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# **Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Students: A Mandate for Higher Education in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is conceptualized to examine ways by which higher education in our own country (Nigeria) could be re-organized in such a manner that critical thinking skills could be imbued in the young learners, in order to make them problem solvers, thereby become assets rather than liabilities to the Nigerian society. In specific terms, the paper examines such issues as the concept of critical thinking, the importance of critical thinking to the nation, means of inculcating it in the students – particularly at the higher education level, and finally makes recommendations on how this could be effectively carried out.

Keywords: Developing, critical, Thinking, Skills, Students, Higher Education

## **I. Introduction**

The world is fraught with myriad of problems. These problems, created by man in his daily interactions with both his physical and social environments, are getting more and more complex by the day. According to Akinlaye, Mansaray and Ajiboye (1996), in any society, human life is a series of confrontations- confrontation with oneself, with other people, with societal institutions and with one's environment. These leave man with limitless problems to battle with in the society. The person who can successfully deal with these problems and issues and that can face them squarely with self-confidence is the one imbued with the right type of knowledge, skills and competencies required to solve these problems. Education definitely has an obligation and function to equip the learners with the mechanisms of dealing with the problems and emerging dilemmas, in order to make them live a happy and fulfilled life in the society. This is why the most challenging role of education generally today, is to equip the students with the ability and capability to deal successfully with the fast dynamic world and the unknown future. Obviously, current situations and problems may become obsolete when students of today face the world as adults tomorrow. One of the tools which education (particularly higher education) can perfectly provide for these youngsters is critical thinking which provides them with the needed skills to solve problems and issues in the environment regardless of their nature. More than ever before in Nigeria today, there is the need for commitment to the resolution of the ensuing societal problems through appropriate education. The individuals who seek to resolve issues and problems without the appropriate skills, abilities and proper understanding of the problems, often tend not only to behave irresponsibly and erratically, but also in ways that damage their own future and the human condition in the society.

Education, the world over, remains the most potent weapon of development. This is why in the National policy on education, it has been described as an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development (NPE, 2004). Experts in the field of education have given various definitions to the term ‘education’. Suffice it to give a simple and functional definition of the term, as it constitutes one of the key words of the title of this paper.

Jekayinfa and Kolawole (2008), Otite and Ogionwo (2006) define education as “the process of development of an independent and integrated personality, which entails the training and acquisition of special knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed by an individual to be responsible and which would enable him to contribute his own quota to the growth of the society of which he is a member”.

When subjected to proper analysis, it is discovered that this definition perfectly agrees with the driving force of Nigeria’s philosophy of education which are:

- a.the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
- b.the full integration of the individual into the community; and
- c.the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system (NPE, 2004).

However, the goals which the Nigerian nation is set to achieve through the provision of sound education to her citizens include:

- a.the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- b.the inculcation of the mind type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society;
- c.the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- d.the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society, (NPE, 2004).

As it can be observed, the needs and aspirations of the nation have been aptly captured by these goals. This goes to say that, any form of education provided in any country must take cognizance of the needs of its people for that education to be seen to be functional. Education is a life -long process, which aims at imparting skills and knowledge needed to lead a purposeful life and equip the learners so as to be able to adjust to the remote and immediate environment in which he finds himself.

Therefore, if education must be seen as performing its expected roles in the society, it must provide the learner with the relevant body of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would make him an active and effective member of his society. One of such skills or abilities the learner is expected to be imbued with is critical thinking, which is the focus of this paper. It is believed that the learner imbued with critical thinking ability would be able to solve his personal problem (s), the problem (s) in his family and by extension, solve societal problem(s) in whatever sphere of life such problems may manifest. This way, the learner becomes a problem – solver rather than problem – creator. And these are the kind of individuals the society desires to raise, which is in consonance with the goals of education mentioned above.

## **II. Concept of Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking features prominently in all the skills or abilities learners are expected to acquire through the type of education being provided. One, who cannot think, may not be able to solve even the minutest problem. We now live in a world of problems – social problem, economic problem, political problem, ethnic problem, religious problem, educational problem, Science and technologically related problems to mention a few. It only takes a sound mind, a mind imbued with reflective thinking, which can engage in deep analysis, to come up with causes of the problem at hand and generate possible solutions or options to arrive at a decision; to solve a or get out of the problem.

Critical thinking like the concept of education has been defined in so many ways by writers and researchers. According to Encarta (2009), critical thinking is regarded as a type of critical analysis has been described as “disciplined intellectual criticism that combines research, knowledge of historical context and balanced judgment. It is the ability to think logically and analytically. In other words, critical thinking is the purposeful and reflective judgement about what to believe or what to do in response to observation, experience, verbal or written expressions or arguments. Thus, critical thinking involves determining the meaning and significance of what is observed or expressed, or concerning a given inference or argument, determining whether there is adequate justification to accept the conclusion as true. This definition agrees with the one given by Fisher and Scriven (1997) as: “skilled and active interpretation and evaluation of observations, communications, information and argumentation”. Critical thinking therefore gives due consideration to the evidence, the context of judgement, the relevant criteria for making the judgment well, the applicable methods or techniques for forming the judgement and the applicable theoretical construct for understanding the problem and the question at hand. Critical thinking employs not only logic but broad intellectual criteria such as clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, fairness and significance. In contemporary usage, the word “critical” may connote expressing disapproval, which is not always true of critical thinking. A critical evaluation of an argument, for instance, might conclude that it is valid.

Similarly, foundation for critical thinking (2009) has defined it as: “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, the foundation claimed that it is based on universal intellectual values of clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth and fairness.

In its simplest form, critical thinking may be conceived of as that mode of thinking about any subject, content or problem, in which the thinker improves the quality of his thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking, and imposing intellectual standards upon them.

It may be observed from the above that critical thinking entails those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning such as purpose, problem or question – at - issue, assumptions, concepts, empirical grounding, reasoning leading to conclusions, implications and consequences, objections from alternative viewpoints and frame of reference. Critical thinking, being responsive to various subject matters, issues and purposes, is incorporated in a family of interwoven modes of thinking which include: scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking and philosophical thinking (Foundation for critical thinking, 2009).

Critical thinking may be seen as having two components i) the skills to generate and process information and beliefs, ii) the habit of using those skills to guide behaviour, based on intellectual commitment. These components should be contrasted with:

- i. the mere acquisition and retention of information alone, this is because it involves a particular way in which information is sought and treated;
- ii. the mere possession of a set of skills, because it involves the continual use of them; and
- iii. The mere use of those skills (“as an exercise”) without acceptance of their results.

Consequent upon the foregoing, it may be summarized therefore that, critical thinking is self-guided, self-disciplined, self -directed, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking, which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. Thus, people who think critically consistently, attempt to live

rationally, reasonably and empathetically. They are keenly aware of the inherent flawed nature of human thinking when left unguided. They strive to diminish the power of their egocentric and socio-centric tendencies. They use the intellectual tools offered by critical thinking such as concepts and principles that enable them to analyze, assess and improve thinking. They work diligently to develop the intellectual virtues of intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, intellectual civility, intellectual empathy, intellectual sense of justice and confidence in reason. They realized that no matter how skilled they are as thinkers, they can always improve their reasoning abilities and that they can at times fall prey to mistakes in reasoning, human irrationality, prejudices, biases, distortions, uncritical accepted social rules and taboos, self interest and vested-interest. People who can think critically strive to improve the world in whatever ways they can and contribute to a more rational and civilized society. Even at that, they recognize the complexities that are inherent in doing so. They avoid thinking simplistically about complicated issues and strive to appropriately consider the rights and needs of relevant others. They also are aware of the complexities in developing as thinkers, and as such got committed to life-long practice toward self -improvement. The critical thinkers exemplify the Socratic principle: “The unexamined life is not worth living” , because of their belief that many unexamined lives together result in an uncritical, unjust, and dangerous world (Paul & Elder, 2008)

### **III.Importance of Critical Thinking to the Nation**

Implicit in the few definitions of critical thinking attempted above is the importance of critical thinking to the individuals in particular and the nation in general. No doubt, everybody thinks, and it is our nature to do so. However, thinking is often casual and informal. Most of our thinking if left to itself is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced. Yet the quality of our lives and that of what we produce, make or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. This fact underpins the importance of critical thinking in the life of a nation and that of the individual. This is because critical thinking enables one to analyze, evaluate, explain and restructure his thinking, thereby reducing the risk of adopting, acting on, or thinking with a false belief. However, even with knowledge of the method of logical inquiry and reasoning, mistakes can happen due to a thinker’ s inability to apply the methods or because of character traits such as egocentrism. Critical thinking includes identification of prejudice, bias, propaganda, self-deception, distortion, misinformation and so on. We live in a world of problems, and it is imperative for the individual, particularly students in the country to be equipped with the skills, abilities and capabilities to get their problems and those of the society solved, thereby, making the nation a worthwhile place to live in

### **IV.Effecting Critical Thinking Skill in the Students Through Higher Education**

One pertinent question that comes to mind at this juncture is: “how to develop critical thinking skills in students”. It is interesting to note that critical thinking ability can be inculcated in the learner at any point of the educational hierarchy (from primary school to tertiary institutions). What varies is the level of engagement at each level. Thus, while it is important to start developing critical thinking in the learner right from the primary school, it is better effected in students at the tertiary level. This is because students at this level are more mentally matured to cope with the rigours involved.

However, the question on how to develop the ability in students still remains. This is a methodological issue. What method do we adopt in order to effectively develop critical thinking in the students? As may be

observed, critical thinking is about being both willing and able to evaluate one's thinking, and could be effected through the teaching and learning of any subject on the school curriculum.

Developing critical thinking skills in students, involves learning the art of suspending judgement (for example, when reading a novel, watching a movie, engaging in dialogical/dialectical reasoning). To do this successfully, one should adopt a perspective rather than judgmental orientation; that is, avoiding moving from perception to judgment as one applies critical thinking to issues.

Critical thinking is based on concepts and principles, not on hard and fast rules. These concepts are exemplified in: identification of problem, rational inquiry, conceptual analysis, logical reasoning, nature of argument, identification of premises, and conclusion; while principles involved in critical thinking include: acquisition of knowledge through thinking, reasoning and questioning based on facts; learning what to think through how to think; judgment of effectiveness of argument through reflective thinking; critical thinking as a search for meaning and critical thinking as a skill that can be learned among others.

It employs not only logic (formal/informal), but broad intellectual criteria of clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth and significance. Critical thinking is highly significant to learning. There are two phases to the learning of content. The first occurs when learners construct in their minds the basic ideas, principles and theories that are inherent in the content, for the first time. This is a process of internalization. The second phase occurs when learners effectively use those ideas, principles and theories as they become relevant in the learners' lives - known as the process of application. Good teachers cultivate critical thinking, that is, intellectually engaged thinking, at every stage of learning. The teacher questions the students often in a Socratic manner. The point here is that, the teacher who fosters critical thinking fosters reflectiveness in students, by asking questions that stimulate thinking which is essential to the construction of knowledge.

Each discipline adapts the use of critical thinking concepts and principles. The core concepts are embedded in the content of each subject. For students to learn content, intellectual engagement is crucial. All students must do their own thinking and construction of knowledge. Good teachers are aware of this, and therefore focus all teaching and learning activities in the class to stimulate the mind to master key concepts, principles and generalizations underlying the subject.

## **V.Critical Thinking: Mandate for Higher Education in Nigeria**

It has been substantially demonstrated in this paper that critical thinking as an intellectual engagement belongs to the higher order level of cognitive abilities (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). A fact that makes it almost an exclusive function of higher education in some countries.

This explains why in United Kingdom school system, critical thinking is offered as a subject at the Advanced level. There was also a report of widespread skepticism about Universities' effectiveness in fostering critical thinking in California, USA. According to the study carried out by Thomas and Nelson (2010), critical reports by authorities on higher education, political leaders and businessmen, claimed that higher education is failing to respond to the needs of the students and that many of the graduates' knowledge and skills do not meet society's requirements for well educated citizens. The study concluded that:

- i. Faculty aspires to develop students' thinking skills, while in practice teachers aim at facts and concepts in the discipline at the lowest cognitive level, rather than development of intellectual or values.
- ii. Faculty agrees that the development of students' higher order intellectual/cognitive abilities is the most important educational task of colleges and universities. These abilities underpin the students' perceptions of the world and the consequent decisions they make.



iii. Specifically, critical thinking – the capacity to evaluate skillfully and fairly the quality of evidence and detect error, hypocrisy, dissembling and bias is central to both personal success and national needs among others.

As it were, while this report essentially raises questions about the standard or level of performance of higher education with regards to the inculcation of critical thinking ability in students, it is clear that it is the responsibility of higher education to provide that needed skill, Nigeria’ s higher education sub-sector, is not an exception.

Similarly, a team of researchers namely: Abrami, Bernard, Borokhovski, Wade, Surkes, Tamim and Zhang (2008) carried out a meta-analysis study of 117 different studies of pedagogical intervention in the area of critical thinking involving a total of 20,698 participants in Canada. One of the questions addressed in the analysis was: what types of pedagogical intervention were most effective in supporting students to develop critical thinking skills? The study identified four approaches to the teaching of critical thinking namely:

- i. General approach- critical thinking being taught separately from subject area content.
- ii. Infusion approach- critical thinking is infused into subject area content. Subject area curricula have explicit objectives in the area of critical thinking, alongside the subject area objectives.
- iii. Immersion approach- instructions in the subject is thought-provoking, but critical thinking principles are not made explicit.
- iv. Mixed approach- a combination of a general approach and either infusion or immersion. Students receive instruction in critical thinking in the context of subject matter, with a separate course aimed at teaching general principles of critical thinking.

Findings of this study showed that:

- i. The immersion method was the least effective.
- ii. The mixed approach was the most effective, closely followed by the infusion approach.
- iii. Students’ learning outcomes were significantly improved where teachers received professional development related to the teaching of critical thinking skills.
- iv. Students’ collaborative work resulted in small but statistically significant advantage in critical thinking.

While this author aligns with the findings above, the study however failed to make categorical statement on classroom strategies that may help develop critical thinking skills in students. This is where the concepts and principles of critical thinking highlighted earlier are highly relevant and useful. At the classroom level, students are made to identify the problem to address, which may come from any sphere of our lives. This step is closely followed by rational inquiry into the problem and subsequent generation of possible alternative means of solving the problem. A step that actually calls for conceptual analysis of issues involved and logical reasoning, supported by sound arguments to enable students get to the fact of the case, thereby leading to the premises on which sound conclusion(s) are made. In the process, students acquire more knowledge through thinking, reasoning, and questioning based on facts and learning “what to think” through “how to think” and assessing the effectiveness of arguments through reflective thinking. This way, students could have acquired the necessary skills in critical thinking to enable them solve personal problems, those of the community and the nation at large.

## **VI. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the discourse above, it can be concluded that since critical thinking is a precursor to personal success, national peace, progress and development, it should be addressed with all the seriousness it requires by all stake holders for the common good of all. To this end, it is hereby recommended that:

- i. Critical thinking is introduced as a separate subject or course in our tertiary institutions.
- ii. Teachers should be encouraged to operate more in classroom, at higher level of cognition than the lower level.
- iii. Teachers should adopt suitable methods of teaching such as Socratic method, Inquiry method, problem-solving method etc. that are consistent with the development of critical thinking skill in students.
- iv. Both teachers and students should imbibe the attitude of intellectual empathy and intellectual humility, culminating in broad-mindedness needed for the development of the skill.
- v. It is not just enough to acquire the knowledge and the skills involved in critical thinking, learners should be encouraged to apply such skills in their daily lives.

In summary, according to Glasser (1941) ability to think critically involves three things namely;

- i. An attitude of being disposed (that is, the state of the mind regarding something) to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experiences;
- ii. Knowledge of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning; and
- iii. Some skills in applying those methods

Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or any form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.

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# Bring Character Education into Classroom

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## Abstract

Character education is a growing discipline with the deliberate attempt to optimize students' ethical behavior. The outcome of character education has always been encouraging, solidly, and continually preparing the leaders of tomorrow. The promotion of character education should not just a leap service but has an action plan for practice. In order words, education policy should take the lead to actualize moral education. Taken together, parents, teachers, and administrators as stakeholders, should join this camp to encourage students to manifest those good values in their lives. The outline of this paper is that first the definition of character education is provided. Then, the historical perspective of character education is reviewed. Third, the issue of context in character education is disclosed. The challenge and controversy of implementation of character education is also presented. Finally, the implication and further research are discussed.

Key words: Character education, characters, virtues, moral education

## I. Introduction

Character has from the time immemorial been perceived as a word that is acclaimed with special connotations. In other words, when someone is attributed as having a good character as it is commonly used, that person also possesses some other qualities such as trustworthiness, integrity, passionate, reliable, and dependable (Pike, 2010). According to developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind (as cited in Berkowitz & Fekula, 2006), character as the measurement of our perceived manners; namely, it is an overall evaluation of our inward and outward behaviors.

Character education is a growing discipline with the deliberate attempt to optimize students' ethical behavior (Berkowitz & Hoppe, 2009; Katilmis, Eksi, & Öztürk, 2011). Character education is not a new idea. The idea of schooling as implanting virtues is as old as schooling itself (O'Sullivan, 2004). Initially character education was an imperative mission in the public educational system; nevertheless, because of fear of conceptual interconnection between morality and religion, it was phased out (Cooley, 2008; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). The main principle of good character is respect, truth, fair, and responsibility (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006).

Education, in its own domain, has been the part and parcel of our individual lives even from the inception of our respective lives. No wonder it is being described as "field of action in its own right" (Hogan, 2006, p. 253). This is the practical aspect of education as those actions have in retrospect been accorded to us when we were growing up. John Wilson said that education should be seen as a tool of various authorities like a huge corporation, institutional settings – research institutes/universities, or better yet, that of a country (as cited in Hogan, 2006). Attention on the character education has growing in a public school system because of the increasing tendency of negative behaviors among youth (Williams, Yanchar, Jensen, & Lewis, 2003). "Character education can become an everyday opportunities" (Milliren & Messer, 2009, p. 20). Further, Cooley (2008) prized character education as "engines of social change" (p.203).

For the purpose of this literature review, first the definition of character education is provided. Then, the historical perspective of character education is reviewed. Third, the issue of context in character education is disclosed. The challenge and controversy of implementation of character education is also presented. Finally, the implication and further research are discussed.

## **II.Character Education Defined**

Right from a very long time, the educational systems of world spectrum had in many forms initiated some systems of educating pupils of different ages, and creed about the values of character. It is believed that whatever the children become in the future has to do with the level of character imbedded in him, or her, through education. The belief systems in different parts of the worlds and the inability to maintain a standard accepted ways of instilling this concept of education (e.g., the disagreement between parents and schools) have made the program of character education even subtle. However, as “ethical thinking” is progressively being incorporated into various levels of education or training, the world is gradually embracing the values that come with character education (Tirri, 2009, p. 118).

The word character in ancient Greek means “to engrave,” which emphasizes the engraved traits will affect us to behave in certain manners (O'Sullivan, 2004). “Good character is a concept which contains knowing good, embracing good and doing well” (Katilmis et al., 2011, p. 854) . The common belief of character education is from psychological and philosophical perspective that virtues can be taught and learned through the proper pedagogy (Cooley, 2008).

Hoge (2002) defined character education as a way of adjusting the behaviors of the students, in order to become good citizens of the future. According to Pike (2010), these students were being instructed, guided, and toward having some sets of prescribed behaviors. Marshall, Caldwell, and Foster (2011) claimed that character education is perpetually believed, to some kind of ways through which the students are being nurtured in the direction of seeing things in different perspectives; in other words, training them is always to exert maturity while in the mist of challenging situations.

U.S. Department of Education (2005) clearly defined the character education as “an explicit learning process from which students in a school community understand, accept, and act on ethical values such as respect for others, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others.” A simpler definition offered by Berkowitz and Hoppe (2009) is “deliberate attempts to promote the development of student character in schools” (p. 132). The purpose of focusing on those values is to decrease problem behaviors and increase academic engagements in schools (Katilmis et al., 2011; Par-ker, Nelson, & Burns, 2010).

## **III.Historical Perspective**

The education of character might sound like some scientific inventions that are just proving the extents of its validities. It might make some people wonder if it has to do with some educational training that will forever alter the cultural beliefs of some people. However, as much as it could sound like a new thing, Althof, and Berkowitz (2006) have acclaimed “that this field has existed as long as humans have thought about how to rise each subsequent generation” (p. 496) . They also mentioned that “Classic thinkers” like Aristotle, and Confucius have in the past devoted a great deal of time and worked tirelessly, in finding solutions to the issues concerning behavioral expectations of our students. Those ancient sages also endeavored to find the ways to make these behaviors permanent on the students.

