinee is different in that the examiner intervenes in the assessment process, and the attitude of neutrality is replaced by that of assisting and mediating. This leads to the final difference between SA and DA—the provision of feedback and mediation. In SA examinees are given sequences of problems to solve or tasks to perform and little or no feedback is provided on the quality of their performance until after the assessment is complete. To do otherwise is believed to introduce a measurement error into the assessment. In DA, a specific form of feedback —mediated assistance—is provided which makes the most important part of the assessment process.

What makes a procedure dynamic or static, as Poehner and Lantolf (2003) maintain, is not the instrument itself but whether or not an intervention is included in the process, no matter where in the process the intervention occurs. Accordingly, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, open-ended essay, and oral proficiency tests are neither static nor dynamic instruments by nature.

Sandwich and Cake DA

According to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002, cited in Poehner 2008) mediation is offered in one of two formats – sandwich or cake. The sandwich format is in line with experimental design and follows a pretest-instruction-posttest procedure. It can be

administered in either an individual or group setting. In the individualized setting, mediation can be implicit or explicit depending on the responsiveness of the examinee. In a group setting, mediation is usually implicit because the examiner will not be able to inform each examinee of his/her specific strengths and weaknesses. The *cake* format refers to procedures in which the examinee is provided with instruction during the assessment process itself whenever problem arises. This format, therefore, is especially effective in individual administrations.

Interactionist vs. Interventionist DA

The terms 'interactionist' and 'interventionist 'have been proposed by Poehner and Lantolf (2003) to describe the two general kinds of mediation that learners can receive. The difference is reflected in the distinction made by Sternberg and Grigorenkons (2002, cited in Poehner and Lantolf, 2003) between dynamic assessment and dynamic testing. They suggest that the goal of dynamic assessment is to intervene and to change, but the goal of dynamic testing is to see whether and how a participant will change when an opportunity is provided. In other words, dynamic testing discovers the extent to which people will or will not change when they are offered certain forms of assistance. Whereas, dynamic assessment attempts to promote development and allow the assistance to emerge in the dialogue between examiner and examinee when they are engaged in a joint task.

   Poehner (2008) also refers to the difference between the two terms by emphasizing that interactionist DA follows Vygotsky's preference for cooperative dialoging between the mediator and the learner, and is sensitive to the learner's ZPD. On the other hand, interventionist DA remains closer to certain forms of static assessment and uses standardized administration procedures or forms of assistance to produce quantifiable results. Put it another way, quantifying in interventionist DA can determine the amount of required help for a learner to reach a prespecified endpoint and is used as an index of speed of learning. But interactionist DA just focuses on the learner's development, regardless of the required effort or the predetermined endpoints (Poehner, 2008).

Empirical Studies

In the study done by Vollmeyer and Rheinbreg (2002, cited in Garb, 2003) the DA format was used to test learning in physics, and the researchers predicted that mediated feedback would affect both motivation and performance.

Another study has been conducted with relation to DA of EFL text comprehension by Kozulin and Garb (2002) in Israel with a variety of student populations. The results revealed that all students benefited in varying degrees from the mediation and were able to apply the acquired strategies to the new texts.

Similarly, Mardani and Tavakoli (2011) investigated the effect of adding a DA component on EFL reading comprehension. The findings indicated that dynamic assessment oriented instruction had positive effect on both test performance and learning of Iranian students.

Sadeghi and Khanahmadi (2011) also used DA as an instructional adjunct in teaching grammar to Iranian EFL learners. Their DA group outperformed Non DA group. However, they suggested DA as a compliment, rather than a replacement for the static assessment.

Calls for Change in Assessment

Delandshere (2002) strongly argues that most specialists in the field of educational measurement have been working from behaviorist perspectives, according to which to learn means to accumulate knowledge, and learning results from teaching that is organized to impart that knowledge in a sequential and hierarchical manner. Accordingly, the task of assessment is to observe whether individuals can reproduce this knowledge when they are stimulated to do so. This conception of assessment, as Delandshere (2002) points out, still underlies most conventional modes of assessment today in the form of end-of-unit tests, final examinations, college entrance examinations, and the like. In this perspective, knowledge is not defined in terms of the individual's activity of learning.

Researchers have attempted to address this conceptual vacuum in the assessment

literature, calling for the integration of new understandings of human cognition (Mislevy, 1993; Embretson, 1993), for theory- and construct-driven assessment (Messick, 1994), for changing the nature of assessment practices (Shepard (2000), and for integrating assessment with instructional practice (Gipps, 1994).

Most social constructionists have been influenced by the earlier work of Vygotsky and his sociocultural theory. Here learning and knowing are defined in ways that are quite different from those found in the assessment literature. This would lead to an explicit conceptualization of learning and knowing (Delandshere, 2002). The absence of an explicit conceptualization of learning and knowing in most assessment literature, as Delanshere (2002) notes, seems to be paralleled by an apparent absence of assessment-related issues in the learning literature.

Traces of assessment concerns can be found in the work of earlier constructivists (Luria, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978), which led to further work on dynamic assessment as a change in assessment (Feuerstein, 1979). Learning here is not located in the individual's mind but explicitly takes place in interaction with others.

Method

Subjects

Forty Iranian lecturers, who were teaching English as a Foreign Language to undergraduate students in different branches of Islamic Azad University, participated in this study. The subjects were selected using convenient sampling method. They were 18 male and 22 female university teachers. They were all either MA or PhD holders in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) within the range of 8 to 15 years of teaching experience.

Instrumentation

To determine the extent to which the subjects appreciated the ideas underlying DA, they were given a researcher-made questionnaire to answer. The questionnaire included 20 items in the form of statements. These items were selected out of 26 in the validation process. In order to check the reliability of the questionnaire, the second

pilot study was conducted and the KR-21 method was applied to calculate the index as 0.81. The learners were asked to report on a scale of '1' to '5' how they agreed with each item. The choices were 'very good' (5 points), 'good' (4 points), 'fair' (3 points), 'weak' (2 points), and 'very weak' (1 point). Accordingly, the sum of 100 was considered as the highest level of agreement and that of 20 as the lowest level.

Data Analysis

The number and percentage of responses for the options in different items of the dynamic assessment questionnaire was calculated. From among all 20 items of questionnaire, those who are mostly related to the application of dynamic assessment in academic settings, as well as to the underlying ideas of DA have been selected and tabulated as follows:

Table 1

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.2: 'It is my duty to diagnose my students' learning needs and problems individually.'

	very weak	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very strong**
Number	0	5	16	19	4
Percentage	0	12.5	40	47.5	10

As the table shows, nobody has chosen the first option and most subjects (47.5%) have selected option '4'.

Table 2

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.5: 'The existing educational system does not give me this opportunity to deal with students' needs and problems individually.'

	very	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very**

	weak				strong
Number	1	4	7	15	13
Percentage	2.5	10	17.5	37.5	32.5

As it can be seen, option '4'(37.5%) and option '5' (32.5%) receive most of the responses respectively, indicating that the subjects mostly agree with the item no.'5'.

When asked about determining each student's potential individually and expecting him/her to improve according to his/her learning potential, they reported their agreement as the table below (3).

Table 3

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.8: 'I determine each student's potential to learn a new skill and I expect him/her to improve learning according to his/her learning potential.'

	very weak	weak	fair	strong	very strong
Number	2	6	16	12	4
Percentage	5	15	40	30	10

Table 4

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.10: 'It is my duty to provide mediation (help) for each individual student in order to help him/her cope with his/her learning problems.'

	very weak	weak	fair	strong	very strong
Number	1	4	12	18	5
Percentage	2.5	10	30	45	12.5

Item '10' of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher's duty to provide mediation for

each individual student. The results show that 45% of subjects agree with this item since they have selected option '4'.

Item '12' addressed teaching the particular strategies that students can use to answer the posttest (final exam). As Table'5' suggests, options '3' and '4' received the highest percentage of responses respectively.

Table 5

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No. 12: 'I will teach my students the particular techniques and strategies they can use to answer the final exam questions.'

	very weak	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very strong**
Number	2	3	17	13	5
Percentage	5	7.5	42.5	32.5	12.5

When the subjects were asked to show their agreement with the teacher's duty to provide more materials and to spend more time for those students who need more help (mediation), they mostly (47.5%) selected option '3' as table '6' shows.

Table 6

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No. 15: 'It is the teacher's duty to provide more materials and spend more time for those students who need more mediation.'

	very weak	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very strong**
Number	4	7	19	8	2
Percentage	10	17,5	47.5	20	5

Item '17' addressed the probability of providing mediation to individual students regarding the existing educational system by stating that it is improbable. As table '7'

shows, options '4' and '3' got most of the responses.

Table 7

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.17: 'Regarding the existing educational system, providing mediation to each individual student based on his/her learning needs seems improbable'

	very weak	weak	fair	strong	very strong
Number	1	4	12	14	9
Percentage	2.5	10	30	35	22.5

Item '18' was to determine the teacher's attitude towards evaluating the subjects dynamically, and table '8' shows that option '3' received most of the responses.

Table 8

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.18: 'Since the final exam (posttest) is not enough to indicate that learning development has occurred, learners should be evaluated repeatedly.'

	very weak	weak	fair	strong	very strong
Number	2	7	17	9	5
Percentage	5	17.5	42.5	22.5	12.5

Also, table '9' shows that option '4' of item '19' received the highest percentage (45%), indicating the subjects' agreement towards a change in assessment.

Table 9

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.19: 'I will appreciate the type of assessment in which the examiner teaches the examinee how to

fulfill the assessment task.'

	very weak	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very strong**
Number	1	3	12	18	6
Percentage	2.5	7.5	30	45	15

And finally, table '10' indicates that 66% (options 4 and 5 of item'20') of Iranian EFL lecturers agree that DA should not be regarded as replacement for other test types, rather as a compliment.

Table 10

Number and percentage of responses given to different options of item No.20: 'I think that Dynamic Assessment is better not to be regarded as replacement for other test types, rather as a compliment.'

	very weak	**weak**	**fair**	**strong**	**very strong**
Number	0	3	11	16	10
Percentage	0	7.5	27.5	40	25

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Iranian EFL lecturers agreed with the ideas underlying Dynamic Assessment. This study was also conducted to investigate the degree to which Iranian EFL lecturers appreciated a change in assessment, resulting from the application of dynamic assessment to educational system.

The results of the study, as clearly shown in the above tables, indicate that Iranian EFL lecturers mostly appreciate the idea of providing mediation (tuned instruction) based on the individual students' learning needs and problems. They also agree with the type of change in assessment that will help the learners to cope with their learning

problems and to complete the assessment task ultimately. Nevertheless, as the data analysis reveals, they mostly believe that putting the underlying ideas of dynamic assessment into practice seem improbable regarding the existing educational system. In other words, the application of DA to educational settings requires a fundamental change in the nature of existent assessment practices. Moreover, most of the Iranian EFL lecturers prefer to practice DA as a compliment for the other modes of assessment, not as a replacement.

These findings suggest further research on the way(s) through which DA can be applied in different instructional settings. It also calls for more attempts to be made on clarifying the ideas underlying the concept of Dynamic Assessment, as well as paving the way for its application as a mediating tool at the service of language teachers and learners.

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Teaching English Through Sports: A Case Study

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Abstract
Teaching English as a Second Language through sports activities gives immense benefits to learners. It promotes active learning of the language in any environment, whether urban or rural. It not only enhances learning of the English Language but also the intellectual, physical and social development of the learners. The method of teaching English through sports activities was carried out on one class of undergraduates, consisting of 15 learners. In the classroom, learners were first introduced to some general information or to the history of a particular sport like badminton or basketball. Discussions in small groups were conducted of the particular sport they would be participating in outdoors or at the sports complex in the following lesson. By the end of the class, they had become familiar with the vocabulary related to the sporting activity concerned. In the follow-up lesson, they began their sporting activity. Observations were made by the instructor to ensure the learners used only English throughout their activity when interacting with the people around them. After the physical activity, learners were asked to describe their feelings, their surroundings, the rules and regulations of the sport, their performances, and the skills and actions involved. Learners were found to be more expressive in using the English Language after the sports activity. They were more confident and motivated than when they were in the classroom. There was also better social interaction and a sense of sharing among their classmates, not to mention an improvement in their use of the English Language.