John Dewey has “defined character as the interpenetration of habits” (as cited in Althof, & Berkowitz, 1999, p. 497). The period between 1917 and 1930 brought a lot of unwarranted behavioral problems on the country, and the impacts were felt in and around different communities of the country. These problems range

from the students showing defiance to the necessary authorities, stubbornly refusing, or rejecting the prescribed behavioral lessons of that period. Also, the religious sects and “families” also witnessed tremendous shifts in their efforts while they were trying to foster behavioral training for the students (Setran, 2003). These behaviors were contrary to how the people with good characters were perceived. Setran (2003) said the elders, or the organizational leaders of this particular period would judge characters based on: (1) how an individual functions in the means of community initiatives; (2) they also would character on how they collectively joined together to pursue an outstanding project; and (3) judge on how convincingly and independently that individual proved himself/herself that assigned projects were completed as expected.

The behavioral declining mode of this period was due to World War I, which was fought between the years 1914-1919. The aftermath of the war has brought with it a disparaging behavioral dilemma which called for gradual, but effective attitude, or behavioral adjustments (Setran, 2003). Their efforts amongst other things, would bring about the renewed, or the rebirth of character education, and convert the “topic into emerging educational mainstream” (Setran, 2003, p. 437).

#### **IV.Current Issues of Students’ Behaviors**

Anderson (2000) stated that these efforts of renewing, revamping, or re-introduction of character education will not be a project that could be accomplished with urgency. It surely has to be gradual progressions with the notion to embed the program into the educational institutions’ curriculum. Further, he emphasized that the teachers should also bear the burdens of impacting, or teaching the students in these institutions. In other words, “the teacher is central to character education” (Anderson, 2000, p.139). Education of character should not be taken lightly, because of the key facts that it would have foundational and everlasting effects on the children, or the students of the future in displaying their character. Further, the program should be well spread through elementary, middle and high school year, and even unto college, while it is distinguishingly embracing a wide range of well-built character classes (Berkowitz & Fukula, 1999). Marshall, Caldwell, and Foster (2011) stated that “rather than being a ‘bag of virtues designed to control student behavior, integrated character education is a school and community process for educating the whole child in a healthy, caring environment” (p. 53) . It must be accepted, according to Edgington (2002), and seen as being done through collective efforts, whereby character added values are constantly being planted in the students, for the benefit of our country, and particularly, that of our communities.

Stiff-Williams (2002) argued the students of the past, and that of the present generations, without any hesitation whatsoever, would dive into some detrimental acts of drinking, indiscriminative kind of behaviors, substance abuse, stealing, and felony crimes. These behavioral irregularities in the past quickly brought about some concerns for the educators, teachers, parents, organizations like religious concerns, government entities, and all others like an ex-president of our country. President Clinton in supporting character education, would through his “February 4, 1997 State of the Union address,” said “I challenge all our schools to teach character education, to teach good values and good citizenship” (as cited in Cunningham, 1977, p. 1). Further, Stiff Williams (2002) also mentioned that the majority if not all the states of the country, have compulsorily accepted character based education to be taught in their public schools just as they have accepted their permanent educational syllabi. The impressive unity of these states in pursuing character education also instigated the Federal Government to approve and give free money to some of these states in order to support their relentless efforts in challenging the character maladies, that were presumed to be taken over our children/the students of this country.

The country at large knows that our students should be well tuned, matured, and self-prepared through the assist of character based education, for them to be the leaders of tomorrow. The leadership mantles will

automatically fall into their hands. With that notion in mind, character educators are always of the higher heights, when they see outstanding students who have unconditionally demonstrated an all-out character maturities that are progressively moving his/her community forward (Setran, 2003). It has also been noted, that a beneficiary of character education will in reverse advocate, or do whatever it takes to impact the same knowledge base, on the next generation, subsequently doing better as they strive to broaden their other secular knowledge, and more accommodative of other people regardless of their background. They also have the spirit of caring, and are liberal in perceiving things (Pamental, 2010).

## **V.The Benefits of Implementation of Character Education**

The initial goal of character education is to exemplify good character characteristics for students (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). A number of researches found the positive results of applying character education programs in the schools, including higher academic achievements, fewer suspensions as well as dropout, and fewer risk behaviors of students (Bergmark, 2008; Berkowitz & Hoppe, 2009; Katilmis et al., 2011; Parker et al., 2010; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). The overall promising student development indicates character education programs should be one of important components embedded in the current curricula. Williams et al (2003) found, through interviews and questionnaire responses, the participants of character education program claimed that the beneficial learning experience they obtained not only in developing ethical, experiential, and intellectual foundation of character, but also those experiences continue extending throughout their lives.

The character education is more effective under the condition of encouraging students with good character traits which also are “legitimized, modeled, and reinforced by school and teachers” (Romanowski, 2005, p. 17). O’Sullivan (2004) suggested that the easiest way to promote character education is using literature study, since the stories serve as role models that connect experiences and morals (Sanchez & Stewart, 2006). Further, Revell and Arthur (2007) argued that the attitudes of student teachers toward moral education also play an imperative role in the process of implementation of moral education. That is, it should be part of the curriculum of teacher education. Most important, they found the positive effect on later exercise because of opportunities of self-evaluation and of checking their assumption of character education.

Romanowski (2005) provided some beneficial suggestions for the implementation of character education: (1) the involvement of the teachers in program planning will increase faculty support and commitment, which in turn improve the effectiveness of the program; (2) with regard to the curriculum, it should be relevant to students’ life and also challenge them intellectually, emotionally, and socially; (3) administration should support and give enough space for teachers to exercise flexible pedagogy in specific character traits; (4) conducting class discussions could effectively engage students in the program. Further, through the reflection, it will lead to the opportunities of in-depth discussion; (5) finally; the responsibility of the school is to develop an environment in which reinforces bright sides of students learning and behavior, thereby students also practicing those good values they learned from the character education program. The promising ground of bring the framework of character education is to “make critical links between the lessons of greater social sympathy in the classroom and benevolent action in life” (Cooley, 2008, p. 203).

## **VI.Constraints and Controversies with Implementation of Character Education**

We live in a free democratic world where individual families can choose to raise their children in the ways they feel appropriate for them, or their life style. In this case, some people, who are not the advocates of character education, are of the belief that children among other things should be completely independent “to

make up their own minds.” The mindset of these segments of people is that “character education is even regarded as indoctrinatory and an infringement of children’s rights” (Pike, 2010, p.311). Another challenge will be the confusions that could take place when the students of different religious backgrounds are studying under one roof, how then will you decipher the situation. A tested solution is to work around the perimeters of some “shared value” (Pike, 2010). However, this could also lead to some disagreement between all the concerned people as they would have different meaning, or interpretation to what is being perceived as shared value.

The politics of schooling, on the other hand, plays an important role to influence the implementation of character education. Sometimes the hidden agenda among the faculty member or parents will block the program development. In order to solve this conflict, the support of administration is the key, which in turn will wipe out the concerns of teachers (Romanowski, 2005). On the behavior of process of character education, Bergmark (2008) identified student voice also services as the cornerstone of character education. By doing so, it allows students to actively participate in the development of character strength. With regards to egalitarian frame for character education, Cooley (2008) pointed out the discourse of character should be located in democratic agreement instead of proclaiming universal values that are in the textbook. For example, Gallien and Jackson (2006) asserted that character curricular should take context into consideration with culturally responsive manner. Different group has specific value and needs. They suggested in order promoting character education in black urban areas, it is necessary to construct the framework through the conception of African-American counternarratives (e.g., history, literature, cultural, and religious values), thereby effectively transmitting good character values to their youth.

Issues of moral education touch an individual’s basic beliefs (Eberly, 1995; Pritchard, 1998). Morris and Scott (2003) identified the importance of educational reform and policy implementation in terms of actualization of moral education in classrooms. In other words, character education will be achieved in accordance with the support of national education system, in which the government should have a commitment and responsibility to this task (Fathurahman, 2012). With the determinative and supportive policy, this atmosphere will be conducive to the operational level, agencies such as teachers, students, and facilities. At the implementation level, the departmental structures and curriculum are also the reason that schools are hesitant to embrace character education (Chazan, 1985; Nucci, 1989; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). As a result, it is necessary to redesign the curriculum for the sake of facilitating character education. Finally, the concept of moral education should be involved in the education of teachers, especially, in the introduction course of philosophy and history of education (Berkowitz & Oser, 1985; Lickona, 1991). The rationale behind this is that those young teachers will involve in elementary and secondary schools, in which the concept of moral and character is easy to introduce to children. Through being equipped with enough knowledge of character education, teachers would tend to be more engaging in character education development.

In sum, there are tendencies where the “standard based education” and all other none standard curriculum, like that of character education would conflict each other, and as these institutions would strive to follow the directive of the authority involve, the auxiliary program, might just be thrown out (Stiff-Williams, 2010). Education has been perceived as authority of its own that serves as catalyst through which knowledge, training, empowerment are also embedded on someone. These two words bring the added value of character education, which simply are calculated attempts used in controlling, or inciting the behaviors of some people. This is an educational phenomenon that has been in existence for a very long time; however, the importance of it in our current world could not be over emphasized as it is just an added packed values that tend to benefit the young, old, organizational settings, the community, and the country as whole.

## **VII.Conclusion**

Character in many forms has been described as the way we express our inner and outward being; that imbedded value that is within us, and will make some of us to go out of our ways to express compassion, caring, integrity, respect, and all other values that go with virtue. Although the focus of character education has changed throughout history, “character education is an enduring idea” (O’Sulli-van, 2004, p. 640). Character education does not function as a quick fix of deviated behaviors of students, because other factors also impact their behaviors such as family, social, and cultural issues. That is, the character of a student is shaped by social environment that is beyond the scope of educational settings (Romanowski, 2005). Centrally, “character development is the dynamic interplay between internal determinants and external influences in order for positive growth to occur” (Gallien & Jackson, 2006, p. 133). Although other factors (e.g., media or peers) could impact the development outcomes and lead to opposite direction, the school still needs to employ character education equipping students with proper characteristics that help them become good citizens. In sum, participation and commitment is the key to attain this goal (Bergmark, 2008).

There are some downsides to the program ranging from conflict with the standard school curriculum, defiance of some parents about the education of character, or where some students of an institution will have variable, or unidentical beliefs in regard to character. Additionally, some issues of character education are lack of reliable and valid evaluation to justify its effect; therefore, it will be beneficial for future research that puts more weights on the assessment (Romanowski, 2005). Further, an inter-disciplinary approach from different perspectives could facilitate a better understanding of character education, especially on specific cultural groups (Gallien & Jackson, 2006).

The outcome of character education has always been encouraging, solidly, and continually preparing the leaders of tomorrow. This subject matter will require more studies particularly in the areas of similarities/differences in character education, and that of moral education. Finally, Skaggs and Bodenhorn (2006) suggested the importance of the process of implementation of character education in different districts in order to fit the needs and goals of each community, thereby effectively influencing students’ behaviors.

In closing, character education is not a slogan or a course but a mission that is embedded in the everyday school life. Schools function as an arena where students could practice good virtues and go beyond their school life (Milliren & Messer, 2009). Most important, the promotion of character education should not just a leap service but has an action plan for practice (Cooley, 2008). In other words, education policy should take the lead to actualize moral education in the school system. Taken together, parents, teachers, and administrators as stakeholders, should join this camp to encourage students to manifest those good values in their lives.

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# The University on Line

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## Abstract

The essay presents the incorporation process in the reconstruction of distance education in Italy. The paper tries to highlight the transition from modern to postmodern society, focusing both on this extraordinary change in the landscape of cultural and communication processes, and outcomes for the education system and educational and pedagogical models that govern this relationship. The research aims to understand, on the one hand, the potential of these techno-social environments for educational systems, and on the other, raises new questions for a sociological reflection more attentive to new social dynamics produced by these technologies. We seek to trace the effects triggered by the advent of ICT on persons and learning systems. We start from the idea that, despite widespread criticism, immobility of education system and the absence of an overview about the use of these new devices in teaching practices, we register a significant tendency towards change. On the basis of these considerations, the research attempts to:

- highlight any differences in perspectives/models in use among the e-learning systems and teaching practices;
- draw a reflection of risks/opportunities, strengths and weaknesses associated with the use of such instruments/techno-social environment in educational processes.

Keywords: Sociology of Education; E-learning; University; Education; Internet; Technology

## 1.Introduction

With the transition from modern to postmodern society there is an extraordinary change in the landscape of cultural and communicative processes, with clear outcomes for the educational system and pedagogical models. These processes, thanks to the development of modern communication technologies, more and more versatile, inexpensive and easy to use, have been incorporated by systems of distance learning.

The essay is an extract of a theoretical and empirical reflection (Capogna, 2014) organized around three themes of which we offer a partial synthesis in this essay:

- a)the evolution of Information Communication Technology;
- b)the evolution of pedagogical theories;
- c)the recognition of the experiences of e-learning in educational system.

## 2.Information versus communication

With regard to the changes which have affected the communication system in recent decades, we can observe a paradigm transformation from a concept of communication conceived as "information" to another considered as "participation". In fact, communication is the essential medium for any form of relationship; basic for any learning experience, and inextricably linked to the developments introduced by new telecommunication technologies. Then, the communication appears as a multidimensional and polysemic concept. It can be studied

from different perspectives with various semantic variations (Boccia Artieri, 2012; Mc Luhan, 1989; Mc Quail, 1983; Ong, 1986; Wolf, 1985).

Today, there is a widely shared opinion about the evolution of ict and enhancement of communication as a social space. These relevant changes have had an impact on the evolution of distance learning, so the most significant theories of learning have been incorporated in this separation process that characterizes the learning transferred in the absence of teachers. We may recognize different theoretical approaches to learning, and different seasons of the evolution of distance learning, due to the progress of ict. Today, we are in a phase of in-depth review but only overcoming ideological and sectoral position we can reach a cross-fertilization result<sup>1</sup>.

Through a brief reconstruction based on secondary data<sup>2</sup>, we try to sketch a picture of various experiences spread in Italy. On this theme, among the delays with which the Italian educational system compares, at different levels, there are the informative dimension, at local level, and the resulting lack of knowledge or vision system. This produces a lack of links between center and periphery, with negative outcomes also on processes of decision making that accompany each debate on the education system.

### 3.Learning Environments

Today, we can distinguish three main types of technologies in use in the university, open source, proprietary and free. From a cursory survey of Universities portals, we can observe a significant spread of open source e-learning platforms in Italian universities.

We can also distinguish, in summary, three main approaches in the design of learning environments:

- the first one is blended to support and integrate the traditional education, to expand markets, targets and students;
- the second one, based on electronic communication, involves the construction of the course entirely in distance learning; generally it is oriented to specific groups of students (workers, adults etc.);
- the third one, is based on the model of open course wares and free diffusion. This appears like a communication strategy can have multiple purposes: to make known their areas of intervention, to do self-promotion, to attract students, to expand markets, to enhance possibilities to build networking and bridging with the broader socio-economic context.

In this type we can include massive open online courses (MOOCs) around which there is a spread debate about the sense, the value and quality of these learning instruments (Department Business Innovation Skills, 2013). But the creation of platforms, through which to connect an increasing number of learners and teachers, does not solve the problem of knowledge construction. The risk we run is to create an education market where the only goal is the certification more than the formation and its socio-cultural impact on subjects and contexts. The change triggered by ICT within education and training systems is indeed far- reaching. It stands at the intersection point between technology, education and market. Often, e-learning is considered as a way to respond to requests from market which come from a growing and articulated demand for training, posed by the knowledge society. It is also the way to incorporate, within formal education organizations (schools and universities), non-formal education organizations (government and public and private companies), and informal education organizations (media, Internet), new contents and services for learning, so, accompanying economic development and social inclusion policies.

One of the most significant problems affecting the development of old and new media in education systems, and the necessary critical-evaluative reflection that should accompany every learning context in Italy, is given

by the absence of a vision system of different levels of education, and lack clear empirical data on the use of these tools in teaching practices.

#### **4.The Italian Way to E-learning**

Although the Italian university arrived late to e-learning, since 2003 there has been a steady growth in the supply of educational courses, supported by e-learning systems. Italian universities that provide training courses organized based on e-learning systems increased from 24 to 45 out of a total of 77 (58,4%)<sup>3</sup>. In 2006 six new telematic universities were established bringing the total to 11.

Often we find dedicated centers or facilities, although not all universities devote full visibility to this training method, which is not always readily available on the home page of the University. This shows a certain weakness in the universities policies regarding abilities and strategies to adopt an integrated communication plan that can enhance and present the learning environment chosen.

In just two years, we registered a strong increase in the offer of Degree Courses in Distance learning. There has been a proliferation in the number of students who choose to study in an e-learning environment. They have passed from 9.376 a.y. 2006-2007 to 19.463 in on-line universities, and from 12.918 to 35,199 in non telematic universities. The e-learning offered by telematic universities assume an increasing importance in the wider area of the university offer (CNSUV, 2010). In 2007-2008 the 11 telematic recognized universities had a total of about 14,000 members, rising to 17.000 members in 2008-2009 a.y. However, this is about 1% of all students enrolled in the Italian universities. Only three of these universities registered in 2010 more than 2.000 members. Analysing the composition of the population enrolled in these universities, we find that, generally, these students are over 25 years of age; very often they are people with a past spent in conventional universities, or people who are already working. In total, in the academic year 2007-2008 249 undergraduate courses online were granted. On the basis of the statements on websites, about 89% of Italian universities include in their educational offer proposals for distance learning.

The spread of e-learning courses has increased compared to previous years; in fact, we move from 32% of Italian universities who used this training method in 2004 to 68,8% in 2006.

As in previous studies we have observed a significant rate of increase among universities that use distance learning (10 in 2004 and 31 in 2006).

We observe an increased of Italian universities that offer training in e-learning courses, going from 73% of the sample in 2003 to 92% of the sample of 2006. A growing number of universities that have structured whole online degree programs courses, turning to a particular target (working students, disabled, etc.). This is especially true in the field related to education sciences, engineering and social sciences. This data is also confirmed by research ELUE according to which e-learning initiatives conducted by Italian universities are concentrated in the areas of humanities (25%), engineering (23%) and social sciences (18%) (ELUE 2006). Despite an appearance of immobility and a lot of criticism, not always well-founded, this short examination shows the significant turmoil that exists in the Italian universities, on which, now, we will try to reflect focusing on the type of experiments and opportunities, projections and risks that we can view. In reference to the diversity of perspectives and models in use, we can observe different realities. We can recognize a spreading of hybrid models which use distance learning systems in various ways. Very often, they tend to use technology as a vehicle for transmission of learning content characterized by lack of multimedia connotation. This should not be considered completely negative, because it also responds to the need to promote access and inclusion of subjects

with technological, cognitive emotional and use digital divide (Dijk, 2006, 2011). The first model aims to organize the on-line learning environment geared to replicate symbolic spaces that represent the places of knowledge, to accompany the insertion of the new entry activating resources gained in experiential education. The second one winds around the role of actors involved in the training program. In this case, the emphasis is on the relationship between parties involved and different areas of interaction. The first model enables the routines of knowledge, while the second stimulates most creative and subjective dimensions. The proliferation of courses, tests and telematic universities, suggests to consider the transition from the traditional model of universities, that incorporate the process of building and transmission of knowledge within rigidly determined borders and paths, in what is called multiversities, which gives rise to a multiplication and differentiation of opportunities for students and teachers. But the multiplication of universities, courses and opportunities may not result in the risk of deskilling of knowledge, nor of its certifications, especially in a country where (and as long as) the regulatory framework recognizes the legal validity of titles of study.

## **5.Risks and Opportunities of on Line Learning Platform**

To operate a reflection based on the logic of a Swot Analysis, we offer a summary of risks and opportunities, strengths and weaknesses, observed in educational processes with the use of these instruments and techno-social environments.

Among the strengths we can include: the liveliness of experimentations we register at bottom-up level; the diversity of models and theoretical approaches which correspond to a variety of implementative solutions; the advanced state of experimentation that allows us to operate critical reflections and evaluation actions; the speed of information and communication and the opportunity to capitalize the knowledge; the greater attention to the quality standards of process and products; the skepticism between a certain part of the teaching staff.

With regard to weaknesses we can mention: the chronic shortage of economic, human, professional, structural and technological resources; the shortage of clear e-learning policies; the absence of a copy right policy; the lack of educational and methodological skills for the development of ICT in teaching; spontaneity of initiatives unable to run critical mass and promote learning organization.

Regarding the opportunities we can indicate: the progressive lowering of costs in relation to the diffusion of ICT and technological infrastructures; the presence of diversified technology partners; the increasing ease in the use of technology; the variety of ways of teaching made possible by the old and new media panel; the openness to the global market; the variety of opportunities.

Finally, for a reflection on risks we have to mention: the absence of vision and policies of development at the decision making level; the lack of public investment in this segment; the inadequate technological infrastructure support in our country (Caio, 2009); a certain lack of research on these issues; a significant delay in terms of international comparisons in the field of e-learning; a considerable national delay in the ICT sector in the development of products, management software and contents marked by culture, creativity and Italian design.

## **6.Conclusion**

It is now time to ask what role education systems can and should play in view of the fact that they can no longer be separated from a critical confrontation with the new social reality. However, it remains a strong conviction that no effort may be sufficient if we do not mature, at policy level, a vision of system on what could

be the contribution of this sector in the overall framework of national development. But, at the same time we need to advance a management awareness of the importance of e-learning development in every organizational contexts. This is the first step to capitalize isolated experiences and produce a real change in a logic of learning organization and quality assurance. However, as we have also tried to show in the research work, of which this essay is only an excerpt, any uncritical acceptance must be repudiated. The form in which it is spreading the use of old and new media in education can not be passively accepted. Agreeing with Clegg, Hudson and Steel (2003), here it is argued the need to counter both the technological determinism as the uncritical acceptance of a neo-liberal vision of technological globalization. Technologies are never neutral but are always a concrete product and outcome of the historical and social relations and, as such, the embodiment of power relations and technique capabilities emerging that derived from it. ICT, being manufactured, is the result of complex social processes, which are never free from the risk of gender differences and accumulation strategies of their manufacturers and suppliers. Even looking at the way in which e-learning has developed in the university we can not avoid the fact that this has occurred, for the most part, under a managerialist fashion, sometimes more oriented to a 'save' or 'invest' objective rather than teaching

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# Les perspectives de l'enseignement en ligne des langues étrangères

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## Résumé

Dans le contexte actuel de digitalisation toujours plus accentuée des communications et des échanges, baptisé « Internet+ », les modes traditionnels d'enseignement des langues étrangères ont connu de profonds changements. L'épidémie Covid-19 ayant accéléré ce processus, il convient d'en explorer les perspectives au bénéfice de l'enseignement en ligne des langues étrangères. Afin de fournir un cadre de référence pratique à cette nouvelle situation, cet article recense les opportunités et les défis auxquels l'enseignement en ligne des langues étrangères est présentement confronté, en vue de suggérer de nouvelles méthodes articulées sur les cinq aspects suivants : la construction d'un espace d'apprentissage, l'optimisation des compétences des enseignants, l'élaboration des contenus d'enseignement, l'innovation pédagogique et le remodelage du système d'évaluation.

**Mots clés:** Enseignement en ligne des langues étrangères ; méthodologie d'enseignement ; pédagogie

## 1.Introduction

Avec le développement rapide de la digitalisation de nos sociétés et l'intégration de la technologie Internet dans tous les domaines, les modes d'enseignement des langues étrangères ont changé concomitamment. Grâce aux technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'enseignement (TICE) et aux formateurs et enseignants, capital humain dans la sphère de l'économie de l'éducation, les MOOC et autres logiciels d'apprentissage en ligne ont vu le jour, devenant un multiplicateur d'efficacité pour les apprenants en langues étrangères. Ainsi, l'apprentissage autodidacte et non conventionnel a fortement gagné en popularité. Parallèlement, le modèle « apprentissage autonome en ligne + interactions en présentiel » a été également largement introduit dans l'enseignement supérieur. Cependant, dans la pratique, l'enseignement traditionnel en classe dit en présentiel prédomine toujours. Au début de l'année 2020, l'apparition soudaine du Covid-19 a infléchi la nouvelle tendance des cours en ligne, garantissant le bon déroulement des activités d'enseignement des langues étrangères dans un contexte de confinement généralisé (Chen Hong, Yin Qifeng & ZhangZe, 2021). De nombreux problèmes générés par le développement de l'enseignement en ligne ne peuvent pourtant pas être ignorés. Face à la normalisation d'un contexte de prévention et de contrôle des épidémies, la conception d'un parcours d'enseignement à distance des langues étrangères à l'ère post-épidémique s'avère un sujet de recherche qui mérite toute notre attention.

## 2.Opportunités et défis de l'enseignement en ligne des langues étrangères

### 2.1. Opportunités

#### 2.1.1. Atténuation des contraintes de temps et d'espace

En recourant à la technologie Internet, l'accès à tout moment et en tout lieu est le trait le plus constitutif de l'enseignement à distance. L'éducation en ligne triomphe des contraintes de temps et d'espace qui bornaient les modèles traditionnels d'enseignement/apprentissage. Les apprenants peuvent dresser à leur guise leur propre



plan et rythme d'apprentissage. Afin d'assimiler correctement les contenus de cours, ils peuvent se référer à loisir aux cours enregistrés autant de fois que nécessaire. Cela leur permet de renforcer la maîtrise des connaissances essentielles du cours et donc in fine d'améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement. À l'heure où l'enseignement en présentiel porte le risque d'être considérablement affecté par les mesures sanitaires de lutte contre l'épidémie, l'enseignement en ligne a démontré sa valeur irremplaçable et répond pleinement aux besoins de l'éducation moderne tout au long de la vie.

### **2.1.2. Utilisation maximale de ressources de qualité**

Tout d'abord, l'accès aux ressources pédagogiques pour l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères se voit élargi. Le Ministère de l'éducation a mis à disposition un grand nombre de cours en ligne de qualité, dont nombre pour les langues étrangères, qui soutiennent avantagement les étudiants dans leur autonomie d'apprentissage. Deuxièmement, la qualité de l'enseignement s'est affermie. Grâce aux cours en ligne, les établissements scolaires peuvent travailler en réseau et initier des synergies éducatives en concevant conjointement et partageant des ressources pédagogiques de qualité. La vulgarisation de ces ressources par le biais d'internet auprès de chaque apprenant permet de surmonter le problème d'une spatialisation inégale des ressources éducatives, et ainsi d'améliorer la qualité globale des cours.

### **2.1.3. Enrichissement des méthodes d'apprentissage et des modèles d'enseignement**

Avant tout, la communication par internet rompt le mode interactif originel enseignant-élève et élève-élève. Les nouveaux rapports qui en sont issus rapprochent psychologiquement les uns des autres et rendent l'interaction plus flexible et moins verticale. De plus, les enseignants peuvent déceler et recenser par le biais de l'outil informatique les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants dans leurs études, puis personnaliser les explications. Les enseignants peuvent également suivre les paliers d'apprentissage de chaque élève et analyser de manière graduée ses progrès, en vue d'adapter les contenus et la progression pédagogiques aux besoins et rythme d'apprentissage individuels. De plus, une diffusion des cours synchrone et asynchrone exige que les enseignants préparent leurs leçons et autres séquences pédagogiques avec le plus grand soin et efficacité, ce qui assure une amélioration générale de la qualité des enseignements.

## **2.2. Défis**

### **2.2.1. Relation pédagogique sujet-objet**

D'abord, rappelons que les enseignants étant administrateurs des cours, en présentiel comme en ligne, leurs connaissances et compétences ont une incidence directe sur l'apprentissage de leurs étudiants. Cependant, les enseignants d'âge moyen et plus âgés ayant parfois développé et arrimé un style d'enseignement à une pratique au long cours, il peut leur être difficile d'en changer ou de maîtriser rapidement les différents outils requis par l'enseignement à distance. La question de la littératie numérique se pose alors. De plus, pour tous les enseignants, la multitude de vidéos, d'images et d'articles architecturant un cours en ligne nécessite plus de temps de préparation. En outre, des situations inattendues peuvent survenir durant le cours en ligne, ce qui demande aux enseignants davantage de compétences pédagogiques et de flexibilité.

Deuxièmement, en tant que principaux sujets étudiant à distance les langues étrangères, les élèves ont besoin d'une capacité d'apprentissage en autonomie renforcée pour étudier correctement. Diverses études démontrent également, lors d'un enseignement en ligne, que les étudiants, relativement dissipés, connaissent un faible taux d'achèvement des tâches assignées par l'enseignant, ce qui devient une préoccupation majeure. En plus, de longues heures d'études en ligne peuvent endommager la vue des élèves, provoquer des maux de tête, réduisant leur efficacité et diminuant leur enthousiasme.

Enfin, l'interaction entre les enseignants et les étudiants mérite d'être renforcée. L'enseignement-apprentissage des langues nécessite une interaction complète au niveau visuel, auditif et communicatif. Lors d'un cours en ligne, les enseignants et les étudiants ne peuvent communiquer face-à-face, ce

qui peut affecter l'efficacité de l'enseignement. En outre, des activités telles que les dialogues, les jeux de rôle et les débats en groupe deviennent difficiles à réaliser, impactant considérablement la créativité et la motivation en classe.

### **2.2.2. Plates-formes et ressources pédagogiques**

Le recours à de multiples plates-formes en ligne a desservi la contrôle de la qualité pédagogique. Bien que certaines écoles se soient assurées le support de groupes de surveillance en ligne, avec des plans de mise en œuvre pédagogique pertinents, certains problèmes paraissent subsister au cœur du processus de mise en pratique éducative. D'ailleurs, bien que toutes sortes de plates-formes en ligne disposent de fonctions visant à enregistrer la présence des apprenants, le contrôle de l'assiduité des étudiants en ligne reste problématique. De plus, la sélection du matériel pédagogique en ligne détermine en grande partie la qualité du cours. Il existe pléthore de ressources pédagogiques pour l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères sur internet, mais l'exactitude, la pertinence et l'adaptabilité de ces ressources ne sont pas garanties, faute de critères uniformes. Pendant l'épidémie, malgré la conception de cours en ligne de haute facture, la direction académique et les enseignants n'ont toujours pas pu répondre aux divers besoins des étudiants de manière satisfaisante.

### **2.2.3. Les conditions matérielles**

La qualité du réseau Internet pour les enseignants et les étudiants peut connaître des variations très importantes lors des cours en ligne. Il est fréquent que le réseau soit mauvais, saturé ou interrompu. Dès lors, l'enseignant peut être tenté de rebooter et redémarrer son cours, ce qui constitue une perte de temps et interfère avec le plan de cours prévu. Pour les étudiants ensuite, les conditions économiques de différentes régions et familles diffèrent. Les équipements informatique et les connexions Internet varient, ce qui crée de nouveaux problèmes d'inégalité éducative. Pour les enseignants, l'enseignement en ligne à domicile est sensible aux interférences sonores provenant de l'environnement proche. Si l'équipement utilisé est ordinaire ou bas de gamme, la qualité de l'enseignement pourrait s'en ressentir, à cause de la transmission-réception défectueuse de documents audio ou audiovisuels notamment .

## **3. Perspectives de réalisation**

### **3.1. Analyse de cas pratique**

La faculté des langues étrangères de l'Université de sciences politiques et de droit de Chine a développé un nouveau modèle systématique d'enseignement à distance pendant la période de l'épidémie, de façon à garantir la qualité des enseignements. Ce modèle comprend les aspects suivants :

Premièrement, il exige une préparation minutieuse de la leçon. L'enseignant envoie à l'avance les documents et vidéos aux apprenants et assigne des tâches à accomplir, en fonction des objectifs pédagogiques. Il est à noter que les documents et vidéos doivent être étroitement liés aux contenus et à la thématique du cours. Les vidéos doivent être de courtes vidéos ou des ressources de qualité disponibles sur les « MOOC ». Les tâches pour les élèves peuvent être réalisées en groupe ou en individuel.

Deuxièmement, il vaut mieux créer une classe multidimensionnelle, diversifiée et interactive, qui prévient la surcharge cognitive et dont la granularité et le découpage pédagogique sont rigoureusement agencés. L'enseignant a besoin de connaître le niveau des élèves et les écueils qu'ils ont pu rencontrer lors des tâches accomplies précédemment, afin de fournir un enseignement ciblé et focalisé. La progression et l'articulation des contenus doit veiller à ce qu'ils ne soient ni trop faciles au risque d'être ennuyeux ni trop difficiles au risque d'être décourageants. Comme une symphonie, un bon cours en de langue étrangère doit comprendre non seulement une partie linguistique, mais ouvrir aussi sur des connaissances politiques, économiques, culturelles et juridiques, de manière à former la conscience citoyenne des étudiants, à les motiver et à élargir leurs horizons de compréhension de la société et du monde. Avant la fin du cours, pour identifier les

acquis par l'évaluation diagnostique, l'enseignant peut publier des quiz auxquels les élèves répondent via la plate-forme en ligne, et leur permettre également de vérifier leur appropriation des contenus pédagogiques par l'autoévaluation.

Troisièmement, la phase post-évaluation de classe est opérée par la combinaison de l'évaluation formative et sommative. Le mode d'évaluation formative s'appuie principalement sur diverses données statistiques, combinant la collecte manuelle par l'enseignant et la collecte automatique par les plates-formes en ligne, évaluant les élèves selon trois dimensions suivantes : niveau d'interaction, de participation de manière autonome et les résultats aux tests. Une fois l'évaluation formative achevée, elle est ajoutée aux résultats de l'examen final selon un certain prorata afin de calculer la note finale de l'élève (évaluation sommative). Ce mode d'évaluation permet à l'enseignant de formuler une rétroaction pertinente et adaptée à la compréhension, motivation et sensibilité de l'apprenant.

## **3.2. Les applications de l'enseignement en ligne**

### **3.2.1. Création d'un espace multidimensionnel d'études en ligne**

La création de cet espace repose sur l'utilisation d'une plate-forme principale synchrone, avec deux ou trois plates-formes supplémentaires ainsi qu'une autre pour la diffusion d'informations. Cette amicale techno-pédagogique participe à la valorisation de chaque plate-forme. Après le Covid-19, diverses plates-formes d'enseignement en ligne ont connu des améliorations notoires en matière de fonctionnalités, proposant ainsi une variété d'options pour l'enseignement à distance. Il est raisonnable de tirer profit de plusieurs plates-formes pour enseigner en ligne des langues étrangères tout en comparant leurs avantages. Concernant les cours en ligne synchrones, on peut employer Tencent Meeting qui permet grâce à la fonction de partage d'écran de présenter et d'expliquer les contenus de cours. Concernant la présence en classe des apprenants, l'application Chaoxing (超星) est un bon choix. Elle est équipée de fonctions pour soumettre ou corriger les devoirs, ce qui permet d'évaluer efficacement l'apprentissage des élèves. En ce qui concerne les ressources pédagogiques, recourir aux MOOC peut représenter une option intéressante pour offrir des ressources d'enseignement plus complètes et les partager (Wang Saihua, Wu Jiawei & Qu Yuhan, 2020).

### **3.2.2. Amélioration des capacités d'enseignement**

Tout d'abord, sur la base du respect des étudiants comme sujets d'apprentissage et de leurs capacités cognitives, les enseignants ont besoin de prendre l'initiative visant à s'approprier ce modèle d'enseignement en ligne. Ils doivent pour cela avoir conscience des implications d'un tel apprentissage chez les apprenants et les guider pour en maîtriser les outils et la portée. Ensuite, il faut que les établissements scolaires rationalisent les ressources pédagogiques, et conçoivent des cours adaptés à cette évolution techno-pédagogique qui puissent en explorer et en exprimer tout le potentiel. Enfin, les départements de gestion éducative devraient mettre en œuvre des formations pour les enseignants afin d'améliorer leurs compétences en matière d'enseignement médié par les TICE, puis sélectionner des enseignants compétents pour créer une série de cours en ligne de qualité. L'ambition ultime qui préside à l'amélioration de la littératie numérique enseignants tient à ce que la technique informatique ne soit plus un obstacle à l'utilisation des plates-formes en ligne. Ces compétences techno-pédagogiques renforcées chez le corps professoral rejaillira inévitablement et perfectionnera ses compétences professionnelles et socio-affectives globales, qu'elles se déploient dans le champ de l'éducation en ligne ou en présentiel.

### **3.2.3. Élaboration de contenus de qualité pour l'enseignement en ligne**

Il est essentiel d'avoir des matériaux pédagogiques pour élever la qualité de l'enseignement. Premièrement, il est important de choisir un contenu approprié d'enseignement en fonction de l'objectif pédagogique et de l'acquisition visé, en matière de compréhension orale, d'expression orale, de lecture, de rédaction ou encore de traduction. Le programme scolaire et le découpage pédagogique doivent tenir compte des différents niveaux des

élèves et d'une progression d'apprentissage, afin d'adapter l'enseignement aux apprenants. Puis, en ce qui concerne la diffusion globale des ressources éducatives, il faut résoudre les problèmes d'accès et de partage des ressources. Il est recommandé que la plateforme nationale d'éducation intelligente ajoute une fonction s'attachant à faire correspondre l'offre et la demande. Ainsi, les écoles auxquelles une demande de cours leur a été formulée peuvent s'y inscrire et réserver des cours en ligne, tandis que les écoles disposant de ressources peuvent proposer des cours de qualité de manière ciblée. De plus, les écoles et les enseignants lambda ont aussi la possibilité de fournir des cours spéciaux, ce qui permet de maximiser l'utilisation de ressources de qualité.

#### **3.2.4. Exploration d'un modèle interactif efficace en ligne et hors ligne**

Le processus d'enseignement en ligne exige une interaction bidirectionnelle. De ce fait, l'enseignant joue le rôle d'animateur au cours de l'enseignement, tout en motivant ses élèves. L'enseignant peut effectuer des tâches de pré-lecture et recommande des livres et des vidéos via la plate-forme MOOC ou WeChat, ceci afin d'améliorer les compétences de lecture des étudiants. Parallèlement, les étudiants peuvent aussi former des groupes d'études pour ancrer une bonne atmosphère d'apprentissage. De plus, il faut introduire des activités de communication basées sur des scénarios, des débats thématiques ou des présentations, pour que les apprenants puissent acquérir des compétences linguistiques, communicatives et socioculturelles par le biais d'une participation appairée ou collective. Après les cours, les connaissances des élèves sont testées par des examens écrits et des quiz pour consolider ce qu'ils ont appris.

#### **3.2.5. Construction d'un système d'évaluation pour un processus complet d'apprentissage**

L'enseignement en ligne devrait renforcer l'évaluation tout au long de l'apprentissage. Cela nécessite un nouveau système d'évaluation pour évaluer l'apprentissage des apprenants de manière objective, fiable et exhaustif. Le système d'évaluation durant le processus complet d'apprentissage est divisé en trois phases, à savoir l'apprentissage en ligne, hors ligne et l'examen final. L'apprentissage en ligne représente 40 % de la notation finale et examine la performance des étudiants en classe et après la classe, telle que la présence en classe, les devoirs rendus, l'interaction avec l'enseignant, etc. L'apprentissage hors ligne représente 20%, appuyé sur les statistiques fournies par les plates-formes, évaluant la durée de visionnage des cours enregistrés en ligne, la participation aux discussions et la complétion des tâches. L'examen final représente 40 %, évaluant les compétences des étudiants en matière de compréhension orale, d'expression orale, de lecture, de rédaction et de traduction.

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# Good Language Learners' Preferences for Motivational Strategies: A Focus Group Analysis

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## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate and explore the motivational strategies employed by good language learners and examine students' differences in using the most-highly used motivational strategies with respect to the gender of the participants. The procedures were done with participation of twenty male and female (10 male and 10 female) students majoring Teaching English Foreign Language at Islamic Azad University of Sanandaj, Iran. The researcher, having divided the students into two groups, used focus group interview. The researcher acting as a facilitator guided the groups based on a predetermined set of topics. The result of quantitative and qualitative investigations and calculations showed that the learners mentioned 158 cases of motivational strategies categorized into 17 factors. These factors were both integrative, such as engaging in problem-solving activities, enjoying success, positive attitudes towards L2 speakers as well as increasing self-esteem and instrumental, like finding job, getting higher degrees, and promoting in current work. Also, the most commonly cited factors from the most to the least included pursuing studies (12.7%), finding good job (11.4%), spending more time (10.1%), engaging in problem-solving activities (10.1%), and getting higher marks (9.5%). The difference between the five most frequently-used motivational strategies with respect to the gender of the participants who were good language learners showed that: a) female students were more motivated in learning English, b) as for finding good job, male students were more motivated to learn English, c) as for spending more time, engaging in problem-solving activities and getting high grades, the difference between male and female students was not significant.

Keywords: Motivational strategies; Good language learner; Group analysis

## I. Introduction

Traditionally, research on L2 motivation has focused on the social-psychological perspectives that create interest in learning and facilitate in sustaining it among which factors such as "integrative motivation" and "intrinsic motivation" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132) were more prominent. Later on, the impact of motivation was examined from cognitive psychology 40 perspectives and motivation was regarded as "intrinsic motivation" (i.e., doing something as an end in itself) and "extrinsic motivation" (i.e., doing something as a means to some separable outcome) (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.41).