Keywords: sports activities, immersion, active learning, motivation, social interaction, language enhancement.

Background of the Study

This is a case study of teaching the English Language to a class of learners enrolled in the Self-Development Group (SDG) programme at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). The SDG programme was implemented in the academic year of 2005/2006 at UUM. The programme stretches for a duration of 6 semesters involving 6 SDG modules. The programme carries 1 credit hour with learners and instructors meeting for 2 hours for each class. The course is not included in the overall student lecture credit hours.

The SDG programme was formulated with the aim of developing the self-potential of learners through group activities. The final outcome is to create a developed-self and also a collective-self. It is also an alternative effort in the solving of academic development problems and learner personality (UUM Academic Affairs Department, 2011). The course is carried out in English as the underlying aim is to help improve learners' level of spoken English. The 6 Self-Development Modules are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
The 6 Self-Development Modules

Module 1: High Touch Communication

Module 2: Personal Development and Character

Module 3: Thinking Skill

Module 4: Living in the Multi-Cultural Society

Module 5: Management Ethics

Module 6: Patriotism and Volunteerism

(UUM Academic Affairs Department, 2011)

All the learners are undergraduates in their fourth semester, pursuing the Economics programme. Their lectures are conducted mainly in Malay although English is used intermittently in the course content. Hence, their project papers are all written in Malay. Most of the imported reference books used by the learners are in English but there are translated versions of these books, not to mention locally published books which are in Malay.

The English Language level of the learners range from lower-intermediate to intermediate. Before they enrol at the university, learners are required to take the

Malaysian University English Test (MUET) to determine the level or band of their English Language. Once they enter university, these undergraduates are required to take English Language support courses, according to their level of English. These courses are English for Communication 1 and English for Communication II, offered at Universiti Utara Malaysia. They then go on to take an option of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses such Business and Professional Communication, Business Report Writing and Public Speaking.

Problems Faced in the English Language Classroom

As English is a second language in Malaysia, ESL learners are aware of the importance of mastering the English Language for purposes of communication and job opportunities. This is even more so as globalization has spread its wings all over the world and English, as an international language, plays a central role in this. However, many of the undergraduates are not motivated enough to master the English Language to the full. Outside the classroom, they revert to speaking in their own mother tongues, namely, the Malay, Chinese and Indian languages which are the 3 main languages in Malaysia.

This scenario is further exemplified in the SDG classes used in this study. As no grades are given for the course, learners do not show much interest in these classes. They spend more attention and time on their Economics courses which are graded. As a result, their attendance at these SDG classes is inconsistent and leaves much to be desired. There are times when these learners complain of being exhausted as they have to meet assignment deadlines and study for examinations, hence their absenteeism. As for the support English courses and the ESP courses, the problems of lack of motivation and absenteeism are less as the courses are graded and they are penalized if they are absent for more than 8 hours per semester. Even then, their goal is merely to achieve respectable grades in these English courses and to avoid any sort of penalty that would have adverse effects on their grades.

In the SDG classroom, as is with the support English classes, the use of the learners' mother tongues when speaking among themselves is a common occurrence. They do not attempt to speak in English when communicating with learners of the same ethnic background but resort to their own mother tongues. When they are among learners of different ethnic backgrounds, they tend to use Malay as the common language among them. This is especially so when they are out of the hearing range of the instructor. At the most, they would code switch between English and Malay as an attempt to include

the English Language in their group activities. When presenting their group tasks, learners are forced to speak in their halting English. However, it is the more confident learners who speak out as the others are happy just being quiet in the background as they lack confidence in speaking the English Language. Learners showed a certain degree of interest when several fun activities were carried out but the activities were not enough to motivate them for very long. Therefore, it can be said that there is an overall lack of English Language participation among the English Language learners at this university in general and among the SDG learners in particular. As a result, the instructors become demotivated. This is reflected in Daastol & Jago's (1995, p. 15) statement:

One of the most serious consequences of our preoccupation with "fun" is that the truly conscientious, caring teachers are being driven to discouragement.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to introduce the method of teaching and learning English through sports. This method takes learners out of the classroom and entails physical involvement. It aims to make both teaching and learning the English Language more exciting and motivating for both instructors and learners, ultimately increasing the English Language proficiency level of the learners. It is hoped that this would help increase the confidence of learners to speak English without any inhibitions while at the same time providing them with new knowledge through sports. At the same time, as the learners are in the fourth semester of their undergraduate programme, it also aims to meet the main objective of the SDG Module 4 (Living in the Multi-Cultural Society), that is, to enhance unity among the various ethnic communities in Malaysia.

Teaching and Learning English through Sports - The 3 Stages

Sports, as meant in this study, takes on Cowie's definition of "playing and being involved in a game, and not just in the practicing of a subskill" (2006, p. 27). There are three stages to this method of teaching and learning English. The first stage is carried out in the classroom. The second stage is done outdoors. The third stage can either be done outdoors, depending on the type of sport and time constraints, or in the classroom. The sports can be of any type such as badminton, squash, cycling, archery etc., depending on the sports infrastructure and facilities available. It can even be simple sports such as brisk walking or jogging which do not involve any equipment. Hence, this method involves "active learning" of the English Language as reflected:

Students need to get off their chairs and to be active participants in the educational process (Simeone, 1995, p. 60).

In other words, active learning does not simply entail listening to a lecture but doing something more. Learners are "DOING something including discovering, processing and applying information" (McKinney, 2011).

Stage 1 - Immersion/ Building Enthusiasm

This stage is carried out in the classroom. It aims to get learners interested in the sport they would be participating in. It can be compared to a set induction of a lesson in class which stimulates the interest of the learners except that this stage consists of a whole lesson which precedes the outdoor (sports) English lesson. Meeks (1999, p. 74) briefly described his use of immersion:

When I teach a poetry unit to 10th graders, I immerse them in poetry for several days before I start any formal instruction.

Similarly, the immersion basically entails introducing general information or history of a sport. In this case, one lesson is sufficient for the learners to become "immersed" in the impending sport. Learners are instructed beforehand to look up information of a particular sport in which they would be participating in the following lesson. They are asked to bring to class newspaper cuttings, pictures of teams, famous players, equipment etc. Learners then discuss what they had brought to class in small groups. They share their information with one another and, in the process, get to know more about the particular sport. The instructor can also show videos of the sport being played for learners to get a clearer picture. A discussion of the sport of archery was carried out in this study. Here are several of the questions discussed with regard to archery:

1. What is archery?
2. Where did the sport originate?
3. What type of equipment is used?
4. Describe how the sport is played.

During the group discussions, the instructor ensures that the English Language is used throughout. Therefore, the instructor both observes and facilitates the group discussions. After the learners have discussed and shared information among them, they are asked to share it with the whole class. Each and every member of the group shares the information they had discussed. Thus, there is sharing of news, pictures

/photos, personal experience with the sport (if any), favourite players etc. with the class. An unfamiliar sport like archery involves discussions of the way the sport is played as well as its rules. At this stage, instructors allow learners to talk in English freely, correcting gross errors but not pointing out each and every error made.

Outcomes of Discussion

From the discussions, learners become familiar with the related vocabulary, descriptive language and narration of personal experiences. For the sport of badminton, for instance, learners familiarise themselves with words such as *serve*, *drop shot* and *smash*. The learners' anticipation of the sport new to them (such as archery) also increases and their motivation level goes up. Learners show keen involvement in group discussions. Finally, learners are ready to participate in the sport, that is, something for them to look forward to.

Stage 2 - The Sports Activity

Learners partake of the sport in groups. Guidance is given for unfamiliar sports like archery. They are also briefed by the instructor or a person-in-charge on the rules and regulations of the sport such as:

a. Never point a bow and arrow at another person.

b. Never shoot an arrow straight up into the air. You can end up hitting another person or yourself.

c. Walk, don't run toward the targets. Remember that the arrows are sticking out and can injure you.

During the sport, the group members remind each other of the various steps/ rules of the sport and point out any mistakes their group members make. In addition, the group members take down scores and cheer the players on. Throughout the sports activity, instructors observe the use of their language and participation. However, this cannot be the case for sports like cycling. For the sport of cycling, learners (in groups) are given specific tasks by the instructor, such as:

a. Observe your surroundings carefully and take mental notes of what you see, hear, smell and touch.

b. Describe in detail the features of a specific tree, plant (including its flowers) or animal/ insect.

c. Cycle to 2 favourite places or spots that inspire you and explain why you like these particular places or spots.

As the instructors cannot directly observe the cycling activity, learners may resort to using their mother tongues for their tasks. Besides, as Gaudart (2009, p. XII) puts it, when there are activities that contain elements of fun and excitement, "learners may switch to a language they are more comfortable in, especially if they and their classmates share the same language". However, the fact that they would have to use the English Language to report on the findings of the tasks they were assigned would ensure that they use the English Language in the course of their sports activity.

Stage 3 – Learners Express Themselves
This stage is best done immediately after the sporting activity at or near the sports venue for more effective learning. At this stage, the instructor and learners get together in a relaxed area where learners feel free to talk, report or give their feedback. Firstly, there is a recap by the learners of the nature of the sport, its rules and regulations and the steps involved. Learners also elaborate on the skills or actions involved in the sport, the level of difficulty and the obstacles faced. Learners also describe their feelings and their performances before, during and after the sport. In addition, they also describe how the surroundings and the people around affected them. Lastly, they give feedback on the team spirit and social interaction among them. Hence, language is used as "a tool to describe and interpret experience..." (Wurr, 1996, p. 2). This last stage is when the instructor gauges how much they have learnt or improved in terms of their English Language, how confident the sports activity has made them in speaking English, how motivated they have become and how much new knowledge the sports activity has given them. Stevens (1983) pointed out that a positive effect of an activity-centred programme is that it motivates learners to communicate.

With reference to task (a), for instance, members of a particular group reported that they cycled "near the tall trees" and "we smell the spice kayu manis, what is the word"? They were told that the English word for that spice was "cinnamon". They continued to relate how excited they were as they had only seen the spice but had never seen cinnamon trees. For task (b), another group mentioned that they passed by "some deers" at the deer park and that "they are very thin. We think it's better the deers are free because the place very small". The instructor, of course, informs them that the plural form of "deer" is also "deer" and that since it is a countable noun, we would say "several deer" or "a herd of deer" rather than "some deers". Finally, learners who undertook task (c), expressed the beauty and serenity of a "quite

(meaning *quiet*) place near the lake" where they would most like to spend their time reading and relaxing.

Learners were also exposed to grammar such as the use of the imperative as they recapped the rules of the sport they participated in. For the sport of cycling, learners were asked to remind themselves of the safety rules and they recapped: "Focus on the road in front of you", Be alert of people around you", "Use hand signals when you turn or slow down" and other rules of the sport which they had learnt. All the learners valued the team spirit and interaction among them in the course of participating in the sports activities and this was evident from the observation of the instructor. One of the learners said, "We enjoy ourself and become closer to our classmate". The learners were also observed to be motivated both before and after participating in the sports activities.

Benefits

Learning English through sports has shown immense benefits:

a. It encourages the active learning of language.

b. It motivates and inspires learners to learn the English Language.

c. It improves the learners' proficiency level of the English Language.

d. It increases the learners' knowledge of various sports and knowledge of their new discoveries.

e. It promotes social interaction among their peers.

f. It improves learners' thinking skills.

Discussion

The study outlines a new method of teaching and learning the English Language using sports by leading learners from the indoors to the outdoors. More specifically, it starts in the classroom and leads to the sports complex or arena, a playing field or court, a walking trail or a park. It can be carried out in an urban or rural area. Besides, it can be carried out at the convenience of the instructor or class schedule. This technique of learning English can be applied to any level, from the primary level right up to the tertiary level. It focuses mainly on spoken English but it can be extended to include written English with follow-up lessons in the classroom after the sports activity.