Nevertheless, motivation, itself, has not been sufficient since there is also another aspect to motivation that every learner most likely has encountered at some point: Motivational strategies. Similar to research carried out on learning strategies, Dörnyei (2001) underscored the use of discussion and joint experience in raising learners' awareness of the strategies. As a matter of fact, it is rather difficult to theorize the motivational strategies. It can be taken as a driving force that energizes human behavior and orients it for better performance.

It has already been documented that motivation performs an effective role in second language acquisition. A sheer number of research explored L2 motivation, examining its complex nature and the way in which it influences the L2 learning process (Clément, 1980; Gardner, 1979; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ushioda, 2009, to name but a few). So there is a benefit to such sorts of research works because of linking theory to practice by transferring motivational theories into techniques and strategies that can be applied by EFL teachers in the classrooms. The present study set out to explore and examine motivational strategies from the perspectives of EFL student in the context of Iran.

During the last five decades, much research has been conducted in the field of L2 motivation and its relevance to the success in L2 learning (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1985). The primary studies of L2 motivation are influenced by the work of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), focusing on the social psychological approach. A key issue to this perspective is the view of L2 motivation as a determining factor which leads to L2 achievement. A noteworthy development in L2 motivation research occurred in the 1990s during which research in the field expanded to incorporate cognitive and educational views of L2 motivation (e.g., Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ushioda, 1996a). During this time, research into L2 motivation emphasized the teacher's role in motivating students as well as the importance of the learning environment.

Since the current study is to focus on the contribution of motivational strategies to good language learners, it should be mentioned that research in the area of characteristics of good language learners has been the home of choice for SLA researchers since mid-1970. According to Griffiths (2008), in conducting such research, both learning and learner variables should be taken into account. However, one topic that has not been touched in this domain is the relationship between the characteristics of good language learner and the use of motivational strategies. It is evident that good language learners are motivated students.

## **II. Background and Objectives of the Present Study**

One of the key factors to determine success in learning a foreign language is Learner's motivation. Motivation researchers suggested that motivational strategies that learners' motivation toward learning a foreign language can be effectively influenced by using teachers (e.g., Banya & Cheng, 1997; Dörnyei, 1994a; Fives & Manning, 2005; Stipek, 1996). In 2001, Dörnyei demonstrated the motivational strategies in his text, *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining, and protecting motivation and rounding off the learning experience (encouraging positive self-evaluation) are the groups of motivational strategies. Based on this idea, the concept of all these strategies is teacher behavior and beliefs significantly affect students' motivation for learning a foreign language. For this reason, an important aspect of motivation toward learning a foreign language is strategies in motivating language learners.

Therefore, motivational techniques have been constructed and summarized in several research studies for teachers in classroom application (e.g., Alison & Halliwell, 2002; Brown, 2001; Chambers, 1999; Williams & Burden, 1997). Moreover, several relevant motivational components into a multilevel are integrated by Dörnyei (1994a), motivational construct in second-language is based on understanding the second language motivation

from an educational view. He made a practical motivational strategy list based on these components comprised of thirty strategies for helping language teachers better understand what motivates their students in the second language classroom. The result shows that not only motivational strategies can influence learners' motivation, but also that teachers play significant roles to help learners establish self-confidence and achieve successes that can crucially influence motivation (Fives & Manning, 2005; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic, 2004).

Accordingly there is a severe lack of research on the determining role of L2 learners' motivational strategies in terms of the new perspectives of motivation including the social and cultural context of motivation in promoting good language learners. The problem lies in the fact that most of the students just focus on cognitive aspects and strategies to improve their English, and they underrate the role of emotional factors in their success. Likewise, research on L2 motivation deals with what makes a person want to learn a second language and what maintains him or her interested in learning. However, motivation to learn a second language is a complex construct, taking into account that language is always socially and culturally bound and hence, quite different from other school subjects (Dornyei, 2001). Particularly, to gain mastery over a L2 is also a social event that is unavoidably accompanied by some elements of the L2 culture.

The current study, as an initial attempt, tries to identify the motivational strategies that learners employ to function well in English language, and in so doing, focus group interview is the focus of this study to figure out the relevant data. Having identified the motivational strategies, the researcher explores the most influential strategies used by good language learners. What mainly prompted this study was the novelty of this particular area of research, that is, the relationship between motivational strategies and good language learner. Based on Vygotskyian Sociocultural theory of mind (1978), higher order cognitive functions are internalized from social interaction with more competent others. Therefore, using group discussion and interaction, finding out the strategies employed by learners who are successful in learning a second language would lead to better understanding of the strategies that play significant roles in learning. L2 motivation is needed to help learners expend and persist in their effort in an L2 learning process which might extend over a long period of time.

Therefore, this study investigates the motivational strategies which EFL learners use to promote their learning process in Iranian context. In particular, it considers the perceptions of EFL students about different motivational strategies. This definition assumes that teachers can apply some motivational strategies in order to raise learners' motivation.

## **2.1 Research Questions**

In order to examine the application of motivational strategies by successful L2 learners, the current study set out to provide answers for the following questions:

1. What factors do determine the motivational strategies employed by good language learners?
2. What is the frequency and order of importance of the motivational strategies employed by good language learners?
3. Are there any significant differences between motivational strategies and good language learners with respect to the gender of the participants?

The first research question of the present study mentioned above is a qualitative question; therefore, no research hypothesis is formulated for it. However, the following null hypotheses were formulated for the two quantitative questions (i.e., the second and third research questions) of the current study:

H02: There are no significant differences between motivational strategies and good language learners with respect to the gender of the participants.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The present study follows two theoretical frameworks to explore and examine the association between the motivational strategies and good language learners: 1) "Motivational strategies" proposed by Dornyei (2005)

and “characteristics of good language learners” suggested by Rubin and Thomspon (1983, cited in Nunan, 1999). The guidelines suggested by Dornyei (2005) are factors based on which the individual's goal-related behavior are promoted. The present study followed the guidelines proposed by Dornyei (2005) regarding the L2 Motivational Self System, including the following three components:

(1) Ideal L2 Self, which is the L2-specific facet of one's ‘ideal self: if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the ‘ideal L2 self’ is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

(2) Ought-to L2 Self, which concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. This dimension corresponds to Higgins' s ought self and thus to the more extrinsic (i.e. less internalized) types of instrumental motives.

(3) L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). This component is conceptualized at a different level from the two self-guides and future research will hopefully elaborate on the self-aspects of this bottom-up process.

Since the dependent variable in this study is good language learner, the present study also pays attention to the perceptions of good language learners regarding the reasons that they offer for their successes and their attributions for their successes. The theoretical framework that frames the characteristics of good language learners for the present study refers to Rubin and Thomspon' s (1983, cited in Nunan, 1999, p. 57) theory of efficient including the following features: 1) finding their own way, 2) organizing information about language, 3) being creative and experiment with language, 4) making their own opportunities, 5) finding strategies for getting practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom, 6) living with uncertainty and develop strategies for making sense of the target language without wanting to understand every word, 7) using linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language in mastering a second language, 8) letting the context (extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world) helps them in comprehension, 9) learning production techniques (e.g., techniques for keeping conversation going), and 10) learning different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

Therefore, The aims of the study were to 1) identify, analyze and categorize the motivational strategies employed by good language learners at Islamic Azad University of Sanandaj, 2) tabulate the frequency and order of the most highly used motivational strategies, and 3) investigate the association between motivational strategies and good language learners in terms of the most frequently-cited factors emerged from L2 learners' responses. The researcher tried to collect the relevant data regarding the major variables including good language learner characteristics as dependent variable, and motivational strategies as independent variable, and used relevant statistical procedures to carry out his research work. To conduct the interview, the researcher followed Semi-structured focus group interview.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants in this study were 20 male and female EFL students majoring in TEFL at Islamic Azad University of Sanandaj. To select the students, first, the researcher chose those students who were between 6th and 8th (junior & senior) semester since they have had enough experience of engaging with learning English language. Then, he went for those students whose average points met certain criteria, that is, they had the required mean score that was 16+ to confirm the sample homogeneity. Following this, the researcher distributed



Nelson Test of Proficiency to them and, finally, 20 students were selected based on their higher scores on the test. The students were willing to take part in the study and they were divided into two groups including 10 male and 10 female students. The number of students in each group was small enough to give everyone the opportunity to express an opinion and simultaneously, large enough to provide diversity of opinions. The researcher named the two groups as Group A (including male students) and Group B (including female students).

### **3.2 Instrumentation**

The major instrument used in this study was “focus group interview” to collect data from multiple individuals simultaneously.

The researcher used “semi-structured type of focus group” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 144) to conduct the research which is the most common format because it included three major questions (See appendix A) posed by the researcher rather than giving the participants freedom to discuss some broad topics.

### **3.3 Procedures**

To collect data for the study concerning the extent to which students employ the motivational strategies introduced by Dornyei (2001), the researcher, having divided the students in two groups, used focus group interview since a focus group is a group interview of approximately six to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interests. The researcher acting as a facilitator guided the group based on a predetermined set of topics. She created an environment that encouraged participants to share their perceptions and points of view.

The researcher held four sessions for each group separately in a quiet classroom and each session and since focus groups typically last about 60 minutes, she tried to pose the questions and leading hints in a way that the session did not last more than around 60 minutes. The researcher guided the group through the discussion and kept the group focused on the topics for discussion. She also asked one of her friends to act as the note-taker and recorder during the sessions. The note-taker was just an observer and did not interact with the group. The notes included a sense of what each person said; identifying how comments were said; and recording when transitions occurred from one topic to the next. She was also responsible for recording the focus group discussion. The recordings were then transcribed by the researcher to figure out and categorize the common themes elicited from students' responses.

To collect the data from students' response three alternatives were possible. Indeed, Focus group data can arise from one of the following three types: individual data, group data, and/or group interaction data (Duggleby, 2005). Focus group theorists disagree as to the most appropriate unit of analysis for focus group data to analyze (i.e., individual, group, or interaction). Some theorists believe that the individual or the group should be the focus of the analysis instead of the unit of analysis (Kidd & Marshall, 2000). However, most focus group researchers use the group as the unit of analysis (Morgan, 1997). The researcher of the present study also used the group as the unit of analysis since it also included the interaction between group members. The researcher believed that out of interaction themes arose that was more than the individual data. By doing so, the researcher coded the data and presented emergent themes.

The researcher provided a focus group guide for herself which included a series of questions and prompts to use during the interview sessions. She asked the relevant questions of the group and allowed time for participants to respond to each other's comments. The focus group guide served as a “road map” and memory aid for the facilitator. The same focus group guide was used for each focus group.

To analyze the data gathered from students' responses and interactions, the researcher first explored different techniques used to analyze the data. Indeed, the frameworks of Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) suggest several qualitative analysis techniques that can be used to analyze focus group data. Specifically, the

analytical techniques that lend themselves to focus group data are constant comparison analysis, classical content analysis, keywords-in-context, and discourse analysis (for a review of analytical techniques, see, for example, Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

The researcher of the present study made use of both constant comparison analysis and classical content analysis to analyze data. With reference to constant comparison analysis, she followed the three major stages of the constant comparison analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During the first stage (i.e., open coding), the data were chunked into small units. The researcher attached a descriptor, or code, to each of the units. Then, during the second stage (i.e., axial coding), these codes were grouped into categories. Finally, in the third stage (i.e., selective coding), the researcher developed one or more themes expressing the content of each of the groups.

With regard to classical content analysis, the researcher created smaller chunks of the data, placing a code with each chunk. However, instead of creating a theme from the codes (as with constant comparison analysis), with classical content analysis, these codes then were placed into similar groupings and counted. The researcher, first, identified whether each participant used a given code, then, she assesses whether each group used a given code, and finally, she identified all instances of a given code. The researchers not only provided information regarding the frequency of each code (i.e., quantitative information) but supplemented these data with a rich description of each code (i.e., qualitative information), which would create a mixed methods content analysis.

## **IV. Result and Finding**

### **4.1 Results from Focus Group Interview with Good Language Learners**

To explore the first research question, the researcher employed Focus Group Interview, following the guidelines proposed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) through which initially the researcher acting as a facilitator posed open-ended questions and closed-ended questions in English language and let students express their ideas while her friend acting as note-taker, wrote down the verbal and non-verbal communication data and she also recorded their voices using audio-tape recorder. The researcher finally came up with common themes employing the techniques of open-coding, axial-coding and selective coding to analyze data.

The researcher started the interview with demographic question as follows: Would you please introduce yourself one-by-one in brief to the group, and immediately asked the questions already constructed to follow a semi-structured focus group interview. Here are the questions and some common statements elicited from the two groups including Group A (10 male students) and Group B (10 female students).

#### **Question 1:**

1. Could you talk about the characteristics of a good language learner?

The group interviews obtained from transcribing the responses out of group analysis revealed the following findings:

#### **Group A:**

Good language learners have self-esteem and they are confident. They practice as much as possible. They try their best to learn in the classroom and concentrate on whatever they study. A good language learner participates actively in class discussion. Students should rely on themselves not the teacher and a good language learner should be competent in listening skills more than anything else. Moreover, good language learners attribute their success to themselves not significant others, and their success is the result of their effort not their intelligence.

#### **Group B:**

Good language learners are willing to attend the classes. They pay attention to details more. They think that a good language learner should speak fluently and has good accent. They write their homework well. They

should memorize vocabulary and grammatical points. They are more reflective than impulsive, reflecting on what they have learned and on their lectures. They like to be checked by the teachers and they attribute their success to significant others, not their own effort. They have good marks.

**Question 2:**

2. To what extent does motivation determine your success in learning English?

**Group A:**

Motivation is a key factor in successful language learning because if we have possessed motivation, we could put away the obstacles and always tries to learn more. When we are motivated, we spend more time to learn. A good language learner has a driving force and will not leave his studies if he finds the task difficult. When we see that we are developing, we expect ourselves to progress more and this is a good indication of having motivation. We not only study our lessons but also learn from outside textbooks and films.

**Group B:**

To a great extent, learning depends on our motivation. Motivation increases our desire to learn English and become successful learners. Sometimes, some students say that if I fail to pass the final test in this or that course, I will give up my studies. Or, there are students who say that what is the difference between getting 12 or 20? We believe that they have not enough motivation and they think about how much they get at the end of the term, but, we think about both how much we get at the end of the term and how much we learned from the course at the end of the term. We like to learn more vocabulary because we are interested in learning them. Motivation helps us enjoy our learning. Indeed, when the teacher or our family praises us, we feel happy and when we see our good course grades, we become excited.

**Question 3:**

3. What motivational factors do help you sustain in learning English?

**Group A:**

We like to promote in works (teaching in private institutes) in English language. Learning English language increases our self -confidence and we feel satisfaction, say, when we see that we are watching an original film and can understand the films. We like to find the answer to the questions ourselves when listening to a track and we like to have teacher but as a mediator who provides hints for us not giving the answer at once. Indeed, we like to engage in problem-solving activities. We do not need to have forces from outside to study; we are worried if we find a good textbook about English language skills or components unread. We also learn English language to continue our studies and find a good job. We like to go abroad and communicate well with other people through English language. Motivation increases self-esteem and self –efficacy. When we are motivated, we participate actively without worrying about our mistakes.

**Group B:**

We like to pursue our studies. We are studying with together and we have a calm environment and we support each other in our lessons and our homework. We learn better in classes where the teacher does not cause stress for us. When we speak in English like native speakers or we write an E-mail in English language, we feel happy. We have a positive attitude towards English culture and try to learn the good points from their cultures; for example, to be honest, to be frank, and to be lively. We like to learn both linguistically and non-linguistically, such as performing well on the tests and paying attention to cultural values. Moreover, educated people are expected to know English language.

#### **4.2 Frequency and order of motivational strategies**

To find an answer for the second research question, the researcher, first, made use of three stages of coding. He chunked the data into small units during the stage of open coding. Then, he attached a code to each of the

units, and these codes were grouped into categories during the stage of axial coding. Finally, the researcher developed one or more themes expressing the content of each of the groups in the stage of selective coding. In the last stage, these codes then were placed into similar groupings and counted. The number and frequency of the categories that motivated the students to learn English were tabulated by the researcher using Descriptive Statistics. Therefore, the first research hypothesis with regard to the frequency of motivational categories was rejected.

Altogether, 158 cases were elicited from focus group interview and they were categorized into 17 factors. The results from the SPSS Software for Windows version 21: 00 yielded interesting frequency. The most commonly cited factors included pursuing our studies (12.7%), finding good job (11.4 %), spending more time (10.1 %), engaging in problem-solving activities (10.1 %), and getting higher marks (9.5 %).

**The relationship between the most frequently cited motivational strategies and good language learners with respect to gender**

***Pursuing studies***

*Table 1: The number of cases pursuing their studies*

	pursuing studies		Total
	Mentioned	not-mentioned	
GenderMale	6	14	20
Female	14	6	20
Total	20	20	40

As displayed by Table 1, the number of cases for pursuing studies mentioned by males was 6 and by female were 14.

*Table 2: Chi-square test for pursuing studies*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.40a	1	.01		
Continuity Correctionb	4.90	1	.02		
Likelihood Ratio	6.58	1	.01		
Fisher's Exact Test				.02	.01
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.24	1	.01		
N of Valid Cases	40				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

To see if the difference between the two categorical variables is significant, we refer to the next table. The main value that should be checked in from the output is the first chi-square value which is presented in Table 3, headed Pearson Chi-Square. In the table, the value is 6.40, with an associated significance level of .00 (this is presented in the column labeled Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)). To be significant the Sig. value needs to be .05 or smaller, and in this case, the value of .01 is less than the alpha value of .05; thus, it is concluded that that the result is significant. This means that the difference between male and female students with reference to pursuing studies is significant; female students are more motivated to learn English language in order to pursue their studies.

***Finding good job***

Table 3: The number of cases for finding good job

	finding good job		Total
	Mentioned	not-mentioned	
GenderMale	12	6	18
Female	6	12	18
Total	18	18	36

The number of cases discussed by the good language learners for finding good job with reference to male students was 12 and the number of cases for female students was 6. Out of 20 students, 18 students mentioned it in their talks (See Table 3).

Table 4: Chi-square test for finding good job

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.0a	1	.04		
Continuity Correctionb	2.7	1	.09		
Likelihood Ratio	4.0	1	.04		
Fisher's Exact Test				.09	.04
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.8	1	.04		
N of Valid Cases	36				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

With reference to Table 5, the results demonstrated that the difference between the two categorical variables for finding good job is significant. The main value obtained from the chi-square is 4.00, with an associated significance level of .04. The significant value is .04 which is less than the alpha value of .05, so that it is concluded that the result is significant. This means the difference between male and female students with reference to finding good job is significant; male students are more motivated to learn English language in order to finding good job.

**Spending more time**

Table 5: The number of cases for spending more time

	spending more time		Total
	Mentioned	not-mentioned	
GenderMale	9	7	16
Female	7	9	16
Total	16	16	32

As shown in Table 5, the number of cases discussed by the good language learners for spending more time with reference to male students was 7 and the number of cases for female students was 9.

Table 6: Chi-square test for spending more time

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.50a	1	.48		
Continuity Correctionb	.12	1	.72		
Likelihood Ratio	.51	1	.47		
Fisher's Exact Test				.72	.36
Linear-by-Linear Association	.48	1	.48		
N of Valid Cases	32				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As for spending more time, the results demonstrated that the difference between the male and female students is not significant. Indeed, this time, the main value obtained from the chi-square is .50. The significant value is .48 which is larger than the alpha value of .05; thus, the result is not significant. This shows that both male and female students spend more time for studying appropriately in the same amount. This means that the difference between male and female students with reference to spending more time is not significant. This shows that both male and female students spend time for studying appropriately in the same amount (See Table 6).

**Engaging in problem-solving activities**

*Table 7: The number of cases for engaging in problem-solving activities*

	engaging in problem-solving activities		
	mentioned	not-mentioned	Total
Gender male	8	8	16
female	8	8	16
Total	16	16	32

As displayed by Table 7, the number of cases engaging in problem-solving activities mentioned by males and females was the same, that is, male students mentioned it 8 times and female students mentioned it 8 times.

*Table 8: Chi-square test for engaging in problem-solving activities*

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.00a	1	1.00		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.00	1	1.00		
Likelihood Ratio	.00	1	1.00		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.00	.63
Linear-by-Linear Association	.00	1	1.00		
N of Valid Cases	32				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Regarding engaging in problem-solving activities, the results showed that the difference between the male and female students is not significant. Indeed, this time, the main value obtained from the chi-square is .00. The significant value is 1.00 which is larger than the alpha value of .05; thus, the result is not significant. This means that the difference between male and female students with reference to engaging in problem-solving activities is not significant (See Table 8).

**Getting good grades**

*Table 9: The number of cases for getting high grade*

	getting high grades		
	mentioned	not-mentioned	Total
Gendermale	6	9	15
female	9	6	15
Total	15	15	30

The number of cases discussed by the good language learners for getting high grades with reference to male students was 6 and the number of cases for female students was 9.

Table 10: Chi-square test for getting high grades

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.20a	1	.27		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.53	1	.46		
Likelihood Ratio	1.20	1	.27		
Fisher's Exact Test				.46	.23
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.16	1	.28		
N of Valid Cases	30				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.50.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Regarding getting high grades, the results showed that the difference between the male and female students is not significant. Indeed, this time, the main value obtained from the chi-square is 1.20. The significant value is .27 which is larger than the alpha value of .05; thus, the result is not significant. This means that the difference between male and female students with reference to getting high grades is not significant (See Table 10).

### 4.3 Discussion

The results of the present study are mostly in line with previous research conducted in Iran (e.g., Dastgheib, 1996). Iranian people usually learn English in order to enter prestigious universities and thereby proceed to the highest levels of education and strata in their society (Sadeghi & Maghsudi, 2000). They also have a tendency to study English in order to live and study abroad and get access to rich resource as well as get familiar with cultural aspects of western societies (Tagughi, Magid & Papi, 2009). On the contrary, the results of the present study was not in line with what Matin (2007) found in the context of Iran. Matin (2007) examined the motivational characteristics of university students in Tehran. The results of the study indicated that the participants did not differ in terms of their general orientation to learn English. Indeed, the students were motivated instrumentally and had integrative forces. The knowledge promotion and employment were the highest and lowest factors on the instrumental scale, and interest in the English language ranked the highest and interest in English culture ranked the lowest on the integrative scale.

In sum, based on the findings of the present study and similar findings with regard to motivational forces in the context of Iran, it is obvious that good language learners tend to have prestigious social status in the classroom and in the society. Norton (2000, p. 10) refers to “investment” according to which learners invest in learning a new language so that they can improve their cultural perspectives, their conceptions of themselves and their desires for the future. Indeed, they want to improve their professional identity in the educational communities of practice.

## V. Conclusion

Based on the findings, major conclusions can be drawn from the present study. Firstly, the line research on motivational strategies in the past two decades is not country-specific because similar pattern has been found in some other countries like Hungary and Japan (Dorniyie, 2005). This confirms the fact that motivational research

has external validity. Secondly, the findings highlight the fact that both integrativeness and instrumentality are important to become good language learners in the context of Iran. Instrumentality can be classified into three major constructs including continuing studies and employment, and integrativeness can be classified into two major constructs entailing spending more time and problem-solving strategies.

The kind of data elicitation in this study was focus group interview based on which interaction and discussion between good language learners confirmed the content validity of the categories emerged and cultural differences were taken into consideration. Although the two groups selected for this study were homogeneous based on their proficiency, the findings revealed interesting facts regarding the gender of the participants. As an example, female students have greater tendency than male students to continue their studies. It is evident today in our universities that female students at MA and PhD levels outnumber male students; however, male students are worried about finding job because of socio-economic factors to be able to afford their future lives and for this reason, the male students outnumber female students in this respect. There are some shared discourses among the individuals, that is, everyone likes to spend more time and learn English better or have a good job. Motivation is the gate for expectancy of success for them, that is to say, those who see their progress, promote in learning since success increases motivation and self-esteem. A critical principle to the maintenance of motivational strategies is that motivation should emerge from the within, that is, from the learner rather than controlled by the teacher.

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# Motivational Inputs Received by Migrated and Non-migrated Students During Classroom Teaching in JNVS

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## Abstract

Objective of the present study is to observe the level of motivational inputs received by migrated and non-migrated students of JNVs during classroom teaching. In this research JNV Bilaspur was selected for data collection. Ten migrated students and ten non-migrated students were selected as sample. The self-developed Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students was used to measure the level of motivational inputs received by students in classroom teaching. The raw score obtained on Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students were converted to Z-Score for analysis. The results found that there is variation in the motivational inputs received by students during classroom teaching

Keywords: Motivational inputs; Migrated and Non-Migrated Students; Classroom Teaching; Z-Score

## 1.Introduction

Swami ji defines education as ‘the manifestation of the perfection already in man.’ The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realization of the infinite power which resides in everything and every-where existence, consciousness and bliss (satchidananda) (Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 from <http://www.esamskriti.com/essay-chapters/Education-in-the-Vision-of-Swami-Vivekananda-1.aspx>). Dictionary of Education (ed. Good) defines “Education as the aggregate of all the process by which a person develops ability, attitude and other of behaviors of practical value in the society in which people are subjected to the influences of a selected and controlled environment (especially that of school) so that they may obtain social competence and optimum individual developments”. (Seshadri, C. (1983). Teacher and the Education . New Delhi: NCERT. Page No.84) . This education is provided to the student through Formal learning, Informal learning and non-formal learning. (Source: A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, European Commission, Unit E-3, <http://www.irlgov.ie/educ/new/LifeLongLearninghtm.htm>). The National System of Education envisages a common educational structure. The 10+2+3 structure has now been accepted in all parts of the country. Regarding the further break-up of the first 10 years efforts will be made to move towards an elementary system comprising 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary, followed by 2 years of High School. Efforts will also be made to have the +2 stage accepted as a part of school education throughout the country (National Policy on Education, 1986 (Modified in 1992, pp.5). Broadly we can divide formal education in to primary, secondary and higher education. Secondary education is given through government school, Aided

school, unaided school, Private school, Public school, Kendriya Vidyalaya, and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. The National Policy on education, 1986, envisaged the establishment of Navodaya Vidyalayas in each district of the country. The Vidyalayas are fully residential coeducational institutions providing education from classes 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. Initially two experimental schools were established in 1985-86. These Vidyalayas aim at identification and development of talented, bright and gifted children predominantly from rural areas who may otherwise find it difficult to avail of good educational opportunities. The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are working on following objectives:

- To provide good quality education including a strong component of India's cultural heritage, inculcation of values, awareness of environment, adventure activities and physical education to talented children belonging predominantly to rural areas, without regard to their family socio-economic condition.

- To ensure that all students of JNV attain a reasonable level of competence in three language as envisaged in three language formula, and

- To serve, in each district, as a focal point for improvement in the quality of school education in general, through sharing of experience and facilities. (K.S., Saran (2004). "Navodaya Vidyalaya". Encyclopedia of Indian Education (Vol. II Page No. 1240). New Delhi : NCERT).

Navodaya Vidyalayas aim at inculcating values of national integration through migration scheme through which the inter-regional exchange of students between Hindi and Non-Hindi speaking States and vice-versa takes place for one academic year. Efforts are made to promote better understanding of the unity in diversity and cultural heritage through various activities. The Regional Language is generally the medium of instruction from Class-VI to VIII and from Class- IX onwards, it is English for Science and Mathematics and Hindi for Humanities subjects. Under the three language formula, the students learn regional language, English and regional language of migrated state. (Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 from <http://www.navodaya.nic.in/welcome%20sbs.htm>) Teacher teaches their student in class through various methods and during their teaching they give verbal and non-verbal motivation to their students. These motivational inputs given by teacher motivate the student and they concentrate on their study. These motivated studies also affect the student's achievement. Migration scheme in JNVs were introduced to foster national integration and to minimize the cultural gap. In this scheme the inter regional exchange of students between Hindi and Non-Hindi speaking States and vice-versa takes place for one academic year. Efforts are made to promote better understanding of the unity in diversity and cultural heritage through various activities (Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 from <http://www.navodaya.nic.in/welcome%20sbs.htm>). When student migrate from their Non-Hindi speaking States JNV to Hindi speaking States JNV, they met with new culture, food habits, environment and the most important the language. Language is the most important factor which connects the students directly to the teacher, students and local people of the JNV where they migrated. During academic activities, playground activities and in hostel they communicate with each other in local regional language. The students of non-Hindi background are not comfort freely in the local language. Although the medium of study in class ix is in English but teacher often communicate with their students in regional language. During teaching the teacher motivates their students for study and to get their answers. All teachers are expected to motivate students during teaching in classroom. So migrated and non-migrated students of class during classroom

teaching receive equal motivational input or not. There is any effect in receiving motivation due to different language and culture.

a) Is migrated and non-migrated students receiving equal motivational input during classroom teaching?

Researcher like Freeman, John and Klinger (2012) Heyman, GailD. And Dweck, Carol (2012)Yoshino, Asako (2012) De Freitas (2012) Kim, Kyung (2011) Rodgers and Summers (2008) Lens (2002) and Shim and Ryan (2002) in his study find that teachers provide motivational inputs at different level but they never demotivate their students and their motivational inputs affects students achievement, sometime students also perform through intrinsic motivation. So objective of the study is:

To study the level of motivational inputs received by migrated and non-migrated students of JNV during classroom teaching.

### 2.Research Hypothesis

After formulating the objective of study, researcher needs to formulate the hypothesis for the process of research. Basically scientific research which keeps scientific approach based on the hypothesis. These hypotheses are formulated on the basis of previous research reviews. Here researcher formulated following research hypothesis:

There is difference in the level of motivational inputs received by migrated and non-migrated students of JNV during classroom teaching.

**Method:** For the testing of hypothesis data has been collected through normative survey method which was followed by the researcher. The data analysis and their presentation are based on Z-Score value.

### 3.Sample and sampling

Purposive stratified sample has been selected in three levels. In first level JNV Bilaspur has been selected as a purposive sample in first phase which is shown in table no. 1

Table No. 1

No. of JNVs in Chhattisgarh	Purposive selected JNVs
16	1

In second phase researcher has classified the group of migrated and non-migrated students of class ix has been selected which is shown in table no. 2

Table No. 2	
JNV Bilaspur	Migrated student
	Non-migrated student

After dividing in to two group researcher has taken third level random sampling which has 10 migrated and 10 non migrated students which is shown in table no. 3

**Table No. 3**

No. of migrated students	No. of non-migrated students
10	10

**Tool:** Researcher developed Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students (CMISS) for the collection of data. This tool has been administrated on students for measuring the level of motivational inputs received by migrated and non-migrated students during classroom teaching.

#### 4. Analysis Procedure

The raw score obtained on Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students were converted to Z-Score for their analysis. Division of migrated and non-migrated students according to level of motivation inputs received in the Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students is given in table no. 4

**Table No. 4**

S.N.	Range Of Z- Scores	Level of Motivation	No. of Migrated Students	No. of Non-Migrated Students
1	1.43 $\sigma$ to 0.81 $\sigma$	Extreme	2	2
2	0.81 $\sigma$ to 0.18 $\sigma$	High	4	2
3	0.18 $\sigma$ to -0.44 $\sigma$	Average	2	1
4	-0.44 $\sigma$ to -1.07 $\sigma$	Below Average	1	2
5	-1.07 $\sigma$ to -1.69 $\sigma$	Lowest	1	3
Total	1.43 $\sigma$ to -1.69 $\sigma$		10	10

#### 5. Results

The raw scores of students were converted in to Z-Score. Out of ten migrated students 2 students were reported for receiving extreme motivation, 4 migrated students for high motivation, 2 migrated students for average motivation, 1 migrated student for below average motivation and 1 students for receiving lowest motivation among all 10 migrated students. Out of ten non-migrated students 2 non-migrated students were reported for receiving extreme motivation, 2 non-migrated students for high motivation, 1 non-migrated student for average motivation, 2 non- migrated students for below average motivation and 3 non-migrated students for receiving lowest motivation among all 10 non-migrated students.

#### 6. Discussion

The hypotheses formulated on objective were analyzed with Z-Score of migrated and non-migrated students obtained in Classroom Motivational Input Scale for Students and it was found that all migrated and non-migrated students were not receiving equal motivational input in the class. Out of ten migrated students 2 students reported for receiving extreme motivation, 4 migrated students for high motivation, 2 migrated students for average motivation, 1 migrated students for below average motivation and 1 students for receiving lowest motivation among all 10 migrated students. Out of ten non-migrated students 2 students reported for receiving extreme motivation, 2 non-migrated students for high motivation, 1 non-migrated students for average

motivation, 2 non- migrated students for below average motivation and 3 non-migrated students for receiving lowest motivation among all 10 non-migrated students.

## 7.Conclusion

On the basis of above findings it can be concluded that although it seems that all students receives equal motivational input during classroom teaching but in this research it was found that there was variation in motivational inputs received by migrated and non-migrated students. During classroom teaching migrated and non-migrated students were reported for receiving extreme motivational input to lowest motivational input.

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# **The Effects of Peer Feedback Based on E-portfolios on Chinese EFL Learners' Writing Performance**

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## **Abstract**

As an important link of process writing, more attention is increasingly paid to peer assessment feedback by teachers. With an aid of e-portfolios based on network and multimedia technology, the present study aimed to explore the effects of e-portfolios on peer assessment feedback and Chinese EFL Learners' Writing. Tests and interviews were used to collect data, which were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results revealed that: (1) E-portfolios could help students practice writing effectively and improve their writing performance; (2) E-portfolios could significantly enhance the quantity and quality of peer assessment feedback; (3) E-portfolios were easily accepted, used and shared with peers by students, and e-portfolios, in turn, could support the interaction and feedback between teachers and students during writing, which showed that e-portfolios significantly facilitated students' writing awareness and ability and peer feedback skills in the context of Chinese EFL Learners' writing performance. Instructional implications for portfolio implementation were offered.

Key words: E-portfolios; Peer feedback; Chinese EFL learners; Writing performance

## **I. Introduction**

It is generally agreed that L2 writing requires both linguistic competence and thinking abilities, among which language factors are very essential for writers. In addition to writer's own language factors, writing assessment and feedback, such as self-assessment and assessment from peers and teachers, are undoubtedly important ones, which can impel students to find their own strengths and weaknesses in learning, and stir up learning enthusiasm and self-confidence so as to enhance writing performance through assessment. In the past two decades, teachers have been trying to find ways to increase students' writing performance, and help them become not only better but more motivated, reflective writers, proactive in their efforts to learn, aware of their strengths and limitations and capable of incorporating feedback to improve their work.

Electronic portfolios (E-portfolios) based on network and multimedia technology lay the foundation for learners to build a new teaching evaluation system with its unique advantages. It combines students' learning and reflection under the environment of information technology so as to enable learners to think independently and innovate learning activities. However, few studies have paid attention to how e-portfolios can be used as an effective writing strategy to promote students' writing performance. For the sake of this, the present study is carried out in the context of Chinese EFL Learners' writing and attempts to contribute to the effects of peer assessment on writing performance.

## **II. Literature Review**



## 2.1 What are process e-portfolios?

With the development of science and technology, the electronic documents trying to replace or supplement paper archives has penetrated into every field in our daily life. As early as 1990s, e-portfolios emerged, which was an evolution of traditional paper-based format. A process portfolio is defined as a systematic and organized collection of evidence used by teachers and students to monitor growth of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes (Barrett, 2010). E-portfolios enable learners to review their learning processes and outcomes by self-reflection and assessments from others, and enhance learners' knowledge management ability through the way of information presented (Palmer et al., 2009). According to integrated learning, Peet et al. (2011) confirmed that e-portfolios enable learners to present and integrate knowledge from the perspective of integrated learning. In summary, using e-portfolios enables learners to acquire, integrate, store, and accumulate knowledge.

In the past, some related studies on e-portfolios mainly focused on e-portfolios verifying the personal qualities in the context of learning (Hickerson & Preston, 2006), or case studies on e-portfolios implementation in specific courses (Tochel et al., 2009). However, the current trend is moving toward implementing e-portfolios initiatives supported by the internet-based technology (Balaban et al., 2013), especially in the acquisition of foreign language skills. As a result, more attention is increasingly paid to the influence of e-portfolios by foreign language researchers.

## 2.2 E-portfolios and writing performance

English writing e-portfolios are created around a series of standards, learning objectives and learners' reflection, which is an integrated process, involving the reflection on the feedback information of peer or teacher assessment, the reflection on the creation and sorting of e-portfolios, and the rational reflection on English writing process. Creating e-portfolios is a record of learning performance of English writing and a objective summary of learning strategies adjustment, which can imperceptibly influence students' writing behavior and improve their writing proficiency (Gao, 2013). In addition, hyper-text links can provide students with various writing materials in time so that their writing can be well documented.

E-portfolios record the whole process of students' autonomous participation in English writing. Based on the writing requirements and assessment criteria, self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment are conducted, which offer all-round feedback so as to help students learn from each other to make up deficiencies. E-portfolios enable students to constantly learn about their own actual performance during English writing, which is conducive to timely summarizing learning experience and constantly making self-reflection, resulting in facing up to their learning attitude and learning methods, and improve their English writing proficiency. Meyer et al. (2010) conducted a comparative study between students using e-portfolios for writing and those who did not. Their results showed significant improvements in students' writing skills, specifically word choice, sentence structure and critical thinking, compared with those who did not use e-portfolios for writing, which were attributed to using e-portfolios. Undoubtedly, e-portfolios have a positive effect on writing performance.

## 2.3 Peer feedback and writing performance

There are many variants of peer assessment, but essentially it involves students providing feedback to other students on the quality of their work. Peer feedback is based on the cooperative learning theory which holds that the cooperative learning is the most effective learning model among cooperative learning, competitive learning and personal learning. By means of peer feedback, students can gradually transfer the knowledge and skills gained in the mutual assessment to their own writing. Olson (1990) conducted a study in which participants were selected from different classes, randomly paired, and then met with peer partners to respond to and revise

rough drafts each other. The results showed that peer feedback had significantly positive effects on students' narrative writing performance. Gielen et al. (2010) verified the effects of peer feedback and collective teacher feedback on personal writing performance. The results indicated that most students held an opinion that feedback from peers was in favor of facilitating writing skills, whereas less than 25% of students considered that offering feedback helped to stimulate their own writing process. The results of a similar study by Yu & Wu (2013) suggested that peer feedback could significantly contribute to the improvement of students' creative thinking in writing, and highlight the importance of cultivating students' critical thinking ability.

## **2.4 E-portfolios and peer feedback**

When using e-portfolios, learners do not only understand their learning, but demonstrate contents of their e-portfolios (Lorenzo & Ittelson 2005). This is similar to the intention of knowledge sharing. Peer feedback in e-portfolios provides a chance for learners to give suggestions for enhancing interactions among peers. This is similar to the intention of knowledge acquisition. Learners' knowledge innovation process can be found through presentation of artifact and self-reflective learning (Metz & Albernhe Giordan, 2010). E-portfolios could attribute to exchanging thoughts and learning feedback among learners, running through the whole learning process, and e-portfolios functioned as the main tools for collecting feedback, presenting learning performance and making further discussion each other.

To further facilitate and encourage this powerful and meaningful reflective learning through e-portfolios use, learners need to be aware of its benefits, as well as the challenges that learners may face in using e-portfolios as one of the alternative assessment methods. Liu et al. (2004) applied e-portfolios of peer feedback to graduate-level computer science course to probe into the roles of E-portfolios with the results that most of graduates enjoyed the peer feedback process based on e-portfolios, and appeared to make sure that offering feedback to peers would be beneficial. Barrett (2010) explored the application of e-portfolios in secondary education, which found that e-portfolios embodied a relatively higher level of interactive feedback, especially among peers. Peet et al. (2011) took the computer application course as an example, exploring the relationship between teacher assessment, peer assessment and students' self-assessment in the context of e-portfolios based on the Internet.

As shown above, the effect of peer feedback based on e-portfolios on writing learning is an under-researched topic. To the best of the author's knowledge, there is no systematic, empirical evidence from research examining the association of e-portfolios with writing performance and peer feedback in Chinese EFL Learners. Therefore, the current study attempts to seek answers to the following research questions:

- 1) How does e-portfolios implementation affect Chinese EFL Learners' writing performance?
- 2) To what extent can e-portfolios affect peer assessment feedback?

## **III. Methodology**

### **3.1 Participants**

Sixty-five non-English major undergraduates from 5 intact classes in a national key university in south China participated in the current study, 34 of them male and 26 female (with 5 missing values for the gender). The present study used quota sampling to keep an approximate balance between the number of participants from the science and engineering programs and the liberal arts programs. Consequently, the 31 science and engineering students were sampled from programs of civil engineering and software, while the 29 arts students were from programs of history, politics and journalism. All of them were admitted into undergraduate programs

in 2009.

## **3.2 Procedures**

### **3.2.1 E-portfolios creation in English writing**

The Wiki-based e-portfolios were created to record the progress of students' writing and feed information back to peers during writing. Chuang (2010) used weblog to support a learning portfolio, which were supported by current information and communication technology and used in the practical teaching. The Wiki-based e-portfolio was a learning platform specially created for writing practice, which was used as an e-portfolio tool. Students could get access to their own learning portfolios by clicking on the writing class Wiki. As Palmer et al.(2009) noted, the learning aspect of e-portfolios not only enhanced learners' knowledge management ability through the way of information presented, but enabled learners to review their learning processes and outcomes by self-reflection and peer feedback.