Learners start showing enthusiasm in learning the language right from the immersion stage. They become motivated during this stage as they get a preview of the sport they would be participating in. Their motivation remains high when they

step outdoors to participate in the sport. As they are focused on their sporting activity, they become receptive to learning new words, phrases and sentence structures, not to mention gaining general knowledge in the process. It also benefits them physically and mentally through sports. In addition, active learning methods help enhance learners' thinking skills as they think about what they are doing (Bonwell & Eison 1991). Although studies have been carried out on active learning, they have either focused on active learning of other subjects/ courses by using techniques such as Interactive Lecture Demonstrations (Sokoloff & Thornton, 1997) or they have not dealt with the method of using sports in the learning of the English Language. Therefore, this new technique literally produces active learners with an improved command of the English Language, while at the same time, gaining a host of other benefits and this has been proven through this study.

Conclusion

Teaching English through sports results in productive English Language lessons as it draws on learners' existing knowledge and improves it in active and fun ways. Besides, it also introduces learners to new knowledge through sports. It makes learning English an enjoyable experience. It is an effective way of building confidence in learners who usually shy away from speaking the English Language. It expands the learners' vocabulary, letting them get a grasp of the language and enhances their communication skills. This technique has also met the main objective of Module 4 of the SDG programme, that is, to enhance unity among the ethnic communities. To put it in a nutshell:

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH SPORTS

Immersion Activity

+

Participating in Chosen Sport

Improved Language Learning
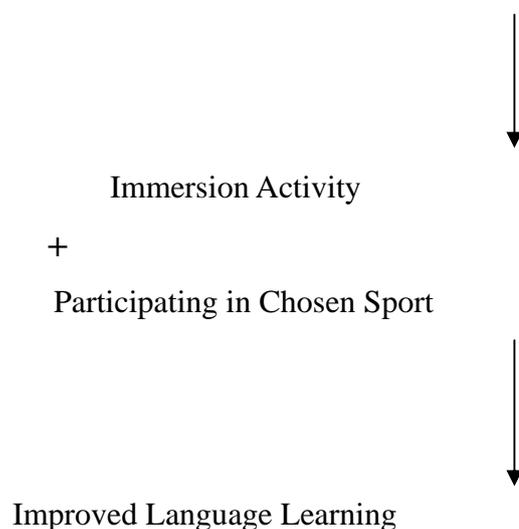
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A Contrastive Study of Oral Communication Discourse Makers Used by Iranian EFL Learners vs. English Native Speakers

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Abstract

Discourse Markers (DM) as important cues in speakers' pragmatic competence signal a sequential relationship between utterances. Present research has demonstrated that they differ in type and frequency across speaking and writing modes. The use of DMs may also index the differences between native speakers and non-native ones. The present study attempts to investigate functionally-based differences between Iranian EFL learners' and native speakers' use of DMs in their oral communication. It aims to explore these cohesive ties in Iranian EFL learners' spontaneous speech in English classes and compare it with native speakers' use of such markers in their discussion sessions. To this end 40 Iranian adult learners (20 male and 20 female) at upper intermediate level of proficiency were selected and observed in naturalistic discussion classes. Also the spoken speech of 40 native speakers taken from Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English was selected. The DMs used by both groups were then analyzed for five main function categories proposed by Schiffrin (1987). The results of the study revealed a significant difference in the use of DMs between the two groups. EFL learners made more use of DMs than native speakers. While ideational, action and exchange structures were used more by
EFL learners, English native speakers made more use of information state markers. Neither groups used participation framework.

Keywords: Oral communication, Pragmatic competence, Discourse markers, Native speakers, EFL learners.

Introduction

Speakers help their listeners to figure out the relations across discourse spans by providing lexical devices that signal the intended message. DMs are numbers of verbal and non-verbal functional devices that provide contextual cues for ongoing talk (Schiffrin, 1987). These connectives are labeled variously by different researchers as: discourse operators (Redeker, 1990, 1991), discourse particles (Schoroup, 1999), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987, 1992), pragmatic markers (Fraser, 1988, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987), and sentence connectives (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In the next section the current definitions of DMs will be provided.

Schiffrin (1987, p.2) believes that DMs are "sequentially dependent units of discourse". She suggests that each marker has a core meaning and functions to establish coherent relations. Fraser (1990) suggests that the term DM refers to the set of words and phrases ranging from the coordinate conjunctions like *and*, *or* and *but* to the less accepted interjections such as *oh*, *well*, verbs *look*, *see*, and phrases like *what I mean* and *to repeat*.

There is no universal consensus about the concept of DMs, hence the variety of definitions among the researchers. However, they may agree on the underlying nature of these connectors. A comparison of the definitions proposed by different researchers reveals that there is some agreement over what a DM does. That is, in most of the studies it is agreed upon that they signal how an utterance influences the interpretation of another one. In fact a DM is used to make the relation between propositions explicit (Knott, 1996).

Background

Schiffrin (1987) presents the most detailed research on DMs and defines them as sequentially-dependent units of discourse. She suggests that DMs have both semantic and pragmatic meaning and believes that they do not fit into a linguistic class. She further introduces paralinguistic features and non-verbal gestures as possible DMs (while other researchers such as Fraser, 1999 do not include them in their classifications). She first analyzed only 11 expressions, namely: *and, because, but, I mean, now, oh, or, so, then, well,* and *y' know* in unstructured interview conversations. She then extended her study and included a number of other cases as DMs like perception verbs such as *see, look, and listen,* deictics such as *here and there,* interjections such as *gosh* and *boy,* meta-talk such as *this is the point* and *what 1 mean is,* and quantifier phrases such as *anyway, anyhow, and whatever* (Schiffrin, 1987, as quoted in Fraser, 1999). She classifies DMs coherently into five distinct planes each with its own type of coherence (1987, p. 24-25):

- "**Exchange Structure**, which reflects the mechanics of the conversational interchange (ethnomethodology) and shows the result of the participant turn-taking and how these alternations are related to each other;

- **Action Structure,** which reflects the sequence of speech acts which occur within the discourse;

- **Ideational Structure**, which reflects certain relationships between the ideas (propositions) found within the discourse, including cohesive relations, topic relations, and functional relations;

- **Participation Framework,** which reflects the ways in which the speakers and hearers can relate to one another as well as orientation toward utterances; and

- **Information State**, which reflects the ongoing organization and management of knowledge and metaknowledge as it evolves over the course of the discourse."

She finally argues that "DMs typically provide contextual coordinates for an utterance by: (i) locating the utterance on one or more planes of talk of her discourse model (outlined above); (ii) indexing the utterances to the speaker, the hearer, or both; and (iii) indexing the utterances to prior and/or subsequent discourse"(Schiffrin, 1987, as quoted in Fraser, 1999, p. 934). She maintains that DMs provide an integrative function in discourse and thus contribute to discourse coherence.

Tarja (1990) investigated DMs in native/ nonnative speaker interactions. His purpose was to show how DMs *and*, *but* and *well* are employed in the interactions between native and nonnative speakers of English in their efforts to gain conversational coherence. The results showed that *well* is the most often used marker in the nonnative speakers' discourse whereas native speakers most frequently employ *and*.

Trillo (2002) made a comparative study on the use of DMs, such as *you know, I mean, well, listen, look, and you see* between children and adult non-natives and native speakers of English. He found that nonnative adults used more DMs than native children, but less than the native adults. Trillo (2002) referred to pragmatic fossilization as a characteristic of non-native speakers and maintained the difficulty in learning of pragmatics as a factor that L2 learners face during their learning process.

Fuller (2003), in his research studied the use of five DMs - *well, oh, you know, like, yeah, and I mean* - between native and nonnative speakers in two speech contexts, interviews and casual conversations. The statistical analyses of the data indicated that native speakers use *like* and *you know* more in interview context and *oh* and *well* more in their conversations, but nonnative speakers do not show a difference in the use of these markers across the contexts. Instead, nonnative speakers use lower rate of DM occurrence.

Finally, in their study, Fung and Carter (2007) examined and compared the production of DMs by native speakers and learners of English. The results indicated that in both groups markers were used as interactional features to structure and

organize speech on interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive levels. The learners showed a high frequency of referentially functional markers in their discourse (*and, but, because, OK, so, etc.*) but relatively restricted records for other DMs (*yeah, really, say, sort of, I see, you see, well, right, actually, cos, you know, etc.*). They also suggested that native speakers used a wider variety of pragmatic functions.

Although these pragmatic particles are important elements in the native speakers' speech, limited research has been undertaken on the rate and type of DMs used in spoken English by second or foreign language learners. In particular, comparative studies on the use of DMs between native and non-native speakers has been less. Therefore, this study, considering the sociolinguistic factor of gender, aimed to compare the use of these pragmatic operators between native and non-native speakers in oral communications.

Based on the previous discussions this study was developed toward answering the following questions:

1. Is there any difference between English native speakers and EFL learners in the use of English discourse markers?

2. Is there any difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners in the use of English discourse markers?

3. Is there any difference between male and female English native speakers in the use of English discourse markers?

Methodology

Participants

The population from which the participants of this study were selected consisted of 40 Iranian EFL learners at upper intermediate level of proficiency from a number of private language institutes. Participants were adult male and female learners who were above 20 years old. Most of the participants were university students or graduates, a few of them were employees, and some were housewives. They attended a two-hour English class, 3 times a week. The native corpus, also, consisted of 40 native English speakers including 20 male and 20 female speakers taken from 'Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English'. An important point about the native corpus is that the spontaneous speech of them was taken from an academic corpus to have a corresponding type of data.

In order to select L2 learners from different proficiency levels, a simulated TOEFL test was administered to the participants. Those who answered above 66% of the

questions were classified as the upper learners; those who scored between 33% and 66% were grouped as the middle learners, and those who answered below 33% were classified as the lower learners. A few of the participants in the upper group had lived or traveled abroad for a short time.

Materials

For the purpose of the current study a language proficiency test, namely 'Oxford Quick Placement Test' was used to help the process of collecting data. This test consisted of 60 multiple-choice items on various grammatical and vocabulary points and was put to use in order to make a report on the level of proficiency of the participants. The use of this test was deemed to be important, since only learners at upper intermediate level of proficiency were the targets of the present study. So, learners with scores above 48 were considered as upper intermediate learners and their spontaneous speech were observed for further analysis.

Procedures

Data for this study was obtained through naturalistic observation of the learner's conversation in the class. The setting was held relatively constant, reducing variability from environmental factors. The teacher engaged the learners in active participation during the discussions and common classroom conversations. Peer talks allowed the researcher to record or, if not possible, transcribe how learners would construct discourse pieces without the interference and scaffolding of the teacher. Each class was observed three to four times, and totally they took 40 hours, choosing four to nine targets for analysis. After observing the participants, the recorded data were transcribed, analyzed and coded for level of DM functions. Audiotapes and transcripts were stored without identifying information to protect the identities of the participants.

In addition, the same procedure was done for the native corpus. The spoken speech of English native speakers, for 40 hours, were taken from 'Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English'. The corpus involved a large variety of spoken speeches of both male and female American university students of different courses. Since the discussions of EFL learners were mostly interactive, the highly interactive speeches of native speakers were selected from the above-mentioned corpus.

Data analysis

Comparative accounts for EFL learners vs. English native speakers

After analyzing the DMs for the possible frequencies, they were classified according to type and function. The categorization used in this study was the one suggested by Schiffrin (1987). To achieve some clear-cut results, chi-square was run to determine the significance of the effect of the concerned variables on the use of DMs by Iranian EFL learners and English native speakers.

To find the profile of occurrence of DMs in the spontaneous speech of Iranian EFL learners on the one hand and those produced by English native speakers on the other, all Iranian EFL learners were decided as one group and all English native speakers as another group. It is worth noting that the participation framework category of markers did not occur totally in the participants' conversations in all groups. For this reason, this function was discarded in the statistical procedures and is invisible in all the following tables and graphs. Table 4.1 shows the difference in the use of four types of DMs by the two groups.

Table 4. 1

Occurrence of DMs in EFL Learners' and Native Speakers' Speech

			DMtype				
			Exchange Structure	Action Structure	Ideational Structure	Information State	Total
group	EFL learners	Count	329	85	978	111	1503
		%	77.8%	64.9%	83.4%	37.5%	74.3%
	Native speakers	Count	94	46	194	185	519
		%	22.2%	35.1%	16.6%	62.5%	25.7%
Total		Count	423	131	1172	296	2022
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As it is clear, English native speakers used 'exchange structure' markers 94 times in their spontaneous speech, but it increased to 329 in Iranian EFL learners' speech. The number of 'action' markers used by native speakers was 46 but it plunged to 85 in EFL learners' speech. The use of 'ideational structure' markers was high in both groups. EFL learners used these markers 978 times, but they were used 194 times by English native speakers. Finally, the frequency of 'information states' in the EFL learners' speech was 111 whereas it was 185 in the Americans' speech.

Another aspect on which EFL learners and native speakers could be contrasted was

the percentage of occurrence of each DM function in the two groups. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of occurrences of those four DM functions in the two groups.
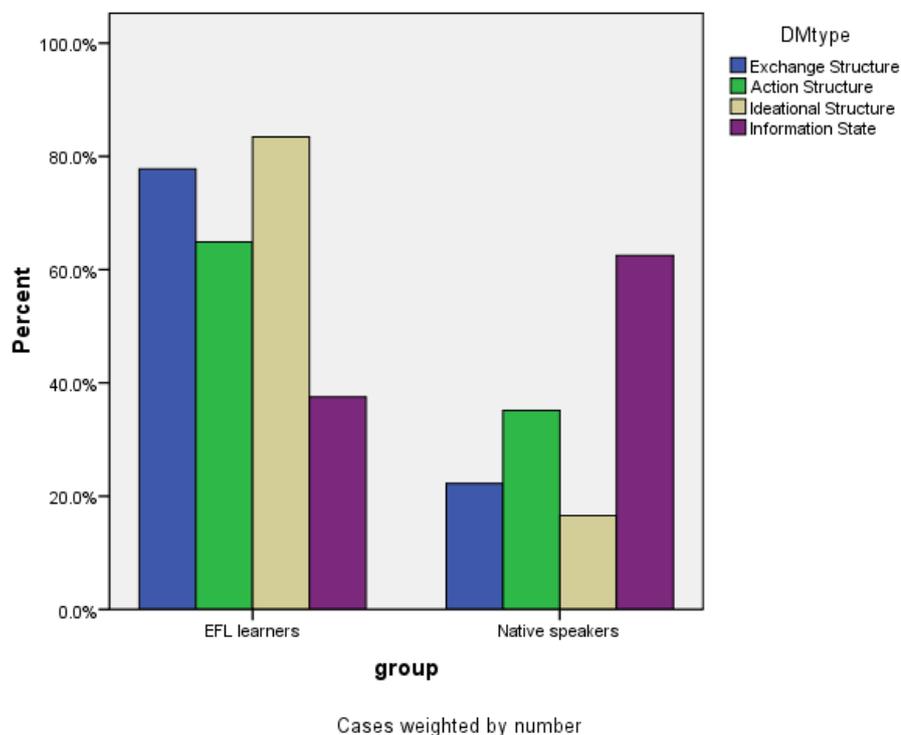

Figure 4. 1. Occurrence of four DM functions in the EFL learners' and native speakers' speech

As Figure 4.1 displays, Iranian EFL learners used DMs more than native speakers did. The 'information state' marker category was the only function which was used more by native speakers than by EFLs. From among the four DM categories the difference between the percentage of 'ideational structure' markers in EFL learners (83.4%) and native speakers (16.6%) was more remarkable than other DMs. Moreover, while in EFL group 'ideational' markers took the highest percentage of occurrences, in native group 'information' markers had the highest percentage. As illustrated above, 77.8% of the speech of EFL learners involves 'exchange structure' markers, while they appeared in 22.2% of native speakers' discourse. The percentage of 'action structure' markers in learners' speech was 64.9% but 35.1% in natives' speech. Finally, the percentage of 'information' markers was 37.5% for the learners and 62.5% for the native speakers respectively.

Meanwhile, analysis of the data showed a significant difference in the use of markers between the two groups, which is illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2.

Significance of Difference in the Use of DM Functions between EFL Learners and Native Speakers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.703E2[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	241.862	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	43.871	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	2022		

In Table 4.2, the most central value to reveal the significance of the difference is the significance value given under the final column of the first row of the table ($x^2=$ 2.703E2[a], df = 3, p < 0.05). Since this value is less than alpha level of the test (p value= 0.05), it can be said that the observed difference was highly significant.

The effect of gender

Of the two investigated variables, both proficiency level and age proved significant in specifying particular DM use tendencies in the EFL learners' speech. Considering gender as an important sociolinguistic factor, this part of the study focuses on the effect of gender on the use of DMs among both EFL learners and native speakers.

Discourse marker use patterns among Iranian EFL learners

To statistically analyze the data, Chi-square was run to determine the effect of gender on the use of DMs by Iranian EFL learners. Table 4.3 reveals the frequency of occurrences of different types of DMs used by male and female EFL learners.

Table 4. 3

Occurrence of DMs in Male and Female EFL Learners' Speech

			DM type				
			Exchange Structure	Action Structure	Ideational Structure	Information State	Total
gende	male	Count	173	37	433	38	681

			52.6%	43.5%	44.3%	34.2%	45.3%
r	femal e	Count	156	48	545	73	822
		%	47.4%	56.5%	55.7%	65.8%	54.7%
Total		Count	329	85	978	111	1503
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

An interesting point concerning Table 4.3 is that except 'exchange structure' markers other three marker types were used more frequently by female EFL learners. A simple look at the above table shows that male EFL learners used 'exchange structure' 173 times in their speech, whereas female EFL learners used them 156 times. 'Action' markers were used 48 times by female learners but 37 times by male learners. Moreover, male learners used 'ideationals' 433 times as against 545 times in female learners' speech. 'Information state' markers were used 38 times by male learners, however they were used 73 times by female learners. Generally, female EFL learners made use of these four DM types 822 times compared to 681 times use by male learners.

Considering the percentages of occurrence of DMs, the following graph shows that the total percentage of 'exchange structure' in male EFL learners' speech was 52.6% and 47.4% in female learners' speech. Concerning the 'action structure' markers, the total percentage in male learners' speech was 43.5% and 56.5% in female learners' speech. The percentage of 'ideationals' was 44.3% and 55.7% for male and female learners respectively. In addition, the total percentage of 'information state' markers was 34.2% in male learners' speech and 65.8% in female learners. Figure 4.2 reveals the above-mentioned results.
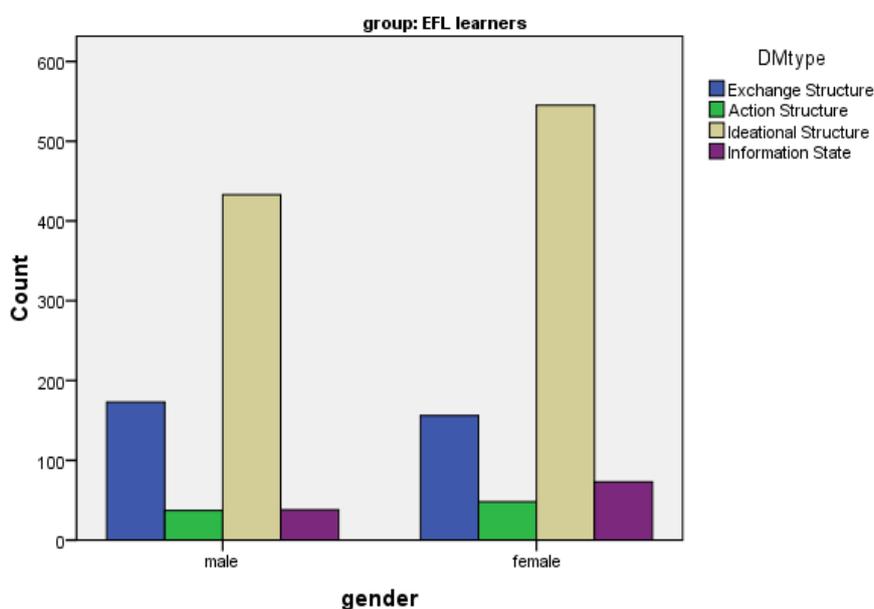
Bar Chart

*Figure 4. 2. Occurrences of four DM functions in male and female EFL learners'
speech.*

As can be seen, the 'ideational' markers were used more than the other three group
functions by the two groups of learners.

Moreover, the results revealed that there was a significant difference between male
and female learners with regard to DM functions employed in discourse ($x^2 = 13.051^a$,
df = 3, p < 0.05). Table 4.4 illustrates the significance of this variable.

Table 4. 4

Significance of Difference in the Use of DMs among Male and Female EFL Learners

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.051[a]	3	.005
Likelihood Ratio	13.140	3	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.129	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1503		

In line with an assessment of gender differences among EFL learners, the difference
between male and female native speakers will be discussed in the following section.

Discourse marker use patterns among English native speakers. Based on the
results obtained through analysis of data, female native speakers used more markers
than males did. The detailed accounts leading to such difference are presented in
Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5

*Occurrence of DMs in Male and Female Native Speaker' Speech*

			DM type				
			Exchange Structure	Action Structure	Ideational Structure	Information State	Total
gender	male	Count	34	5	77	75	191
		% within DM type	36.2%	10.9%	39.7%	40.5%	36.8%
	femal	Count	60	41	117	110	328

e	% within DM type	63.8%	89.1%	60.3%	59.5%	63.2%
Total	Count	94	46	194	185	519
	% within DM type	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As the results in Table 4.5 reveal, female native speakers used all four types of DMs significantly more than male native speakers. While male speakers used 'exchange structures' 34 times, female speakers used them 60 times. 'Action', 'ideational' and 'information' markers were used 41, 117 and 110 times in the speech of female native speakers respectively. On the other hand, these markers were used 5, 77 and 75 times in males' speech. Therefore, the most frequent markers were 'ideationals' with 194 occurrences in the speech of both male and female native speakers and the least frequent one was 'Action' with the total frequency of 46. The total number of occurrences of these four types of DMs was 328 in female and 191 in male native speakers.

To have a better understanding of the difference between male and female native speakers, the percentage of their use of markers could also be subject to contrast. Regarding the percentage of occurrences of all four DM functions in both male and female native speakers' speech, 'exchange structures' took 36.2% of the total percentage in male and 63.8% in female native speakers' speech. The percentage for 'action structures' in males' speech was 10.9% and 89.1% in females' speech. For 'ideationals', it was 39.7% in male and 60.3% in female native speakers' speech. Finally, the percentages of 'informations' were 40.5% and 59.5% for male and female speakers respectively. Figure 4.3 represents the reported results clearly.