### **3.2.2 E-portfolios implementation in English writing**

During writing, students shared their writing with classmates by using e-portfolios so as to gain feedback from peers and teachers, and blend these feedback in revising their writing draft. With the aid of Wiki, e-portfolios could make it possible for students to upload and share information and asynchronously offer assessments to peers. In this case, students could conduct self-assessment based on the given standards and self-reflection, and set their own writing goals. The procedure was repeatedly done for six writing additional pieces in a semester, during which students were required to offer some simple or constructive feedback to their peers. However, the present study only focused on the peer feedback based on E-portfolios.

## **3.3 Instruments**

The quantitative and qualitative analyses were combined into the data of present study. The former consisted of pre- and post-tests of English writing performance, questionnaire on the function of e-portfolios whose results were used to understand and compare the improvement of students' writing performance and the function of e-portfolios prior to and at the end of the experiment, whereby the latter meant the interview with students, which was supplementary to the former.

### **3.3.1 Pre- and post-tests of English writing performance**

Students were pre-tested and post-tested with regard to their writing performance prior to and at the end of e-portfolios implementation. Materials used in the pre- and post-tests of English writing were selected from the national College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) in China from 2017 to 2019. The test results of English writing were used to examine Chinese EFL Learners' writing performance prior to and post e-portfolios implementation.

### **3.3.2 Questionnaire of e-portfolios implementation**

The present study employed a questionnaire which, in addition to personal background information, consisted of five-point Likert scales from "1"(totally disagreeable) to "5" (totally agreeable) to the participants (teachers and students) respectively. There were 20 items in the questionnaire, by which data collected were used to examine teachers' and students' attitudes to e-portfolios implementation during writing.

### **3.3.3 Peer assessment criteria and feedback forms**

A five-point scale, ranging from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong), was employed to evaluate students' writing performance. Then the score was transformed into a percentage score with maximum possible score (100) and minimum score (20). Students' writing was assessed by the following aspects: 1) paragraph structure; 2) body / conclusion; 3) subject-predicate agreement; 4) part of speech / collocation; 5) tense / voice; 6) spelling; 7) repetition / redundancy; 8) punctuation; 9) content / creativity; 10) Chinese expression.

Peer feedback could be divided into the simple feedback and the constructive feedback. The former only verified one or two minor errors in the writing draft and offering the general comments, whereas the latter often provided the positive assessment and put forward more than three suggestions for improvement.

### 3.3.4 Interviews

At the end of e-portfolios implementation, 8 students with different writing performance (4 with top performance and 4 with low performance) and 3 teachers were selected to make interviews face to face, each of which was done within 5 minutes. All interviews were videotaped, and then transcribed into the written version for the qualitative analysis.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Differences in writing performance between pre- and post-portfolio implementation

The quantitative analysis was employed to examine the effects of e-portfolio implementation on students' English writing performance. All students were pre- and post-tested with regard to their writing performance prior to and at the end of e-portfolios implementation, as shown Table 1. A paired-samples t-test showed that there were statistically significant differences between students' pre-test ( $M=58.38$ ,  $SD=8.76$ ) and post-test ( $M=70.42$ ,  $SD=12.56$ ) on writing performance ( $t(104)=-10.28$ ,  $p<.01$ ), which indicated that there was a certain positive correlation between using e-portfolios and students' writing performance over time, meaning that e-portfolios implementation contributed to effectively practicing students' writing so as to improve their writing performance.

**Table 1 Students' writing scores of pre- and post-tests (n=60)**

Test	M	SD
Pre-test	58.38	8.76
Post-test	70.42	12.56

### 4.2 Effects of e-portfolios on peer assessment feedback

#### 4.2.1 The descriptive statistics of peer feedback

**Table 2 The descriptive statistics of peer feedback**

Essay	n	M	SD
E1	55	4.76	3.06
E2	124	5.08	3.88
E3	98	3.40	4.40
E4	43	6.73	2.44
E5	113	9.15	5.53
E6	71	3.91	0.20

The descriptive statistics of students' peer feedback as this was reflected in the number of their comments showed that students continued to use e-portfolios over time, offer peer feedback actively, identify errors in peer essays gradually, and provide suggestions for improvement.

#### 4.2.2 The quantitative analysis of peer feedback

The quantitative analysis of peer feedback assessment showed that the contents of peer feedback had gradually been improved, especially in the first four weeks of implementation. In the first two weeks, 85% of

peer feedback were defined as the simple feedback. After eight-week implementation, this percentage was dropped into 31%, whereas the percentage of assessment based on the constructive feedback climbed to 59%. In addition, during the middle period of implementation (6-12 weeks), the constructive feedback exceeded the simple feedback.

The above analysis showed that students could better provide the constructive feedback and suggestions to their peers during implementation. However, during the last four weeks of the semester (13-16 weeks), the constructive feedback assessment was decreased, while the simple feedback was increased. One possible explanation might be that approaching to the end of the semester, students were less enthusiastic with peer feedback and unwilling to spend time in providing positively constructive feedback. However, the positive effect of peer feedback assessment became increasingly significant over time because students would actively spend time in identifying errors and communicating with their peers, and be simultaneously concerned the expression of feedback assessment.

#### **4.2.3 Findings from students' interview on e-portfolios and peer feedback**

The students' interview on e-portfolios and peer feedback analyzed qualitatively indicated that students laid great value on peer feedback during writing practice. Haughton & Dickinson (1989) found "a relatively high level of agreement between the peer assessments and the marks given by the lecturers (p128)" in their study of a collaborative post-writing assessment. Fulcher & Davidson (2007) verified that peer feedback might improve students' critical thinking ability. A similar study conducted by Shute (2008) indicated that peer assessment had a more positive effect on students' writing performance than feedback from teachers. The findings from students' interviews in this study showed that peer feedback could contribute to motivating students to revise their essays during writing practice, and create more opportunities for interaction and cooperation, which were key factors to improve students' autonomous learning. At the same time, peer feedback can also improve learners' reader awareness, strengthen learners' self-awareness and identity in the writing process, make it easier to find their own mistakes in writing, and be willing to accept peer evaluation and modification so as to improve the quality of writing.

The collaborative learning theory holds that the cooperative learning is the most effective learning model among the three learning models: cooperation, competition and individual, while peer assessment feedback is a form of cooperative learning model. Feedback collation was the most effective link, and often neglected by students in the context of English writing, which further facilitated and encouraged students to conduct the powerful and meaningful reflective learning from the multiple perspectives. In general, students believed that e-portfolios helped record the whole process of their participation in English writing, which encouraged students to participate in the whole process of language learning, and to be aware of individual progress. In addition, by means of e-portfolios, students could learn from each other, which was conducive to summarizing experience in time, constantly self reflection, facing up to their learning attitude, learning methods, and improving their enthusiasm in writing learning practice so that they could gradually transfer the knowledge and skills achieved to their own writing practice. Although some students complained that feedback received from peers was not always helpful during writing practice, meaning that peers would often ask them to correct the spelling of words in cases when it was not ungrammatical at all, and feedback was sometimes repeatedly presented, which undoubtedly showed some shortness of peer assessment feedback, it is not problematic that peer assessment is a more effective learning tool than self-assessment when used appropriately.

The study result revealed that e-portfolios had a significantly positive effect on students' writing

performance, which reminds teachers that e-portfolios can be integrated into their instructions and enhance students' writing abilities. Students had more significantly positive attitude toward their writing after using e-portfolios than before, which was consistent with some studies stating that portfolios are a facilitator for writing behavior (Bozhko & Heinrich, 2011; Palmer et al., 2009; etc.). According to the reflection contents from the students, they expressed that Wiki-based portfolios with a function of knowledge accumulation were beneficial to their writing knowledge acquisition and integration. However, there were students mentioning the problem of Wikis posted on the Internet. The results can inform teachers and students focusing on knowledge storage and accumulation when using Wiki-based portfolios in the future can enhance students' knowledge assessment. Moreover, teachers should enhance activities of knowledge integration in order to facilitate the effect of e-portfolios on writing performance.

#### **4.2.4 Findings from teachers' interview on e-portfolios and peer feedback**

Findings from the qualitative analysis of the teacher's interview revealed that e-portfolio implementation made peer assessment feedback during English writing more operational. E-portfolios could cover the disadvantages of storage in traditional paper-based portfolios, enable students to review their writing processes and outcomes by self-reflection and assessments from others, and enhance their writing ability through the way of information presented. While using e-portfolios, students could further organize and systematize information in order to produce useful knowledge and improve writing behavior by collecting and presenting information with goals.

However, it seemed that students with high writing ability could really benefit from e-portfolios implementation rather than those with low writing ability because those with low writing ability often needed the extensive support from teachers to effectively participate in peer feedback groups. Moreover, as the teacher stressed, it was difficult for students with low writing ability to verify out problems from peer feedback and correct their writing errors, and it was, in return, not easy for them to assess peers' writing draft when offering feedback to their peers. Additionally, when students with low writing ability corrected the first draft once again, they had an inclination to make the same mistakes. Therefore, teachers were more concerned about how students with low writing ability dealt with feedback from peers, teachers, as a result, would spend much time in helping them deal with feedback from peers efficiently and provide correct feedback to their peers, whereas for students with high writing ability, teachers believed that they could find common mistakes in peers' writing draft and provide peers with the constructive comments. In conclusion, teachers stood by the ease of use of the e-portfolio tool and e-portfolios' affordances of peer feedback.

## **V. Conclusion and implication**

The present study explored the effects of peer feedback based on e-portfolios on Chinese EFL learners' writing performance. First of all, there was a positive relationship between e-portfolios implementation and students' changes of English writing abilities by comparing writing performance prior to and at the end of e-portfolios implementation. Secondly, analyzing peer assessment qualitatively showed that students' writing performance was improved over time, which suggested that peer feedback could contribute to students' English writing learning. In addition, e-portfolios could promote peer feedback, gradually verify peers' writing errors and appropriately offer the constructive feedback over time. Finally, as previous research has shown that students who received constructive peer feedback derived more learning benefits from peer assessment than those who receive low-quality feedback (Gennip et al., 2009).

As the analysis of the teacher interview showed, some students, especially those with low English writing ability, often repeated the same mistakes in their subsequent writing practice after receiving peer assessment feedback. Students agreed that e-portfolios could help improve their writing performance, and they had a more positive attitude towards peer feedback and objectively corrected errors in their own writing draft. More importantly, students' feedback skills to peers were improving over time, which showed that e-portfolios implementation was beneficial. A problem that students identified in their interviews was that feedback from peers was not always constructive, and in some cases it was repetitive, meaning that more than one student pointed out the same mistake, which might arise given the social context of peer assessment, such as a lack of trust in others as assessors. In short, e-portfolios were easily to be accepted and used by students during writing practice, and e-portfolios could, in return, promote interaction and feedback between teachers and students, which demonstrated the feasibility and effectiveness of e-portfolios implementation. This finding is in line with a study by Ash (2000), meaning that integrating technology into the learning process stimulates students to reach their full potential. In addition, teachers who were interested in promoting peer feedback might invest more time on e-portfolio implementation. In this study, the application of e-portfolio with Wiki as the carrier is greatly effective, but its usability and functionality in practice need to be improved. Peer assessment feedback is a revolutionary change in the actual educational practice, which can improve students' critical thinking ability in writing learning. However, how do different forms of feedback affect students' writing ability? How does peer feedback promote learners with low abilities to use feedback to modify their writing? These issues are worthy of being further investigated in the future research.

Undoubtedly, the present study also has some limitations. Students in the study used Wiki to create e-portfolios. However, there are many other types of tools for creating e-portfolios, such as FrontPage, Face-book, Twitter, and Web-log. Therefore, one of the limitations is that the study results may not be generalized to other types of e-portfolios. The differences in writing performance among different types of e-portfolios can be compared in future studies. In general, the larger the sample is, the more convincing the results of data analysis are. Another limitation was the small sample size (n=60), which affected the credibility of the research results to a certain extent. It was, therefore, not possible to assess whether learning gains would be attained for students who face severe learning difficulties. The findings cannot be generalized as they only apply for students and teachers who have similar characteristics as the ones who participated in the study.

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# Fostering a Community of Inquiry in Online Discussions

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## Abstract

With increased demands for online courses, instructors are challenged to facilitate discussions that promote critical thinking and mastery of content. Synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums are used to create a Community of Inquiry (COI) across four respective disciplines and areas: English as a Second Language (ESL), Teacher Education, Industrial Technology, and Human Resource Development (HRD). Understanding the benefits and limitations of each forum and their applications allows instructors to facilitate quality online discussions that foster development of social, cognitive and teaching presence.

Keywords: Community of inquiry; Online courses; Critical thinking; Cognitive and teaching presence.

## I. Introduction

The 21st century is characterized by new methods of communication, which have moved from letter writing to emails, texts, and social networking, that are inherent to U.S. college students. Virtual learning environments (VLEs) moved from instructor-driven to learner-customized environments through Web 2.0-based Internet platforms (Kompfen, Edirisingha, & Monguet, 2012). These online platforms foster collaboration between instructor and student allowing faculty and students to engage in critical thinking and deeper collaboration (MacKnight, 2000).

New technologies offer educators a variety of asynchronous and synchronous approaches; however, limited literature describes ways forums are used to develop a community of inquiry (COI) incorporating social, cognitive, and teaching presence necessary for higher order thinking and learning (Arbaugh, 2008; Mandernach, Gonzales, & Garrett, 2006). The purpose of this article is to explore the limitations, benefits, and applications of online discussion forums that provided different opportunities for developing a COI across four respective disciplines and areas: English as a Second Language (ESL), Teacher Education, Industrial Technology, and Human Resource Development (HRD).

### 1.1 Presence in an Online Forum

Based upon social constructivist theory, Garrison, Anderson and Archer's (2000) COI framework suggested that instructors consider three areas of student learning in online environments: cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. Social presence is how people socially interact within learning environments. Researchers need to "consider a host of new things related to social presence with continued blurring of boundaries between classroom and fully online courses as well as course bound communication tools (e.g., discussion forums)"

(Lowenthal, 2010, p. 21). Garrison (2011) defined social presence as “the ability of participants to identify with the group or course of study, communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop personal and affective relationships progressively by way of projecting their individual personalities” (p. 34).

Cognitive presence is the construction, exploration and confirmation of understanding through reflection and collaboration within a COI; and, “cognitive presence is defined in terms of a cycle of practical inquiry where participants move deliberately from understanding the problem or issue through to exploration, integration, and application” (Garrison, 2007, p. 65). Akyol and Garrison (2011) noted that “establishing and sustaining cognitive presence and deep approaches to learning in online and blended learning environments are dependent upon a dynamic balance of all the presences to support a collaborative community of inquiry.”

While social and cognitive presences are integral, a strong teacher presence is required for students to engage in higher-order learning necessary to gain competence in their fields of study. Teacher presence may focus on dialogue or discourse. Facilitation may support a dialogue “with minimal shaping of the course of the discussion. Discourse is disciplined inquiry ... [requiring] a knowledgeable teacher with the expectation that discourse progresses in a collaborative constructive manner and students gain an awareness of the inquiry process” (Garrison, 2007, p. 67). According to Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2010), the COI instrument provides a means to study the dynamics of online communities of inquiry, both among and within the presences (p. 9).

## **1.2 Asynchronous Platforms**

Asynchronous learning (on demand) forums are a popular means to foster course discussions when instructors and learners are in different locales. Advantages of using asynchronous discussion boards include students having additional time to create responses, and postings are less intrusive than real-time meetings (See Figure 1). The Academic Technology and Creative Services (ATCS, 2009) noted that “asynchronous discussions can be just as beneficial as traditional face-to-face discussions, if not more” (p. 1). Asynchronous tools help students with “reflective dialogue...making reflection an interactive, shared process rather than merely a solitary process and...facilitate[s] the constructivist method of reflective knowledge acquisition” (Bye, Smith, & Rallis, 2009, p. 843).

While asynchronous discussions allow students to engage in the reflective process, they also have disadvantages (See Figure 1). According to McInnerney and Roberts (2004), asynchronous activities may not facilitate the types of interactions necessary for discourse or “automatically become interactive and collaborative” (Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, & Chang, 2003, p. 137). Low social presence can be problematic in text-based asynchronous discussion forums, as miscommunication can occur whereby, “a learner’s connectivity and sense of belonging (relatedness) may be reduced, as may perceived competencies [reducing]...social interaction” (Giesbers, Rienties, Gijsselaers, Segers, & Tempelaar, 2009, p. 301). Research concerning asynchronous forms of communication has largely focused on students’ perceptions of their learning (Rourke & Kanuka, 2009). Therefore, it is important to provide examples across disciplines of how instructors use asynchronous discussion forums to create a sense of presence.

**Figure 1: Asynchronous Discussion Forums**

Platform	Description	Benefits	Limitations
Online Discussion Boards	Typically posted through a content management system (CMS) where boards contain threads that answer questions posed by an instructor.	Easy to use. Students respond before deadlines at their own pace. Students access discussion items and responses. Instructors may use the "post first" option for academic integrity.	Since postings can be made over a number of days or weeks, responses are not immediate. Messages may be misinterpreted.
Blogs	A forum or diary used as a means to dialogue with classmates.	A blogger can continuously update online blog page and others can make comments. Blogs can demonstrate the learner's growth over time.	Postings occur in chronological order, so grading can be difficult. Discussion can shift to the recent contribution topic.
Wikis	Website easily created allowing all interested users to contribute or edit pages.	Facilitates content creation and collaboration between members of the course or a group within a course.	Contributions can be deleted.
Facebook	Popular social platform that can be set up for a class or group with link posted in LMS.	Encourages collaboration and rapid status updates on various topics posed by instructor (or students).	Privacy issues; distracting.
Instagram	Visual social media platform allowing postings of relevant course content/learning.	Students can share images to document their learning in the course and add hashtags to make class postings easily searchable.	Visually distracting; responses may not be easily graded without hashtag.
YouTube	Platform for posted video creations.	Video is motivating and instructors can record videos; also, students can post a video privately and share URL with instructor and/or class members who can comment.	Privacy issues; distracting.
Twitter	Online social blogging platform; enables users to read and send short messages.	Increases participation; supports learning between class sessions; documents learning.	Privacy issues; distracting; limited length of messages; may not be easily graded without hashtag.
Pinterest	Online social platform enabling users to save images to online pinboard.	Users can visually share, curate, and discover new interests and document learning.	Copyright infringement; distracting, time-consuming.
LinkedIn	World's largest online professional social networking site.	Users collaborate and can share their learning or new resources using class hashtag for commenting/grading.	Privacy issues; time consuming.

### 1.3 Asynchronous Forums in Practice

#### *Wikis, Blogs, and Discussion Boards*

One example of using multiple asynchronous platforms occurred in an undergraduate ESL course beginning Spring, 2012. Students used online discussion boards, blogs, and Wikis to discuss basic course concepts. Students were provided online tutorials within a learning management system (LMS) and from the instructor. Timelines for online postings were essential; misconceptions were reduced or eliminated by requiring frequent postings by students to an online discussion board. The students clarified posts for their classmates and discussed basic content knowledge from the course.

With the use of blogs and Wikis, students discussed the course content in regards to real-life applications, and they shared resources with one another. As online discussions moved from theory into practice, a sense of *cognitive presence* evolved. The discussion board, blog and Wiki activities necessitated advanced planning and modeling by the instructor through ongoing posts to ensure learning moved from discussion to discourse. *Instructor presence* facilitated deep, meaningful discourse. Limitations existed for the platforms: Blogs, posted in reverse order, were time-consuming to grade, while the Wikis were easily deleted or edited by others.

#### *Flipgrid Video*

Purchased by Microsoft in 2018, Flipgrid is a free video-based discussion platform where students record short, authentic videos from 15 seconds to five minutes in length. An instructor teaching a graduate level educational technology course created a grid, posted a topic specifically concerning the use of digital distractions, and shared the specific URL grid link with the class. The students clicked on the link, read the prompt, recorded and reviewed their video response, and submitted their video to the grid. The students in the course were able to watch all of the posted videos and provide feedback to one another. Students were also able to download the videos and add stickers, selfies, and drawings to their posts. The instructor tailored the assignment by adding a custom assessment rubric for the assignment in addition to providing private, individual video feedback to each student. Flipgrid moved learning beyond a traditional discussion post by giving students a voice in a more engaging way.