Figure 4. 3. Occurrences of four DM functions in male and female native speakers' speech

40
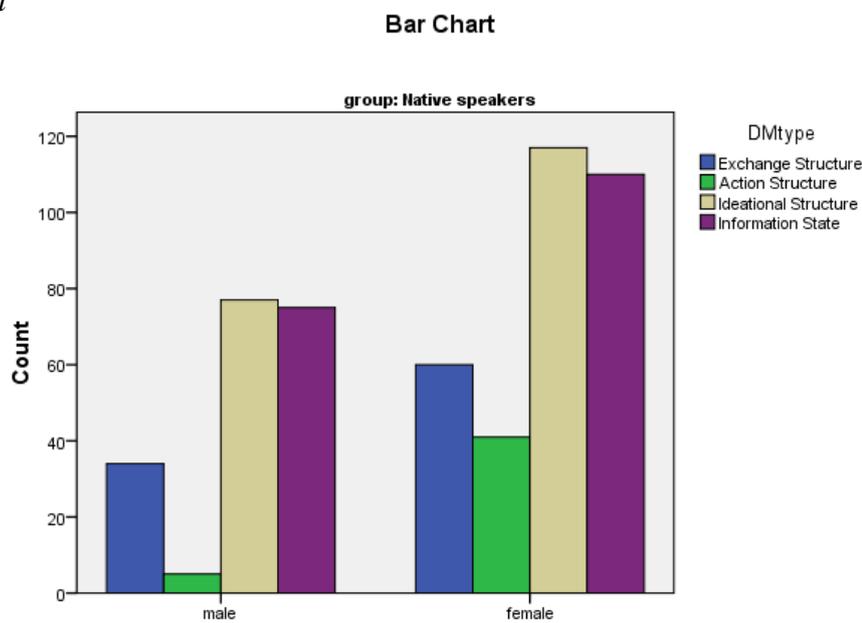
It is worth mentioning that, although women used all four marker types more than men, the difference between them is more remarkable in the use of 'action structure' markers. In addition, the significance value is presented to clarify the point further. In this regard, gender played a statistically significant role in the profile of occurrences of DMs in native speakers' speech ($x^2 = 15.125^a$, df = 3, p < 0.05).

To get more information about significance of this effect the Chi-square test table has been provided.

Table 4. 6

Significance of Difference in the Use of DMs among Male and Female Native Speakers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.125^a	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	17.801	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.859	1	.091
N of Valid Cases	519		

Taken together, the effect gender as a sociolinguistic factor was seen in both EFL and native speakers groups.

Discussion and conclusion

Question One

To find out the difference between EFL learners and native speakers in the use of markers, Chi-square test (Table 4.2) was conducted as reported in the previous section. Data analysis revealed a significant difference between EFLs and native speakers in using DMs. The frequency of occurrence of markers in EFL learners' speech (1503 times) was more than the one in native speakers' speech (519 times). An important point was that the distribution of the frequency of DMs was not the same for all markers. In both EFL and natives' speech 'ideationals' occurred more frequently than the other three marker types. In this regard, the pattern was the same in the two groups but with different values in each. Another difference between native

speakers and EFL learners was that the difference in the frequency among these four markers was less in native speakers' speech. In other words, the pattern of frequency of these markers was smoother in natives' speech than in EFL ones'. To get back to the studies in the literature, Fuller (2003) found that unlike native speakers nonnative speakers did not benefit from various types of markers across contexts and used lower frequency of them in their speech. Emphasizing that native speakers made more use of DMs, Trillo (2002) concluded that L2 learners have problem in learning pragmatics of the language they learn. He concluded that pragmatics is linked to the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural meanings expressed by language forms and is difficult to implement in educational syllabuses in non-target language environments.

On the whole, the findings of the present study are not in the same line with the above-mentioned annotations of the difference between native and nonnative speakers in the use of DMs in oral communications.

Question Two & Three

The tie-in between the number of DMs involved in learners' discourse and their gender they were examined in the light of Chi-square test (Table 4.4). Data analysis showed that except 'exchange' markers female learners used other three DM functions more than males did. In most of the recent sociolinguistic studies, there is a debatable assertion that women's speech is less authoritative and more tentative than men's (Ekert & McConnell-Ginnet, 2003). In these studies, DMs like pause fillers, conjunctions, hedges, tag questions, affirmation and place holders (according to Schiffrin, 1987) function as positive politeness markers as well as indicate that there is common ground between the interlocutors. The results of such studies indicate that DMs occur mostly in women's speech than men's. It should be noted that the results of the present study corresponds with the above-mentioned sociolinguistic studies.

The pattern of occurrence of DMs was the same in male and female EFL learners and native speakers. Female native speakers used all four marker functions more than male natives did and the results of the Chi-square test (Table 4.6) for native speakers displayed a significant difference between male and female learners in using DMs. The result of the analysis of the native corpus is also in line with some present sociolinguistic studies. In these studies (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1994) , women's language is regarded as indirect (Tannen, 1994) suggesting that women use more hedges and tag questions (Lakoff, 1975), for this reason certain DMs have also been among the linguistic elements which are supposedly more frequently found in

women's language.

According to the obtained results, learners benefited from different types of DMs in their speech and they made more use of DMs than native speakers. In addition, gender revealed to be effective in DM use. In both EFL and native speakers' speech women were dominant in using markers. In both groups, they tend to use more DMs in their speech in order to encourage the participation of others and to signal a shared belief. Since the use of DMs is heavily dependent on the context of discourse and the topic of conversations, further research is required in regard with the conversational context as well as the topic of the discourse in English classes to make more valid generalizations about the functions of DMs. Another study can be carried out to contrast the use of markers in Iranian EFL learners' native language and the foreign language they are learning, while considering the effects of proficiency, age and gender.

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Big Brother and Big Sister: But Whose Power Is Bigger?

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Abstract
"Big Brother" (BB), apart from being a very popular reality TV show broadcast in over 65 countries, is significant to linguistics in terms of gender differences and power relations in the house. Referring to a male figure as a name, Big Brother (UK) instructing housemates on various matters and interacting with them on a daily basis is, in fact, both a male and a female figure changing randomly in housemates' visits to the diary room. The housemates' perception of authority of BB as a male figure and a female figure is the focus of this study and the question asked is whether housemates change their discourse when interacting with male and female BB. The data is collected from 4 housemates' dialogues with BB in the diary room on two consecutive eviction nights, where their reflection on evictions is asked by BB male and BB female. Each housemate is interviewed by male and female BB once in these two visits. The data transcribed is analysed by the use and frequency of specific discourse markers which are *oh* and *you know*. One of many functions of these two markers are showing dependency on listener and defining listener / speaker roles in discourse. The results show that housemates are more passive, aware of a listener and dependent on listener participation with male BB whereas they express themselves regardless of female BB's position as a listener and do not ask for her participation during their interactions

Keywords: Big Brother, discourse markers: *oh* and *you know*, gender and power relations.

Introduction

Big Brother is a UK reality show which involves a group of people entering and living in a house where their every move and conversations are recorded and broadcast live or as edited highlights on Channel 4. The duration of the show is ten weeks during which the housemates who are nominated by the other housemates and put up for the public vote are evicted.

The authority figure in the house is Big Brother who instructs the housemates on various matters, gives tasks to complete, commands them to take action on certain things, punishes them for violating the rules of the house, interacting with them in the diary room through asking questions.

"Big Brother" as a name has some implications in linguistics and gender studies. In every language some forms are marked and their correlates unmarked. Unmarked forms in a language refer to men and become marked by adding suffixes (Thomas et al., 2004).As a result, unmarked forms tend to be simpler than the marked ones. Gender is a grammatical category subject to marking, and traditionally masculine has been unmarked and feminine marked. As an example, the male of species is morphologically simpler than the female (tiger-ess – tiger). However, when it comes to gender-related words (such as policeman, chairman, sportsman), Lakoff (2000) suggests that it is not purely morphological. As men are unmarked and women are marked, the coding of this perception encourages speakers to see the power men have as inevitable and correct whereas the power women have is seen not natural but arbitrary.

The name Big "Brother", in a sense, contains the same markedness in itself in terms of the power men have. However in the show, BB is not always male. This situation proves that this gender-related word is not purely morphological as in the examples above. It can also be a woman calling housemates to the diary room to set tasks, ask questions and interact, and this shift between male and female BB takes place randomly, so female BB has the same power and voice as male BB does.

This paper's aim is to find out whether the housemates living in the house change the discourse they use when interacting with the male and female power figures in the diary room. If yes, in which ways does it affect their relations with the female / male power figures? The data collected during housemates' diary room visits will be analysed by the discourse markers they use in their discourse.

Participants

The data is collected from the diary room visits of four housemates who had been living in the house for 85 days when the data was recorded: Sophie, Lisa, Marcus and Siavash. Further details will not be relevant to this paper as the focus is not age, gender and social class differences in discourse. The only relevant point is that there are no non-native speakers of English among them and their ages are between 20 and 25. Because the number of males and females are even and the age of the housemates are very close to each other, this provides the data in which there are not great differences arising from age and gender issues.

Data and Data Analysis

Housemates' visits to the diary room were recorded and broadcast on Channel 4 every day. The data of this study is the videos from this diary room filming. Male or female BB calls housemates to the diary room after the eviction night and asks them how they feel about the eviction and how they get on with the other housemates. To be able to collect the data where they interact both with female and male BB, the videos are selected from 2 different eviction nights. Luckily, these evictions took place in the weeks following each other so the dynamics of the group and the atmosphere in the house was more or less the same. Each video differs in length, the shortest is one minute thirty seconds and the longest is two minutes thirty nine seconds. So the videos used for this study are 1.30 minutes long each so that the length of interaction time for each housemate is equal. Transcripts are then analysed by the use of specific discourse markers which are "oh" and "you know".

Schiffrin is the first to use discourse markers in the analysis of recorded speech (Macaulay, 2005) showing how they connect the "units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987:31) and help with coherence. She defined discourse markers as elements that "bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987:31), units being sentences, propositions and speech acts. Discourse markers provide cohesion and coherence in discourse, and their function in the sentence (expressive, information management, response, participation) can change the meaning of discourse completely.

Discourse Marker *oh*

Oh can be defined as the exclamation to use for reacting to something; emphasizing what you are saying or when you are thinking of what to say next (Procter, 1995). However, these are not the only functions of *oh* in a sentence.

According to Schiffrin (1987) and Macaulay (2005), the marker *oh* also makes evident the participation of the listener when used as back channel - that is, feedback given while someone is speaking to show you are listening but not going to take turns (Richards & Platts, 1992). Back channel *oh* sets the current structure of the conversation. If you are the speaker, you stay as the speaker and the listener as the listener. By doing this, it puts the participants in specific statuses in the conversation.

The frequency of *oh* used by housemates towards male/female BB and this average of the frequency is shown in Figure 1.
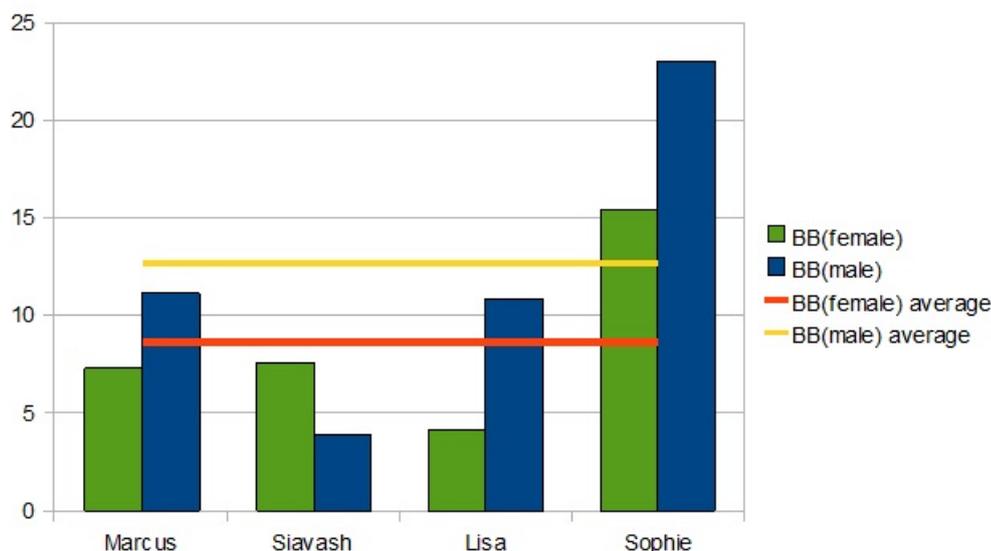
Figure1. The frequency of *oh* and the average

(frequency per 1000 words)

   With the exception of Siavash, all other three housemates use *oh* more when speaking to male BB. The frequency of use differs for each participant, Sophie uses the word more than any other housemate but still she uses it more when interacting with male BB (25 with the male, 15.4 with the female). And Marcus and Lisa's use of the word with the male BB is very close to each other (Marcus 11.1, Lisa 10.8). On the other hand, Siavash uses it in the opposite way, that is, more with female BB than with male BB (3.8 with the female, 7.6 with the male). Despite these differences, the average use of *oh* for the female is 8.6 while the average for the male is 12.6.