#### *Pinterest for Creating Community*

Higher educators have utilized Pinterest to build community in a number of ways. For example, the institution can connect with prospective and current students and alumni to tell the institution's story through visual media (Lytle, 2012). In addition, DeLello and McWhorter (2014) examined Pinterest as a virtual community of practice (VCoP) in online courses and they found it facilitated unique ways for communicating through visual social media and also promoted student learning on the curation of relevant information. However, due to its visual nature, it was found that Pinterest can also be distracting to students so higher educators are encouraged to post the URL for the course Pinboard along with focused written instructions to direct student efforts for collaboration only within the designated course space so that they achieve expected learning outcomes.

#### *Social Media in Higher Education*

Three popular social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, provide spaces for interaction and social presence. According to a recent Pew Research Center publication (Smith & Anderson, 2018), Americans ages 18 to 24 are likely to use social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter. Palmquist and Barnes (2015) noted that "Facebook allows groups to share information, documents, videos, music and more or to chat asynchronously or synchronously easily... ideal and necessary conditions for a community of practice" (p. 95). In addition, research that is more recent suggested that Facebook groups could increase student

engagement and remove many of the barriers associated with the lack of face-to-face interaction with their instructor and fellow classmates (Hall, Delello, & McWhorter, 2017).

**Examples of Asynchronous Social Media Discussions**

One undergraduate online HRD class during Summer, 2012 utilized closed (private) Facebook Groups for teams to collaborate asynchronously while working on a project. Likewise, the class used Twitter to continue conversations in-between classes (Bozarth, 2010). The instructor posed a question-of-the-day, tweeted reminders, and offered web-links to supplemental resources. In an HRD capstone course in Fall 2016, LinkedIn provided a professional way to network with experts (HR professionals) and develop their professional brand. Students explored the LinkedIn Help Center (<http://help.linkedin.com>) for advice. The class found open discussion groups where experts and organizational members responded to key topics. Students joined discussions, kept abreast of trends, and added their voice to conversations, increasing their marketability (McWhorter & Delello, 2016).

**1.4 Synchronous Forums**

With the advent of new technologies, synchronous discussion forums are increasingly available to educators. Synchronous discussions allow users to communicate with one another in “real- time” through mobile devices, instant messaging (IM), screen sharing, videoconferencing, and face-to-face discussions with the convenience of distance education. Synchronous discussions reduce frustration that students may feel when waiting for responses during asynchronous communications.

Numerous advantages of using synchronous discussions for online learning have been documented in the research. Park and Bunk (2007) remarked “Synchronous communication has a great potential to increase individual participation and performance” (p. 245) while enhancing social interaction within online courses (McInnerney & Roberts, 2004). However, several disadvantages were noted. Not all students have the software, hardware, or bandwidth necessary to connect with classmates. Finkelstein (2006) said, “Most tools that transmit audio or video on the Web will have some degree of latency—a delay between the time something is actually said or done to the time those words or images arrive for remote participants” (p.143). Time zones may hinder participation, and many synchronous platforms are costly creating institutional limitations for use (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Synchronous Discussion Forums**

Platform	Description	Benefits	Limitations
Instant Messaging	Typically posted through a learning management system (LMS) such as Canvas, Facebook or Blackboard.	Easy to use. All students have access. Notification when peers are online.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements. Students must enroll in service.
Skype	A forum used as a means to dialogue with classmates.	Allows for face-to-face conversations across distance. Can be used with audio or video. Students can also use it to instance message.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements. Students must enroll in service. Subscription for video conferencing with 3 or more users.
Adobe Connect	A web-based platform for online conferencing and webinars.	Facilitates collaboration between members of a class or group. Allows for screen sharing.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements. Time limitations; costs involved for institutions. Difficult to monitor with large groups.

Collaborate and Zoom	Web conferencing tools that allow faculty to synchronously communicate online with students anywhere in the world.	Allows for audio and video screen sharing. Features include public/private chat and instant messaging. Sessions can be scheduled and recorded.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements. Students engage in off-task conversations. Difficult to monitor with large groups.
Chat	Typed messages sent to another user's computer. Twitter is one platform that allows for asynchronous and synchronous chats.	Conversation happens quickly and informally. Short phrases are normally used.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements. Requires typing. Students may have difficulty finding chats taking place online or some chats may be too fast paced.
Second Life	A platform in which an avatar is created to move about in a virtual world.	Supports a wide variety of communication channels, including text, chat, voice, document sharing, and mind mapping in fun, gaming environment. Free if sharing learning spaces.	Software, hardware, and bandwidth requirements; steep learning curve for many students and faculty. High costs associated with owning space (region).
Google+ Apps Hangout	A multilingual social networking service	Connect with any device and you can share screens or customize your screen with special effects.	Software, hardware and bandwidth requirements; can only video chat with up to 10 people and no recording option.

### 1.5 Synchronous forums in practice

In the past decade, with the advent of video conferencing platforms (i.e. Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting), online courses have gotten very popular because they save costs in travel time, fuel costs, and impact on the environment. To combat the paucity of student engagement in online courses, instructors have been adding synchronous activities that are relevant to online students (Palloff & Pratt, 2013; Bennett & McWhorter, 2017). One such activity held is real-time group meetings (RTGMs) defined by McWhorter (2018) as “a synchronous meeting facilitated by technology” (see McWhorter, Helfers, & Consalvo, 2018). These RTGMs can be held through various platforms such as video conferencing (i.e. Skype.com; Zoom.us; GoToMeeting.com), social media synchronous meetings (i.e. Facebook chat, Twitter Group chats) or virtual worlds (i.e. SecondLife.com).

#### *Twitter*

One social media platform that is increasingly used synchronously in higher education is Twitter. Twitter, a microblogging tool, allows users to tweet or retweet messages of up to 280-characters with additional images or videos. Twitter allows for a synchronous conversation or chat to take place in “real-time” around one unique hashtag, a type of metadata that contains the prefix sign #, used to organize topics or find followers with similar interests. Recent research in a teacher education course disclosed how synchronous Twitter chats enhanced students’ social presence in a virtual environment, improving the learning experience and providing students with new ideas for professional growth (Delello & Consalvo, 2019).

#### *Collaborate*

An example of incorporating a synchronous platform occurred in an undergraduate Total Quality Management (TQM) course within an Industrial Technology program from the Fall, 2010 to Spring, 2013. Prior to the first meeting, students received an email explaining how to access Blackboard Collaborate. The first class meeting lasted about 45 minutes and introduced the course. Collaborate allowed students and instructor to communicate for setting weekly meeting times to discuss course content, presentations, and other pertinent information. In addition, the instructor used Collaborate as a review portal for exams by organizing sessions and asking questions through video conferencing and instant messaging (IM).

Collaborate was used similarly in an ESL education course, except that the instructor required all students to connect at a specific time. Students entered separate chat rooms for group activities; the screen sharing option allowed the instructor to share documents and conduct presentations as necessary. One disadvantage (See Figure 2) of the Collaborate session occurred when students engaged in “sidebar” conversations that were distracting to classmates. Also, when used with a large group, sessions became difficult to moderate while some students were typing comments and others were voicing comments. However, both cognitive and social presence were established as discussions encouraged reluctant students to ask questions; and, it supported collaboration within a culture of respect, allowing for a deeper understanding of the material.

The students used IM through the CMS to discuss assignments and connect to the instructor for virtual office hours. The CMS allowed the IM system to convert to a Collaborate session, which permitted screen sharing and white board applications with individuals or small groups.

IM helped establish the teacher presence, further developed through online chats and Collaborate class sessions. In addition, the students were able to discuss their applications of the theories and clarify misconceptions, building cognitive presence. However, one issue at the beginning of the ESL course was some students’ unfamiliarity with the technology. Once the students gained understanding, they discovered applications beyond what the instructor planned, including virtually connecting with students in other classes.

### ***Zoom***

During the fall 2018 semester, an undergraduate industrial materials course utilized the video conferencing tool Zoom. Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing software that integrates real-time messaging applications, allows for audio and video content sharing, and enables session recordings. Zoom was used to synchronously lecture to two course sections at the same time. One section was taught face-to-face at the university campus; the other section was located 40 minutes away at a community college. The use of Zoom allowed the satellite section to interact with the face-to-face section in real-time. Both groups were able to ask the instructor questions, complete tests, and have open discussions pertaining to the subject matter, promoting a sense of collaboration/social presence between the student groups.

### ***Adobe Connect***

Globally, students connected with face-to-face students through the web conferencing software Adobe Connect (AC). One Saturday per month, paraprofessionals engaged in professional development activities while collaborating with specialists from a variety of backgrounds. Using AC, students had meaningful conversations on topics ranging from school law to classroom management. The instructor promoted a COI by assisting student-to-student discourse. Students heard how schools globally dealt with educational issues, asked important questions and made valuable connections with peers as well as professional educators. When using platform tools such as AC, the instructor must consider time zones as several students were meeting during the day while others were foregoing sleep to meet at night; further, not all learners had access to high-bandwidth necessary to stay connected to peers and required frequent re-connections. In addition, AC has been utilized as an option in

online courses for RTGMs and was found to be useful for connecting graduate business students synchronously to discuss various business concepts in the course and the students overwhelming reported value in discussing their experiences with peers in real-time (see McWhorter, Helfers & Consalvo, 2018).

### ***Second Life***

The 3D space of Second Life (SL) provides a sense of presence and immersion (feeling of being in same location) that some instructors and students find more compelling than traditional venues (Texas A&M University, 2009). Real-time interaction occurs through the use of an avatar (on- screen character) and voice and text chat. During the 2011-12 school year, a 3D safety laboratory (built from digital images of a working lab) was constructed as a prototype to explore the emerging field of Nanotechnology (McWhorter & Lindhjem, 2012). Instructor and students toured the virtual lab (see <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rochells/32621591778/in/dateposted-public/>) interacting at safety stations such as adding safety goggles, respirator mask, and lab coat to their avatar. SL creates a 3D space allowing movement, experiential learning, customized content creation such as adding school logo and familiar buildings, and real-time group meetings (RTGMs) with instructor and students (McWhorter, 2009; 2010).

### ***Google Applications***

Cloud based platforms such as those provided by Google' s G Suite for Education, which include Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Drive (see Hayes, 2017) and Google Hangouts Meet, allowed students to collaborate in real time from geographically diverse locations in a teacher education classroom. As part of a blended synchronous-asynchronous environment, such tools from the G Suite allowed students to work with one another on a class podcast project, provide simultaneous peer feedback, and review their shared document before submitting the assignment. Google Hangouts Meet also allowed the students to use a virtual platform to communicate through video, chat, instant messaging, or phone discussions as needed in order to discuss their work.

## **II. Discussion and Conclusion**

Today's technology provides instructors with a variety of platforms to use to create a COI. When making a decision about the appropriateness of a forum, consider the following recommendations:

- Choose forums that foster a COI
- Train students and ensure they have the technology necessary for the platform
- Multiple forums may be appropriate for one course
- Consider advantages and disadvantages of forums
- Keep high expectations and a strong teacher presence to ensure students meet learning outcomes.

In four distinct disciplines, instructors utilized different online discussions forums to create a COI that promoted cognitive, social, and teaching presence. While limitations existed for each forum, the instructors carefully chose the appropriate forums for their disciplines and planned discussions within the COI framework to ensure that online discussions were meaningful, customized, and promoted critical thinking and deep collaboration.

### **Endnotes**

[1]This article updates and extends previous study published in Academic Exchange Quarterly. See Delello, J. A., Everling, K., McWhorter, R. R., & Lawrence, H. (2013, June). Fostering online discussions. Academic Exchange Quarterly, 17(2).



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# **The Effect of Teachers' Individual Verbal Feedback and Praise of EFL Learner's Achievements**

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## **Abstract**

Teachers use different methods to enhance students' motivation and hence their achievements. One method is giving individual verbal feedback and praise which is used to encourage students and provide remediation. This study aimed to explore the effects of teachers' verbal feedback and praise on students' achievements. A pre-post test was used as the research tool and two groups of female students participated in this study (N=30) under two conditions: no feedback, feedback and praise provided by the instructor. The findings showed that teachers' verbal feedback and praise had a significant positive impact on the learners' motivation and hence their achievements. As a result of giving feedback and praise to the students and their effects on motivation and achievements, it can be argued that the more motivated students are, the more and the better they will learn. This study has implications for instructors, learners and researchers especially in Iran both to do more serious researches on the teachers' perceptions as the most involved actors of Foreign Language Teaching regarding various aspects of feedback, motivation and their roles in language teaching and to make changes in the manner of feedback giving and even the method of teaching English.

Keywords: Individual verbal feedback; Motivation; Praise; Achievement

## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The enhancement of student motivation and interest is an issue of major concern and focus to most teachers and education researchers. Educators are often concerned about the low motivation level of students in learning a second language. As reviewed by Dörnyei (1994a, 1994b, 2001a, 2001b), there are motivation strategies teachers can adopt in a language classroom. One of the effective motivational teaching strategies is the provision of motivational feedback and praise by teachers.

The present study arises from our own experiences in working with English teachers in secondary schools and English Institutes in Jahrom, Iran. Over teaching career, the researchers had an ideal opportunity to work in different schools and English Institutes with students of different backgrounds and levels, but most teachers from these different schools and institutes indicated that they faced similar problems with learners having low level of motivation and interest. Teachers were concerned that their students had little interest and motivation in class, failed to remember completely or partially what their teachers had taught, performed poorly academically and had little or no desire to improve. From our teaching experiences and observations of other teachers' practices, the researchers felt that motivation was a wide area of concern that had considerable impact on the students' learning outcomes. A comprehensive understanding of learners' motivation could make a significant

contribution to the educational field. This study was designed to investigate how teachers can improve students' motivation and hence their achievements in learning English through more effective verbal individual feedback and praise. Since class assessment and class participation are carried out each session regularly and continuously, the researchers saw them suitable vehicles for exploring teacher feedback in Navid English Institute.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In the realm of education, many variables can affect learning and determine whether instruction will be effective or not. Many of these effective factors are related or intertwined with one another. One of the most critical pieces of the educational puzzle is motivation. If students are not motivated enough to learn, they are unlikely to learn, and there is little chance that instruction will be effective.

Verbal individual motivational feedback as an immediate and direct response to student academic performance is one of the most powerful classroom interventions that teachers can use to foster learning and improve student motivation and achievements. Effective feedback plays an important role in motivating further learning as it informs learners about the degree of their learning or their needs for improvement (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). Effective feedback is essential for improving both teaching and learning. It enables the students to close the gap between the actual and the desired performance. (Carless, Joughin & Lui, 2006 as cited in Lee, 2007).

Praise is also considered to have beneficial effects on learners' motivation and performance. One group of researchers and teachers claim that normally a feedback message of praise increases motivation and leads to improvement in learners' performance (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Dev, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Some researchers state that feedback which contains praise can be more effective since it causes a positive affective reaction, which is often linked to increased motivation and higher goals (Delin & Baumeister, 1994; Ilies & Judge, 2005).

The researcher hopes the results of this study would provide educators and language teachers in Iran with evidence concerning the effectiveness of teachers' motivational verbal feedback and praise in L2 classes.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

The concept of motivation within educational systems has been studied for many years. The domain of educational motivation is a continually evolving area of thought; therefore, the viewpoints regarding the significance of motivational factors within the educational realm are continually changing. To be able to provide the most suitable and best suited instruction for learners in each of the domains to be explored in this study, instructors, curriculum designers, and student advisors must understand the motivations of the students they teach. In addition, these professionals should be provided with contemporary, research-based and reliable information about relationships among motivators and specific academic ability domains. Effective individual verbal feedback and praise as two important motivational factors can take a great part in this regard.

## **II. Review of Related Literature**

Based on Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent with regard to aspects of one's performance or understanding. The present study focuses just on teacher feedback. According to Black, and Wiliam (1998) having a desired aim is one of the three essential elements in feedback: 'When a learner is trying to learn, feedback about the effort has three main elements: recognition of the final goal, evidence about the present position, and clear understanding of a way to close the gap between the two situations' (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p.141). To close this gap, students need to improve their knowledge and receiving enough constructive feedback is the means to this goal. They strongly stress the significance of feedback to students to improve their current performance.

The following discusses two kinds of feedback and their effectiveness. They include ‘traditional’ feedback and dialogic feedback.

## **2.1 ‘Traditional’ teacher feedback-giving practice**

‘Traditional’ refers to a summative method of feedback delivery by teachers where feedback is from time to time and only given at the end of a summative assessment, in a written form on the report card.

In ‘traditional’ feedback-giving, teachers often perceive feedback as a simple acquisition process. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) state that, feedback is often conceptualized by teachers as a transmission process where ‘they ‘transmit’ feedback messages to learners about what is right or wrong in their academic work, about its weaknesses and strengths, and learners use this information to make improvements’ (p.200). As a result, feedback delivery is mainly controlled by and seen as the responsibility of teachers, so undermining the active engagement of students.

These basic arguments against the sole use of point scale without appropriate descriptors can pave the way for a detailed discussion of the use of other sorts of feedback in the next section. They include constructive feedback – feedback with suggestions, and evaluative feedback, which are discussed more in the section that follows.

## **2.2 The process of conducting dialogic feedback**

Most criticisms of the ‘traditional’ way of feedback-giving have given teachers deep insight into what makes educator feedback more ‘constructive’ and effective. As proposed in the previous section, the two-way dialogic feedback is always more effective and motivating than the ‘traditional’ way of feedback-giving practice. The sections that follow first explore the ways to conduct dialogic feedback properly, then its content and tone. Below are three different methods to deliver dialogic feedback: verbal, written and non-verbal non-written feedback:

### **2.2.1 Verbal feedback**

In the conduct of verbal feedback, an effective motivational feedback strategy is ‘prompting an exchange of comments between educator and student. In this process, a two-way direct interaction between students and teacher is facilitated while at the same time helping educator-assessors check to what extent learners understand their learning goals. This can inform both teaching and learning regularly.

As stated by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), to conceptualize feedback as a mutual dialogue rather than as information transmission can enhance the effectiveness of feedback because learners can play a more effective and active role and use the feedback to develop and regulate their performance. What is important is to generate a formal or informal discussion between learners and educators so that learners can develop a clear understanding of standards and expectations.

### **2.2.2 Written feedback**

Educators can have verbal interaction with learners in the form of a real dialogue; they can also deliver their feedback in written form. It can be done in a structured manner with success criteria and rubrics; with open positive comments embedded with praise, suggestion and criticism.

When examining the role of written feedback, Hyland and Hyland (2001) came upon the point that feedback can function well as praise, criticism and/or suggestion. They recognized in their research that praise was generally used to soften suggestion and criticism. Their survey also shows that learners vary significantly in what they want from educators in the form of feedback, so that there is a great need for teachers to change their feedback to fit specific learners and their personalities and needs. This gives importance to the issue of the need to deliver ‘individualized feedback’.

### **2.2.3 Non-verbal and non-written feedback**

This section investigates feedback that is neither written nor verbal. It takes the form of gestures, facial

expression, rewards, etc. Tunstall and Gipps (1996) propose that there are four types of evaluative feedback - rewarding, punishing, approving and disapproving. Rewarding as a type of evaluative feedback can be provided in the form of symbols (e.g. stickers). Approving is a positive type of feedback, joined with the normative in relation to social and educational values. Non-verbal means of approving feedback embraces physical touch like holding learners' arms and a tap on the shoulder. Disapproval can be demonstrated in using physical gestures and a firm tone like pointing while speaking.

## **2.3 Content of dialogic feedback**

### **2.3.1 Constructive feedback – feedback with suggestions**

As mentioned above, knowing about one's weaknesses and strengths is not enough. Konold, Miller and Konold (2004) stress that learners need to be helped to progress suitable strategies to gradually improve their performance. One of the suggested ways is to give constructive feedback. This means students should be given as much help and guide as they need to employ their knowledge.

In sum, constructive feedback assists learners to find their weaknesses and provide them with the strategies and skills in making improvement.

### **2.3.2 Evaluative feedback**

As stated by Tunstall and Gipps (1996), evaluative feedback is judgmental which is opposite if just being descriptive. It is either positive or negative and the judgments are made based on implicit and explicit norms. Moreover, evaluative feedback relates more to affective aspects of learning than do descriptive kinds.

Below is a brief discussion of the tone of two-way dialogic feedback which includes positive and negative feedback:

### **2.3.3 Positive feedback**

One prevalent way to classify feedback is whether it is positive or negative. 'Positive feedback is seen as pleasing, complimentary, and consistent with the learner's self-image' (Nicols, 1995, p.289). While receiving positive feedback, students are more likely to feel supported since it improves the students' self-esteem.