   With the use of *oh* as back channel, the speakers stays as the speaker and do not interrupt and take turns in the conversation, but indicates that they are following what is said and not willing to take part at any point. In a way, they accept their position as the listener and eventually their status in the conversation, and agree with the speaker.

   Below is an example of how housemate Lisa used *oh* for agreeing:

   (1)

   1.BB (M): *Do you get on with Rodrigo?*

   2.Lisa*: Oh we do*

   3.BB*: yeah?*

   4.Lisa: *Oh I love him and he loves me I know we have stupid arguments but (…)*

   Lisa's use of *oh* is simply agreeing with BB and it does not have any intentions of interrupting or taking the matter any further in line 2. She answers the question BB asks and does not take the turn. In fact, she waits for another question to be asked, just

to make sure it is her turn to speak. When BB asks the second question, she understands that now it is her turn to speak and she starts telling about their relationship with Rodrigo.

Here is another example where female BB asks more or less the same question to Marcus:

(2)

BB (F): *Are you upset David is evicted?*

Marcus*: David went and Charlie's has been close to David but he voted for him (...)*

It is a yes/no question BB is asking Marcus in conversation (2) and he does not answer the question directly, rather starts talking about another housemate and what he does. This gives her the power to decide when to talk and what about regardless of the questions from female BB. However, in conversation (1), BB decides who to talk and when.

It can be seen that this change in discourse and the frequency of *oh* indicates that housemates behave differently to male and female power in terms of their statuses in the conversation. When a conversation takes place with male BB, housemates are more patient, stay in their status during the conversation, show more acknowledgement and agreement, and speak when they are offered the turn explicitly. When speaking to female BB, they are more impatient, do not give direct answers to the questions, start a different topic even if they are not asked to speak about it.

Discourse Marker *you know*

You know's definition in the dictionary is "a phrase with little meaning, which is use when the speaker is thinking of what to say next; or to remind somebody of something (Procter, 1995).Both Macaulay (2005) and Schiffrin (1987) agree with this definition but suggest many other functions of *you know*.

Macaulay (2005) comes up with the following functions of *you know*.

1.to place the emphasis on shared knowledge

2.to allow the speaker time to find the desired impression

3.to show hesitancy

4.to check listener's involvement in the conversation.

Schiffrin (1987) on the other hand interprets *you know* as it shows speakers' dependence on listener for their own talk and they do it by involving the listener into an exchange. She also interprets it as "overdependence on the hearer" (Schiffrin 1987:311) it puts listeners in a situation where they are more than passive participants

of the conversation.

The function of *you know* which will be analysed in this paper is its indication of dependency. The frequency of its use in terms of showing dependency is in Figure 2.
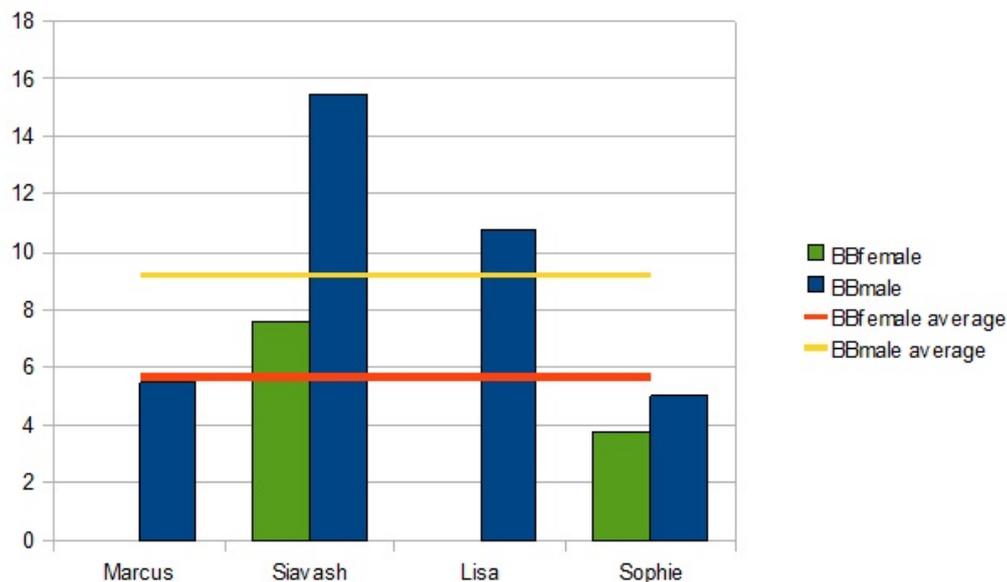

Figure2. The frequency of y*ou know* and the average

(frequency per 1000 words)

All four housemates' use of it to maleBB is higher than their use to femaleBB. Siavash, using it more than the others (15.5), is followed by Lisa (10.8), Marcus (5.5) and Sophie (5). With the exceptions of Marcus and Lisa who did not use the word to femaleBB, Siavash used it for 7.6 times and Sophie for 5 times. And the average is 5.7 for femaleBB and 9.2 for maleBB.

As a group, the housemates show the tendency to be more dependent on maleBB for their own talk. They check maleBB's involvement in the conversation more often and try to get him to cooperate. Whereas with femaleBB, they do not look for common grounds to connect and they do not seem to be dependent on her during the conversation. They do not show many agreements and acknowledgement to her as discussed for *oh*. They rather use her questions as a start for their own talk, and when they start, they may not answer her questions but go on with a completely different story as in conversation (2).

Below is an example use of *you know* that indicates dependence of the speaker on the listener,

(3)

BB (M): *How do you feel about the eviction tonight and going into the final week?*

Siavash: *(…) He voted for him and you know he got upset (waits for BB's reply, cannot get any, continues) (…) You know he came here to win it? (waits for a few seconds, cannot get a reply again, and continues).*

Another example for the use of *you know* is from Lisa:

(4)

BB (M): *How are you feeling about the housemates today?*

Lisa: *(…) he stopped speaking to us. That is absolutely ridiculous. I know for a fact that he's not speaking to us. I haven't done anything wrong you know? (…)*

And below is the example from Marcus who made no use of *you know* when speaking to femaleBB.

(5)

BB(F): *How are you feeling about the eviction?*

Marcus: *No feelings about it at all (…) I'm not entirely sure why I'm still here, the only thing I can think of is people just want us all tormented here.*

In both of the examples, the one feature that is common is the way they utter *you know* and then wait for a few seconds for BB to reply and participate in the conversation. When they cannot get a reply, they continue the conversation. Waiting for BB's involvement and cooperation in the conversation is clearly seen more in every housemate's interaction with maleBB meaning that they are more dependent on the male's interaction and participation, and this makes them dependent on the male power.

As discussed earlier, *oh* can be interpreted as the speaker's acceptance of the role in the conversation given by BB, it puts the listener into the position of a recipient and by doing this, it gives the speaker the ground when speaking without an interruption from the listener. It also gives the power to decide when to let the listener speak and get involved in the conversation. It indicates the speaker is in the intention of continuing the speech and the listener is to stay in the listener position until speaker finishes and allows the turn.

In the use of *you know,* it is a similar kind of power given to the listener. The speakers are dependent on the listener as they want the listener's involvement in the conversation and need agreement or acceptance. Even when they are given the turn to speak, they are still in need of the listener's participation and exchange. In the examples (3) and (4), the speakers are willing to give the turn to the listener and hear his participation in the manner to confirm that they agree on the subject and/or are not saying something BB would not agree with.

Schiffrin (1987) suggests that, from the listener's stand in the conversation, *oh* and *you know* complement each other because in both, the listener acts as an information recipient. In *oh*, the listener is actively involved in the process of receiving by saying *oh.* In *you know,* the listener stills acts as a recipient, but this time a recipient whose reception of information is more important than before. However in this paper, the listeners in the first part are the housemates and the listeners in the second part are BBs, so it does not arise the opportunity to compare these two markers in terms of listener's position in the conversation.

Conclusion

In this paper, the data is transcribed and analysed in terms of the use of discourse markers and as a result, the difference in discourse towards male and female power figures by the use and frequency of markers has been observed (Figure 3).
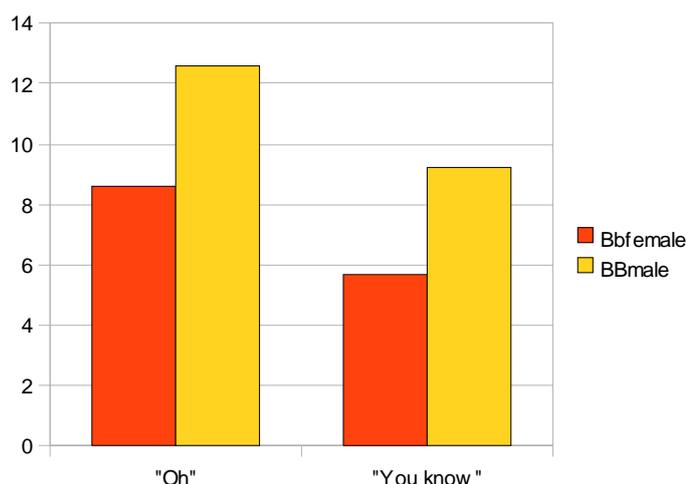

Figure3. The average use of *oh* and *you know* (frequency per 1000 words)

The first discourse marker observed in the housemates' utterances is *oh. Oh* has the meaning of acknowledgement, agreement and back channel in speakers' part and it also indicates that the listeners are in a specific status they are not willing to change or not given the floor by the speakers. Housemates average use of *oh* to maleBB (12.6) is higher than their use of the word to femaleBB (8.6) (Figure 3). From this finding, it has become evident that they accept their role in the conversation and are more passive when speaking to maleBB. This makes them more active and willing to hold the ground when speaking to femaleBB. Being more passive - according to Tannen (2005) - may mean that they have more respect for the male power figure and less for

the female.

The second discourse marker observed is *you know*. According to Schiffrin (1987), *you know* means that speaker wants listener's involvement in the conversation and requires her/him to be more than a passive participant. This, she suggests, shows speaker's "overdependence" (Schiffrin 1987:311) on listener. Housemates' discourse showed this dependence by the average use of 5.7 to femaleBB and 9.2 to maleBB (Figure 3). The difference indicates that they are more dependent to maleBB during their interaction whereas with femaleBB, they do not ask for her involvement in the conversation but rather they express themselves regardless of her position as a listener. As with *oh*, this makes the housemates more active and dependent from listener's participation in the conversation. This again may indicate their respect for the male power

One limitation in this paper is the limited data available to public on Channel 4 and on websites. Videos are cut and shortened to be broadcast on television so they are the parts / episodes of diary room filming. So to be able to standardize the data, one minute thirty seconds of the videos is used for analysis, which could have been given much clearer results if it had been longer.

With a focus on housemates' social backgrounds, ages, education, origin, this paper can be taken further to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any differences in discourse that is connected with social class, age and gender?

2. How does the discourse differ in the following situations?:

- Male housemates & MaleBB
- Male housemates & FemaleBB
- Female housemates & MaleBB
- Female housemates & FemaleBB

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The Internal Structure of Language Learning Motivation and Its Relationship with Learners' Belief and Self-Perceived Performance

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Abstract

The complexity and multi-facets nature of L2 motivation leads to conflicting findings in the past, especially during the cognitive-situated period in 1990s, i.e., Gardner's classic concept of the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985). However, it has been attacked by Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system. From the perspective of willingness to communicate, few of the published research concerns motivational processes with learners' beliefs and self-perceived communication competence. The present study took the initiative to investigate the relationship between L2 motivational self-system, learners' belief, and self-perceived competence in a theoretical model. Participants were 227 first-to-sixth grade Chinese speaking children at an elementary school in Taipei City. Data was collected by means of a self-report questionnaire, in-depth interview, and in-class observation. Multiple-group structural equation modeling was applied to analyze the proposed model and to evaluate the relations between the various latent variables investigated in this study. The results indicated that all the constituent elements of the L2 motivational self system, though to different degrees, motivated language learners to have positive perception toward learners' belief and self-perceived competence; nevertheless, the ought-to L2 self self-driven students had less identity in self-belief and self-perceived competence in communication. These findings pointed to the conclusion that learners' belief was closely related to the students' motivational regulations, particularly the ideal L2 self. Pedagogical implications and directions for future research were provided.

Keywords: The L2 motivational self system, learner's belief, self-perceived competence, structural equation modeling, young EFL learners

Introduction

The complexity and multi-facets nature of L2 motivation leads to conflicting findings in the past, especially during the cognitive-situated period in 1990s, i.e., Gardner's classic concept of the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985). However, it has been attacked by Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, supported by Fairclough's (2003) Critical Language Awareness, including personal identity and social identity.

One way to increase critical language awareness is to identify social practices, defined as rules and structures that limit human actions and interaction within a context.

The L2 motivation and other affective variables, such as learners' belief and self-perceived competence, have not been integrated into a coherent framework. A recent approach of L2 motivation proposed by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) who provides a research motive to explore this underresearched territory. As demonstrated by numerous studies, the L2 motivational self system is admissible at the current age of globalization and in the light of emerging conceptualizations of identity (e.g, Lamb, 2008, Segalowitz, Gatbonton, & Trofimovich, 2009; Yashima, 2009); consistent with other noteworthy recent conceptualizations of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2009), and congruent with the established frameworks in motivational psychology, especially the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987).

According to Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006), there were two components of L2 motivation, i.e., 'Ideal L2 Self,' referring to the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self. If the person we would like to become speaks a second language, the Ideal L2 Self is a powerful motivator to learn the particular language because we would like to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. On the other hand, 'Ought-to L2 Self' referred to the attributes that we believe we ought to possess so as to avoid possible negative outcomes.

Unfortunately, few of the published research concerns willingness to communicate integrating motivational processes with learners' beliefs and self-perceived communication competence, and critical language awareness and L2 motivation from the perspective of willingness to communicate, defined as the probability of initiating communication. The current study is developed to investigate the relationship between learners' belief, self-perceived competence, and L2 motivational self-system.

Literature Review

L2 Motivation and Willingness to Communicate

In terms of willingness to communicate (WTC), MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) developed a pyramid-shaped model, which was a layered heuristic model and captured time and concept specificity. It arranged from proximal to distal continuum. The most proximal factor, the top one was the decision factor, representing the final psychological step in preparation for L2 communication. On the other hand, the most distal factors, the intergroup climate and personality, i.e., social and individual context, predated the individual by capturing enduring intergroup and

genetic influences. This pyramid conceptualized different factors affecting learners' willingness to communicate.

In addition, based on the Willingness to Communicate model, MacIntyre et al. (1998) integrated communication studies in L1 WTC and motivation studies in L2, and this model were made up of twelve variables, some of which were hypothesized to influence L2 learners' WTC, in other words, the factor that was hypothesized to eventually lead to their communication behaviors. Various studies were conducted in different learning contexts, such as perceived competence (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), social support (MacIntyre et al., 1999), learning context (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000), international posture, self-confidence, and motivation (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). Yashima (2002) for example, investigated and examined how individual differences, such as attitude, English learning motivation, and English communication confidence, influence WTC in English in the foreign context.

MacIntyre, Babin, and Clément (1999) further conducted a research on the process of initiating communication. In their study, they had pretest of participants' willingness to communicate in a L1 lab setting, in which oral and written tasks from easy to difficult. The results revealed that those who came to the lab voluntarily had higher willingness to communicate than those who did not participate in the study. The conclusion was that willingness to communicate predicted the initiation of communication in both oral and written forms. The results further implied that there was a correlation between L2 motivation and willingness to communicate.

Learners' Belief, Self-Perceived Competence and L2 Motivation

Learners' belief was speculated to be closely related to motivation (Graham, 2006). It referred to self-estimates or beliefs of how good one is at a given activity, which meant that learners endorse positive beliefs about learning and communication in a communicative classroom tend to be more active and motivated.

Self-perceived competence rather than their actual competence refers to self-estimate or belief or how good one is at a given activity, found to be the most immediate antecedents of L2 WTC (Yashima, 2002). MacIntyre and Charos (1996) have demonstrated that while personality traits of intellect, extraversion, emotional stability, and conscientiousness are related to WTC through self-perceived language competence, communication apprehension, and motivation, the personality trait of agreeableness is directly related to WTC.

This is consistent with the self-efficacy theory of motivation (Seifert, 2004), which

suggests that a child who feels they are able and competent will work on a task and persevere even if it is difficult, but if a child who feels that they are unable or lacking ability will be more likely to avoid the task. This association suggests that children's perceptions of their own ability may affect the level of investment or effort they put into a task. In this study, competence refers to all of the forms of knowledge that L2 learners must have in order to communicate effectively.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship

The present study is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the relationships among L2 motivation, learners' belief, and self-perceived competence in the young EFL learners?

2. How do the effects of the ideal and ought-to selves on learners' belief and self-perceived competence differ?

3. Is there a relationship between young EFL learners' perceived competence and motivation?

Method

Participants

The participants for the current study were selected from 227 first to sixth graders (115 boys and 112 girls) in thirteen classes at an elementary school in Taipei City. The participants start to learn English formally at the first grade. Moreover, a reliable test of the beginning level in General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) developed by LTTC (Language Training and Testing Center) was applied in the current study to examine children's preexisting English listening ability. GEPT is a comprehensive examination that tests EFL learners' overall ability in English, including vocabulary, reading comprehension, oral fluency, and composition. In each grade, two of the students of the tests were designated as the higher and lower-proficiency groups ($n = 6$, respectively); therefore, twelve students from six grades were selected. Accordingly, they showed little difference in their English proficiency. The criterion for dividing the participants into two groups was purely practical: to obtain sufficient statistical power to detect potential differences in outcome measures. Thus, it should be noted that the division criterion was relative rather than absolute.

Based on the Elementary school English curriculum guideline in Taipei City, for the elementary school students, the main goal is to help them to cultivate listening and

speaking abilities so as to be successful learners with communicative competence. Therefore, the students in the present study were instructed 'audio-lingual communicative activity' in dialogue form named 'Weekly English' for improving their listening and speaking abilities, and to increase their opportunities in using English in the EFL context.

Instrument

To ensure that relatively complete data were collected and that the data were not contaminated by any delays, a semistructured interview was collected in Mandarin Chinese immediately after the participants finished 18 dialogue sentences in one semester. Because the guide was semistructured, additional questions pertaining to the research questions for this study were also asked.

Data was further collected by means of a self-report questionnaire, comprised of a total of 20 items that focused on four major variables, each variable has five items: (1) ideal L2 self; (2) ought-to L2 self; (3) learners' belief; and (4) self-perceived competence. All variables were measured by a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.'

L2 Motivation. In order to ensure that the instrument has appropriate psychometric properties, ten items were adopted and revised from established motivation questionnaire, with sufficient validity and reliability coefficients (e.g., Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner, 1985).

Learners' Belief. Five items were adapted from Sakui and Gaies (1999) according to the polarity of item meanings; that is, only items assumed to facilitate or debilitate L2 WTC were used. Five items were additionally constructed to reflect beliefs about classroom behaviors identified in Peng's (2007) study. Items endorsing traditional pedagogic approaches (Sakui & Gaies, 1999) or conceived to debilitate L2 WTC were reversely coded, so that high scores on this scale suggest WTC-promoting beliefs. This scale is designed as a 5-point Likert scale.

Self-Perceived Competence. Five items for interest in the self-perceived competence were taken from a study by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) constituted the measure of self-judgment of communication competence.

Design and Materials

The listening and speaking materials and instruments used in this study were eighteen sentences in dialogue form based on the curriculum guideline, sentence flash cards,

worksheets, target word flash card, listening comprehension tests, and post-instruction questionnaire. Given that test-takers' affective schemata can influence their positive or negative responses to the given task (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), in the present study, students were required to fill in a post-study questionnaire on their responses to the listening and speaking activities, and take comprehension post-tests.

Teaching materials. English Passwords is a listening and speaking activity in dialogistic form, which would like to motivate students to speak and use English in daily life. In the current study, this activity was named "Password English." The paired eighteen weekly English were selected based on three criteria.

First, in order to maintain students' English learning interest without adding their learning load, the topics should be authentic, meaningful, and relevant to their life and learning experience.

Second, to control the level of difficulty, the selected target words should be included in the elementary school English curriculum guide in Taipei City. 320 vocabulary for oral production, 250 vocabulary for written production, sixty nine simple sentences, and thirty dialogues were included.

Third, due to the limited size of the flash cards printed with illustrations, the maximum number of words is eleven. For example, 'How many students are there in your class?' 'There are twenty.'

Interview Procedures

Individual interview procedure was conducted and the twelve participants were interviewed in one session of about 20 minutes each on average. The interview questions were intended to elicit information about the participants' metacognition, that is, their metacognition knowledge, about various aspects relating to EFL listening and speaking. The questions referred to the participants' own perceptions or evaluations of themselves as listeners and speakers (including motivation, beliefs, and self-perceived competence) of the texts that they had learned, their strategy-use and problem-solving processes in learning the conversations, and their reactions to the texts.

Data Analysis

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Chinese by the experimenter. The transcripts were translated into English for presentation in this article. Miles and Huberman's (1994) three procedures for analyzing qualitative data

were adopted, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verifying. All the transcripts of the participants were analyzed and classified to address the study's research questions.

To maintain consistency and reliability, the same data set was analyzed by the same colleague who assisted the experimenter in assessing the participants' perceptions and transcribing the interviews. In case where disagreements arose, the disagreements were resolved through discussion. The ultimate inter-rater agreement was about 95%.

Multiple-group structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to evaluate the relations between the various latent variables investigated in this study, using the software AMOS 18.0. From each weekly sentence, each child was exposed to eighteen paired sentences across eighteen weeks of the study. In the daily class period, the participants regularly received weekly sentences for ten minutes and the target persons were being observed every three minutes by the classroom teacher. The questionnaires were given over eighteen consecutive weeks and students spent 20 minutes to complete the post-instruction questionnaires.

Post-instruction questionnaire. 20 questions were composed to elicit the participants' affective responses and attitudes toward the effects of listening and speaking texts. To reduce the possibility of potentially inferring factors, such as language barrier, test items were written in Chinese.

Vocabulary instruction. Before students listened to the weekly sentences, the teacher taught each target word explicitly by using colorful flash cards and provide the equivalent of the target word in L1, matching the target word with a definition or synonym. The teacher directly pointed to the target word printed on the flash card, asked students to repeat the word and spelled the word together, and then put explicit efforts on the meaning of each target word. Five minutes were spent on these activities in each listening text.

Sentence instruction. In this condition, the students were told the topic of the listening and speaking texts before reading aloud the sentences. They were then guided by the explanations of the sentences, had discussions about the related topics of the texts in order to activate their background knowledge for better understanding the subsequent listening and speaking texts.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 presents the schematic representation of the model with standardized path coefficients. As can be seen in the figure, the values of factor loadings and residuals

are all acceptable, but the overall model fit indices, and the correlation between the ideal self and ought-to self of the paths are not significant. As can be seen in Table 1, due to the adequate number of the participants, the chi-square is significant, indicating insufficient model fit. However, a conventional way of dealing with this effect on the chi-square statistics is the employment of the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (X^2/df), which in the present study displays a value below the acceptable level of 3; nevertheless, all the selected model fit indices show very poor levels. Thus, it can be concluded that the final version of this mode is not an acceptable representation of the dataset concerning the measured variables.

By taking a closer look at the obtained structural equation model and reflecting on the current state of language learning in the context in Taiwan, we can gain insights into the internal structure of the L2 motivational system and the motivational characteristics of elementary school learners of English. Four of the significant paths indicating the impacts of the ideal L2 self, and the ought-to L2 self on learners' belief, and self-perceived competence confirm the results of obtained in previous studies (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). The strength of these influences on the learners' beliefs is also in line with the findings of the study, with the ideal L2 self having the highest impact, and the ought-to L2 self being the second strongest predictor of learners' beliefs, respectively. Among the components of the L2 motivational self system, the ought-to L2 self has the less effect on self-perceived competence.

Given the strongest impact of the ideal L2 self on learners' belief, and the unquestionable effect of self-perceived competence on the learners' motivated behavior, it appears that the role of Taiwanese students' future self-guides in increasing learners' belief to learn English is mainly mediated by their attitudes toward the immediate learning environment and experience. As can be seen in Table 2, the correlation coefficients among the variables such as the correlation between the ideal L2 self and learners' belief is considerably stronger than the causal effect of the ideal L2 self on the same variable in the structural model. Thus, this finding bears out the claim that the desired future self does not necessarily result in motivation unless it is perceived as available and accessible through the specific learning channel (Normal & Aron, 2003); in other words, future self-guidance need to be equipped with appropriate behavioral strategies (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006) so as to facilitate goal attainment.

The impact from the ideal L2 self on self-perceived competence is much stronger than the impact from the ought-to L2 self on self-perceived competence, confirming

the general assumption in L2 motivation literature that the more intrinsic motivation and self-internalized a motive is, the more motivated students are to achieve (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999). Furthermore, the results of this study show that the ought-to L2 self does not have significant effect on self-perceived competence, indicating that the ought-to L2 self plays the secondary role in leading to L2 learning achievement.

An important result of this study is the non-significant correlations between ideal self and ought-to self, which probably the significant impacts from anxiety (Higgins, 1987; Papi, 2010). For example, the confirmation of the findings in Papi's (2010) study, the ought-to L2 self significantly contributes to English anxiety, and the ideal L2 self shows a negative relationship. In the future study, one more factor in personality psychology, i.e., anxiety should be taken into consideration. This findings suggests that the more the students' behavior is motivated through their ought-to L2 self in learning English, the more negative beliefs they have. On the other hand, the more developed the students' ideal L2 self, the greater learners' beliefs they obtain in using and learning English as a foreign language.

The data-generated correlational link between the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self is another interesting finding of this study. There seems to be a certain amount of overlap between these two future self-guide (see Figure 1 and Table 1), a finding that might expected with regard to the specific range of the participants, representing the beginning period to learn a foreign language. The elementary school EFL students might have not yet developed an established self-internalized image of what they desire to become that is entirely distinct from what they ought-to become. Another explanation might be that due to the collective nature of interpersonal relationships in Taiwanese society, with minimal opportunities for self recognition, Taiwanese learners of English may internalize the social standard and ideals endorsed by their society or significant others as their own ideal selves.

Figure 1. The model of the L2 motivational self system, learners' beliefs, and self-perceived competence
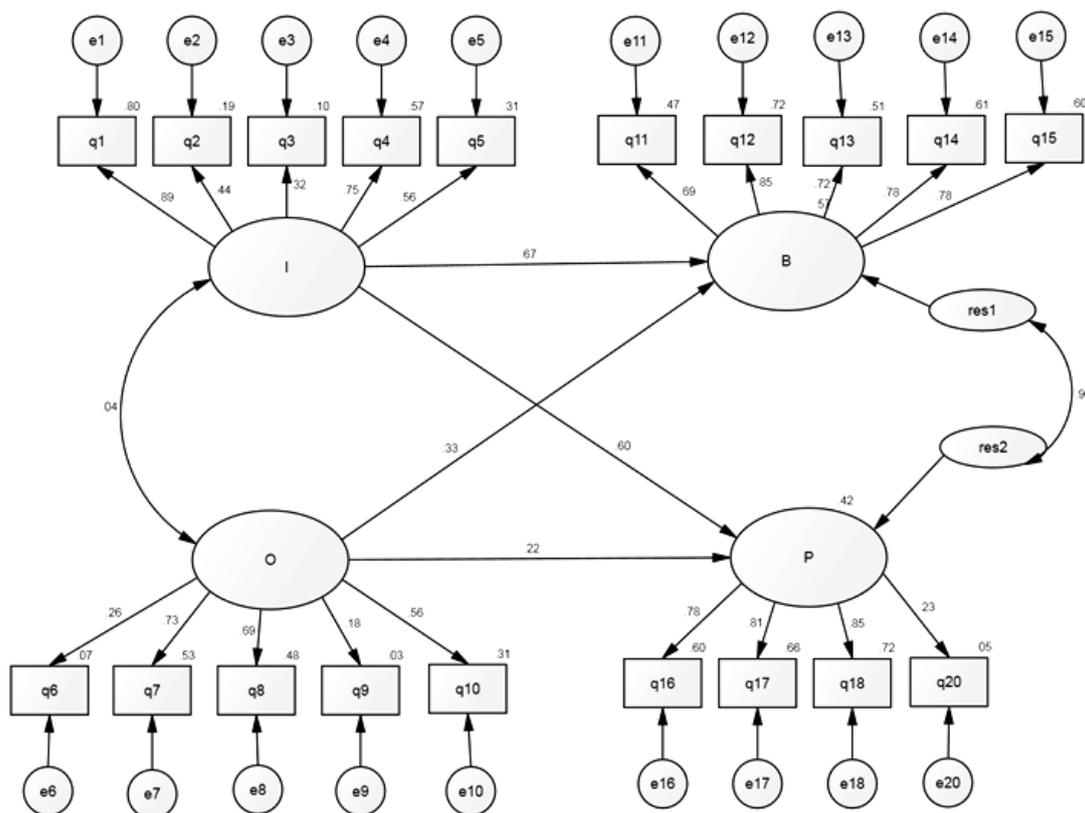
Table 1
Selected fit measures for the final model

Index	Current level
X^2	$p < .001$
X^2/df	2.69
GFI	.829
AGFI	.747
NFI	.852
IFI	.749
RFI	.893
TLI	.899
CFI	.873
RMSEA	.000

Note. GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; NFI = Normal Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; RFI = Relative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

Table 2
Correlations between the measured variables

	Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	Learners' Belief	Self-Perceived Competence
Ought-to L2 self	.066	1		
Learners' Belief	.554**	.336**	1	
Self-Perceived Competence	.431**	.257**	.687**	1

**p < .01, two-tailed.

Interview data revealed a higher degree of self-belief and L2 motivation. During the interviews, several students described how and why they gradually felt confident and motivated in using English in their daily lives even though it was a difficult task for them in the early stages.

Now I am not shy anymore. I am willing to speak English to my classmates, teachers, and parents. I believe I can use English when I talk to foreigners. I also believe I will have better chance to find a good job when I grow up (Male student E, higher-proficiency, SF04-03).

General speaking, from the evaluation of oral performance, the results also indicated that there was a great improvement between the pre-test and post-test (see Table 3), i.e., 66% of the focused higher- and lower-proficiency students spoke English better than before ($t(11) = 3.5$, $p = .005** < .05$).

Table 3

Oral performance of the focused higher- and lower-proficiency students

Focused student	Able to understand the interlocutor's speech （25%）	Able to fluently speak learned English （25%）	Able to accurately speak sentences （20%）	Able to identify learned dialogues （20%）	Able to actively communicate （10%）	Total score （100%）	Improvement evaluation
S1	15	15	14	13	5	62	V
	20	20	18	17	8	83	
S2	16	14	15	15	6	66	--
	17	15	17	16	7	72	
S3	18	16	18	17	7	76	--
	19	17	19	17	7	79	
S4	16	15	16	15	7	69	V
	19	19	20	20	9	87	
S5	18	18	17	19	7	79	V
	24	24	19	19	9	95	
S6	20	20	18	17	8	80	--
	21	18	19	18	7	83	
S7	15	16	14	16	8	68	V
	24	25	19	19	9	94	
S8	16	15	16	17	7	71	V
	21	20	20	20	8	89	
S9	18	16	17	17	6	74	V
	23	24	18	19	9	93	

S10	20	18	19	19	8	84	V
	24	24	20	20	9	97	
S11	19	18	18	17	9	81	V
	24	24	20	18	9	96	
S12	19	19	18	18	9	83	X
	16	15	16	14	8	68	

In addition, one focused student said that it was not just the self-perceived competence, but a real linguistic performance of four skills.

I was not good at spelling and memorizing vocabulary, but now I can recognize more vocabulary and I can independently read more English storybooks by applying phonic rules. Most important of all, I believe I can perform quite well in English, and now I am glad that I realize it. I will keep on learning this foreign language. (Female student B, lower-proficiency, SI03-02)

Paired *t*-test was used to analyze the participants' listening and reading comprehension performances. Higher-proficiency students performed significantly better than the lower-proficiency students on both tests. Nevertheless, the lower-proficiency students still learned English as the foreign language given that their grades were above 50% of the total scores (see Table 4).

Table 4

Outcomes of listening comprehension and reading comprehension

Performance (1 point/ total 30 points)	Higher-proficiency group (n = 75)		Lower-proficiency group (n = 75)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*-value	Significance
Listening comprehension	27.32	2.95	18.88	4.46	28.86	.000***
Reading comprehension	25.92	5.60	17.90	5.16	21.64	.000***

Note. *** *p* < .001

In brief, as for both of the higher- and lower-proficiency young EFL learners, English listening and speaking activities can not only improve their ability in listening comprehension, but also performed better in reading comprehension.

Conclusion

This study examined a model that contains the main component of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system in relation to learners' belief and self-perceived competence. Overall, the results revealed that all the constituent elements of the L2 motivational

self system, though to different degrees, motivated language learners to put more effort into learning English and using English as a communicative tool, thereby offering validity evidence to Dörnyei's construct of the L2 motivational self system; however, the influence from ought-to L2 self demonstrated a different picture.

The ought-to L2 self and learners' beliefs, on the other hand, did not display significant positive causal relationships with self-perceived competence. The ought-to L2 self-driven students had less identity in self-belief and self-perceived competence in communication. Whereas learners' belief is known as a rather situation-specific factor related to the immediate L2 learning context, in this study the variance explained by one of the L2 motivational self system, the ideal L2 self was higher than the one explained by the ought-to L2 self. This finding points to the conclusion that learners' belief is closely related to the students' motivational regulations, particularly the ideal L2 self.

The students are motivated through a self-internalized, inner-directed imaginary view of their future L2 self or through an other-directed, less internalized picture visualized to fulfill others' expectations seems to make a real difference in the students' emotional properties including L2 anxiety. The current study was intended to provide some initial results in this new line of enquiry.

Pedagogical Implications and Directions for Future Research

Unlike previous studies, the present study focused on the impact from L2 motivational variables on the extent of effort that learners reported they intend to put effort in speaking English. In brief, Taiwanese elementary school learners' attitude toward language learning and communication affect their motivation in learning English. It is a compulsory responsibility for teachers and educators to provide a positive and motivating context for students to have authentic communication.

The motivation of Taiwanese elementary school learners of English seems to be dependent on their attitudes toward English learning and communication. Providing a positive and motivating classroom by teachers and educational authorities seems to be an urgent necessity. Hence the strong impact from the ideal L2 self on learners' belief generating and priming the aspect of L2 self (Dörnyei, 2008) through employing specific strategies can be effective in increasing language learners' motivation. Not like many previous works, the present study focused on the impact from some motivational variables on the extent of effort that learners' self-report they intend to put into speaking English.

However, the conclusion derived from this study's findings must be seen as very tentative given the following limitations. First of all, convenient sampling was applied to select participants from the age of 7-to-12 schoolchildren in Taipei City for the current study, who primarily learned foreign language as school subject. It is entirely possible that different age groups and different language proficiencies would produce differing structural patterns. Another limitation of the present study is that it did not test the measurement models of each construct and then conduct tests of the structural relations. Further research is needed to examine the links between these variables and learners' actual effort, such as standardized assessments of listening and reading comprehension tests, and speaking test in English.

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