A popular type of positive feedback is 'praise'. Salili (2001) maintains that praise is a positive feedback stating teacher's approval of learners' behavior or academic work. It is also claimed that praise is more than just a simple feedback on performance as it shows educators' positive affect and provides information about the value of the learner's behavior. This explanation emphasizes that praise is a type of positive feedback which is embedded with the teachers' positive affection and it is rich enough in information. A more significant aspect of praise is that it also consists of information telling students the positive value of their performance.

Moreover, it is discussed that positive feedback in the form of praise has a motivating function in maintaining students' learning. Nonetheless, it is vital to mention that praise can have negative effects on learners' motivation if it is misused or overused. Brophy (1981) proposes that 'praise delivered to the wrong student, or in the wrong way, or under the wrong circumstances may be not only ineffective but counterproductive' (p.21).

### **2.3.4 Negative feedback**

Negative feedback refers to feedback that is 'critical that may be rejected if not delivered skillfully' (Nicols, 1995, p.289). This section examines the facets and functions of criticism in addition to its relationship with learners' motivation to learn.

Criticism is a type of negative feedback. As stated by Salili (2001): 'Criticism is described as showing disapproval of learners' academic work or behavior'. (p.81). With regard to the application of criticism by educators, Brophy (1981) proposes that criticism and praise would better be used together. Teachers do so to reinforce learners systematically.

As reviewed above, positive feedback does not necessarily motivate learners. If it is used inappropriately, it can have negative effects on learners' motivation to learn. In the same way, negative feedback such as criticism does not necessarily bring harmful effects to learners' motivation.

The above has examined the tone of feedback – positive feedback and negative feedback, including praise and criticism respectively.

## **2.4 Motivation**

The significance of motivation in improving foreign/ second language learning is undeniable. Lifrieri (2005, p. 4) reports that “most people would defiantly mention motivation among the factors which affect individual levels of success in any activity – like language learning –”. In the same way, Gardner (2006, p. 241) reports that “learners with stronger motivation will do better and more successful than learners with lower levels”. He also claims that “if a learner is motivated, he/she has enough reasons (motives) for being involved in the same activities, puts more effort, persists in the activities, pays attention to the tasks, has more desire to reach the goal, enjoys the activities more and more, etc.” (Gardner, 2006, p. 243).

Research Studies concerning individual variables in L2 learning also show the close relationship between motivation and achievement. In one research study, Gardner et al (1997) claim that language learning causes motivation, and this motivation in turn affects attainment.

A large number of research studies have demonstrated that motivation is vital for L2 learning since it directly influences how much effort learners make, their level of proficiency and how long they maintain and persevere in L2 skills after completing their language study (Cheng & Dornyei, 1998; Trang & Baldauf, 2007). Cognitive skills in learning the target language are not a guarantee that a student can successfully master that language. In fact, in many cases, learners with greater L2 learning motivation get better grades and achieve better language proficiency (Wu & Wu, 2009).

## **2.5 Praise**

Praise has been considered as “favorable interpersonal feedback” (Baumeister, Hutton, & Cairns, 1990, p. 131) or “positive evaluations made by an individual of another’s products, performances, or attributes” (Kanouse, Gumpert, & Canavan-Gumpert, 1981, p. 98). In general, praise is considered to have beneficial effects on learners’ self-esteem, motivation, and performance. Therefore, educators are encouraged to use praise effectively as a reinforcer of a desired behavior (Dev, 1997).

Feedback which contains praise can be more effective since it causes a positive affective reaction, which is often linked to increased motivation and higher goals (Delin & Baumeister, 1994; Ilies & Judge, 2005).

Evidence of a direct or mediated positive effect of praise on performance and motivation is abundant but not without flaws. There are also instances of the negative effect of praise on individuals’ learning. An early study by Baumeister’s et al. (1990) presented evidence that praise can both facilitate and impede students’ performance. The analyses demonstrated that although positive feedback improved learners’ performance on effort tasks, it led to impairment in skilled performance.

## **2.6 Studies on Feedback, Praise, Motivation and achievement**

In an action research case study, Magilow (1999) suggests that once positive affect is enacted— by use of humor, etc. —the teacher will be able to correct learners’ errors without damaging their self-perception. The survey conclusion is that the issue of feedback may be inseparable from that of rapport. When a teacher-student rapport is created, explicit error correction may be completely effective.

Kubota (1994) (as cited in Burrell’s literature review, 2000, p.26) finds that an experimental group receiving explicit linguistic and metalinguistic feedback performs better on language learning tasks than a group receiving no feedback. In this survey both implicit and explicit feedback are found to facilitate SLA.

Imai’s (1989) thesis aim is to find whether praise or correction is more likely to improve oral L2

proficiency. In brief, Imai hypothesizes that Japanese EFL university students' grammar and pronunciation improve by error correction, but fluency would improve by praise.

Moskowitz (1976) reports teacher techniques related to feedback giving practices. Moskowitz (1976) claims that effective feedback should be immediate and direct. This kind of feedback is best given in a warm, accepting classroom climate. He also stresses that effective praise for learners' behavior is frequent, varied, and often nonverbal.

Some researchers (Fadzil et al., 2011) conducted a research to examine the relationship between various socio-psychological variables like motivation, attitude, anxiety and instrumental orientation on performance in English as L2. The findings demonstrated that these variables were significantly correlated with students' performance. Furthermore, the regression analysis indicated that all the variables except for personal motivation had significant effects on performance with attitude and instrumental orientation having positive effects while anxiety having a negative effect.

Based on Gardner and Lambert (1972), in acquiring a foreign language, motivation is affected by attitude. Evidence for positive correlation of English proficiency with positive attitude and being highly motivated towards learning English as a second language has been accumulating, for both integrative (Nida, 1956; LoCastro, 2001) and instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1960; Brown, 2000).

Liu's (2007) survey on Chinese university students' motivation and attitude to learn English and the correlation of both variables with the learners' English proficiency also indicated similar findings. Moreover, correlation analysis indicated that learners who had more positive attitudes towards learning English tended to score better in the proficiency test. Accordingly, Liu proposed that higher instrumental and travel orientations and more positive attitudes might also be the result of students' higher English proficiency.

According to Haitema (2002) and Saracaloğlu (2000), there is a positive relationship between foreign language achievement and affective characteristics. In her survey, Saracaloğlu (2000) refers to the learners' attitudes that they differ in.

Bartley (1970) reported that his studies have indicated that there was a direct relationship between high achievement and positive attitudes as well as low achievement and negative attitudes. That positive attitudes enhance achievement has been insisted on and explained by Lambert et al. (1963), and Spolsky (1969).

Gardner (1985) maintained that motivation has close relationship with students' achievement. He analyzed the role of motivation and attitude in second language acquisition through his previous survey. The findings revealed that the attitudinal-motivational factors were significantly related to learners' achievement.

### III. Research Question

In order to explore the effects of individual motivational verbal feedback and praise on Iranian EFL learners' achievements, the study addressed the following research question:

- 1) Do teachers' verbal feedback and praise have any effects on Iranian EFL learners' achievements?

#### *Hypothesis*

H0: Teachers' verbal feedback and praise have no effect on Iranian EFL learners' achievements.

## VI. Methodology

### 4.1 Setting

This study was conducted at Navid English Institute in Jahrom. The Institute contains a student population of 1400 students in total. Classes in this institute ranges from KIDS 1 (age 7) to FCE (advanced level). 25



English teachers are teaching English in this Institute (10 MA, 14 BA and 1 PHD students).

#### **4.2 Participants**

The participants of the study were all EFL learners of Navid English Institute in Jahrom. The researcher randomly selected two female classes. The number of the participants was 15 in each class. All the participants were native speakers of Persian and their age ranged from 17 to 24. The participant students were all at a high intermediate proficiency level. Some of them were High school students and some others had completed 12 years of schooling while a few of them had graduated from different universities in Iran at BA level and some were following their education at the university. The teacher participant was an English-major holder and had a master degree in education. Mr. Jafarian, the teacher participant, has been teaching in this Institute for 10 years. He is one of the most successful instructors in this institute.

#### **4.3 Data Collection Procedure**

In order to collect the data required for the fulfillment of the objectives of this study, one of the teachers agreed to participate in the study. Two classes were selected randomly. Both classes were the same in terms of their level of English proficiency and gender and also they had the same English teacher. One class was considered as the control group (class A) and the other one was the experimental group (class B). The students' achievements were measured twice by the prepared pre and post-test. The teacher was provided with a list of positive sentences and praise which had to be used as motivational tools during the semester while giving feedback to the learners. All the participants in class A received motivational supportive feedback and praise along with required help and guidance individually and regularly. The teacher helped the learners know where they were going, how they were going and what to do next. In this way they would feel confident enough to follow the teacher's guidance closely.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

The research design for this study was an analytical (quantitative) survey which provided a numerical description of the variables.

In the process of the study, teacher motivational feedback and praise were considered as the independent variable that was expected to bring about changes in students' motivation, and hence their achievements which would be the dependent variable. The change in students' motivation and hence their achievements depended on the positive motivational feedback and praise they received.

#### **4.5 Instrument**

In order to meet the objectives of this study, the following instrument was used:

-Pre and posttests: The tests were prepared by a group of experts and university professors in Central Navid Institute in Shiraz and then they piloted the tests in some classes and calculated their reliability. When they were sure of their reliability and validity, they passed them to other branches and classes to be used regularly. Each test was composed of 50 items in reading, listening and writing based on the students' course book, the second edition of Top Notch, in Navid Institute.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data in the present study is quantitative. The quantitative data of the pre and post-test was analyzed in terms of means, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To report, describe, and summarize the important general characteristics of the sets of the obtained data, descriptive statistics were used.

In order to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the pretest and post-test before and after the treatment and to check whether the teacher's individual verbal feedback and praise had improved the participants' achievements or not, both the paired samples t-test and the independent samples t-test were run.

## **V. Results and Discussion**

### 5.1 Preliminaries

The purpose of this section is to provide the analysis of the data collected for the study designed to address the research question, “Do teachers’ verbal feedback and praise have any effect on Iranian EFL learners’ achievements?” The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of praise and feedback on changing motivation toward the English language and hence their achievements.

#### Descriptive Statistics

To report, describe and summarize the important general characteristics of the sets of the obtained data, descriptive statistics were used.

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics for the achievements of the experimental group. The mean scores and standard deviations are illustrated as well.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	75.9333	8.81935	62.00	94.00
Posttest	90.8667	3.54293	86.00	98.00

As Table1 shows the mean score of the achievements of the experimental group is 75.93 in the pretest and 90.86 in the post-test. The participants in the experimental group have the standard deviation of 8.81 in the pretest whereas that of the participants in the post-test is 3.54. Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the achievements of the control group. The mean scores and standard deviations are illustrated as well.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
pretest	82.6000	5.90157	74.00	94.00
Posttest	84.2667	5.48331	76.00	96.00

As Table 2 shows the mean score of the achievements in the control group is 82.60 in the pretest and 84.26 in the post-test. The participants in the control group have the standard deviation of 5.90 in the pretest whereas that of the participants in the post-test is 5.48.

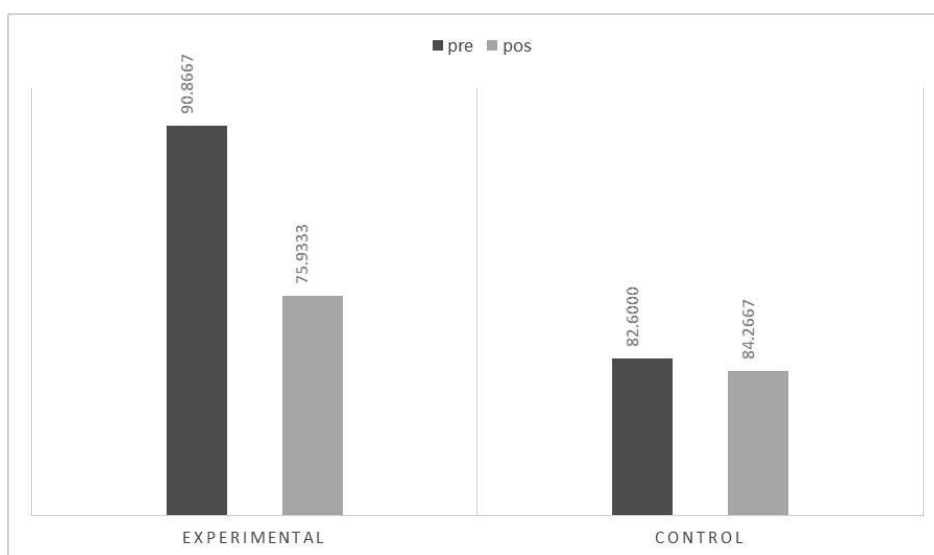


Figure 1: Mean differences of achievements between pretest and post-test of experimental and control Group

### 5.2 Inferential Statistics

In order to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and

control groups in the pretest and post-test before and after the treatment and to check whether the teacher’s individual verbal feedback and praise improved the participants’ achievements or not, the paired and independent samples t-test were run.

In order to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group in pre and post-test, a paired samples t- test was run.

Table 3: Paired samples statistics for the effect of verbal feedback on the achievements of the experimental group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence Interval				
		Deviation	Error	of the Difference				
	n	Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pre and posttest	-14.93333	7.27488	1.87836	-18.96202	-10.90464	-7.950	14	.000

According to Table 3, there was a significant difference in the scores for no verbal feedback in pretest (M=75.9333, SD=8.81935) and verbal feedback in post-test (M=90.8667, SD=3.54293),  $t(-7.950) = p < .05$

Table 4: Paired Samples Statistics for the effect of verbal feedback on achievement of the control group

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	Std.	95%	Confidence			
		Deviation	Error	Interval	of the			
	n	Mean	Lower	Upper				
precon – postcont	-1.66667	4.62395	1.19390	-4.22733	.89399	-1.396	14	.184

According to Table 4 there was not a significant difference in the scores for lack of verbal feedback in the pretest (M=82.6000, SD=5.48331) and post-test (M=84.2667 SD=5.90157),  $t(-1.396), p > .05$ . In order to find out if there was a statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups in pretest, an independent samples t-test was run.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test for Difference between Treatment and Control Group in Pretest

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	1.852	0.1843	2.4331	28	.0816	-6.60000	2.739946	1.054143	12.279191	
Equal variances not assumed			2.4331	23.9	.0826	-6.60000	2.739946	1.017125	12.316209	

An independent-sample t-test was run to see if there was a significant difference in achievement scores of control group (M=82.6000, SD=.75.9333) and experimental group (M=75.9333, SD=8.81935),  $t(23) = 2.4331, p = 0.08$ . The results suggest that there is no significant difference between the experimental and control group in pretest. In order to find out if there is a statistically significant difference between the treatment and control group in post-test, an independent samples t-test was run.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test for Difference between Treatment and Control Group in post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	2.667	.114	-3.916	28	.001	-6.60000	1.68561	10.05281	-3.14719
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.916	23.955	.001	-6.60000	1.68561	10.07927	-3.12073

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the difference in achievement scores in oral feedback and no oral feedback conditions. There was a significant difference in the scores for oral feedback (M=90.8667, SD=.91478) and no oral feedback (M=84.2667, SD=1.41578),  $t(23) = -3.916, p < 0.05$ . As Tables 5 and 6 show, the results suggest that giving verbal feedback really does have an effect on students' achievements. Specifically, our results suggest that when the participants receive feedback, their achievements in tests increase.

### 5.3 Discussion on Research Question

In discussing the findings, this part answers the research question raised in this study:

1) Do teachers' verbal feedback and praise have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' achievements?

#### Research Question

This section addresses the research question: Do teachers' verbal feedback and praise have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' achievements?

The research question asked whether teachers' verbal feedback and praise affect Iranian EFL learners' achievements. To this end, a paired and an independent samples t-test were performed. The result of the paired samples t-test revealed that the difference between the experimental group in the pretest and posttest, when the experimental group received teacher's verbal feedback and praise, was significant. There were also changes in their achievements. The control and experimental groups were equal in all conditions, so the difference between them was due to the teacher's verbal feedback and praise. The learners' achievements in the experimental group were significantly improved in learning English. After the treatment many participants got better scores in the post-test.

The above findings support Latif, et al., (2011) research findings. The results indicated that socio-psychological variables like attitude and motivation were significantly correlated with learners' performance in the English course conducted at Open University of Malaysia.

The findings echoes clearly what researchers previously found. It was found that evidence for positive correlation of English proficiency with positive attitude and being highly motivated towards learning English has been accumulating, for both instrumental (Brown, 2000) and integrative motivation (LoCastro, 2001). Liu's (2007) study on Chinese university students' attitudes and motivation to learn English and the correlations of both variables with the students' English proficiency also revealed similar findings. In addition, correlation analysis showed that students who had more positive attitudes towards learning English tended to score higher in the proficiency test.

In line with the findings of this study Bartley (1970) stated that his studies showed that there was a direct

relationship between positive attitudes and high achievement as well as negative attitudes and low achievement. That positive attitudes enhance achievement has been confirmed and described by Lambert et al. (1963), and Spolsky (1969).

The findings of the study are also in line with the results of previous studies by Haitema (2002) and Saracaloğlu (2000). They revealed that there is a positive relationship between affective characteristics and foreign language achievement.

Finally, the findings supports Catano, 1975, 1976 who states that praise improve adults' performance greatly at skilled tasks, comparing the performance of a control group. In another study by Henderlong and Lepper (2002), in line with the findings of the present study, they report the positive effect of praise on students' performance. Although the findings of the present study seem contradictory to what was reported by Baumeister's et al. (1990). They presented evidence that praise can both facilitate and impede students' performance. A possible explanation for such a result may be over-use or under-use of praise or using praise for a wrong person.

## **VI. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback is information provided by an agent (e.g., parent, teacher, peer, book, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. It occurs typically after instruction that seeks to provide knowledge and skills or to develop particular attitudes. Feedback is among the most critical influences on student learning.

On the other side, feedback can have negative effects on the learners if the teachers do not pay enough attention to the students' emotional feelings. As a solution to this threat, this study followed a new strategy to overcome this danger to the students' motivation and feelings. Therefore, the writer took the benefit of the positive effects of praise and positive feedback in order to sugar the pill and enhance the positive effects of feedback on the students' motivation and achievements.

The second strategy which the writer took in conducting this research study was giving the feedback verbally and individually. Accordingly, the verbal feedback which is given individually can help the students to speak about all aspects of teaching and learning face to face with the teacher and this can help both the teacher and the learner to have a real comprehension. Moreover, learners can play a more proactive role in the learning process by participating in feedback-giving practice, building up the habit of self-evaluation, communicating with the teachers and making open dialogue with them. Teachers can also offer support to students in this respect to enhance their self-regulating skills and guide them step by step. Finally, when the feedback is given verbally and individually, teachers can improve their communication strategies, enrich and polish the content of feedback and build rapport with their students.

To respond to the research question, the learners' achievements in the experimental group were significantly improved in learning English. After the treatment, many participants got better scores in the posttest. The control and experimental groups were equal in all aspects, so the difference between them was due to the teacher's verbal feedback and praise.

The instructors, student advisors, curriculum designers, and all other educators involved in the teaching, instructing, and, consequently, motivating of students, must understand the motivation of the students they teach. These professionals should be provided with contemporary, research-based information about the relationships

among the motivational factors within specific academic ability domains.

The findings in this research began to dissect the motivational factors of students in the hope that educators will be able to design teaching strategies and curricula more effectively to help their students achieve success. This finding can be used by educators in the development of their instruction.

## **6.2 Implications**

This research study has its practical implications for various aspects of language teaching profession. These implications can encourage the relatives of the related field, especially in Iran, both to do more serious researches on the teachers' perceptions as the most involved actors of foreign language teaching stage regarding various aspects of feedback, motivation and their roles in language teaching and to make changes in the manner of feedback giving and even the method of teaching English.

Teacher training programs must pay more attention to the elements of motivation, praise and feedback. A course in the role and method of effective feedback-giving skills and motivation can enhance foreign language teachers' awareness and competence.

In order for the teachers to be aware of the more new beliefs, attitudes, and studies about the role of these elements, teacher training programs must be continued to appear as in-service trainings, and it is better to be a lifelong program for the teachers. The last but not the least important group that this study has a lot of words with is the group of language teachers. Iranian foreign language teachers should be aware of the importance of motivation and feedback in the language classroom, and they should try to improve their knowledge of feedback-giving techniques and motivation. This section presents in detail some implications of this study.

### **6.1.1 Implications for teaching practice**

As for pedagogy, this study has revealed the importance of teacher feedback which can motivate students to learn and hence improve their achievements. This section discusses some implications for teaching practice.

This study implies that teachers need to gain some feedback delivery skills to motivate learners. The relationship between teachers and students, and how students perceive their teachers, can also determine how students interpret the corresponding feedback. This study also implies that teachers should acquire some strategies to deliver feedback that is motivating to students. Hence, communication strategies are one of the important areas teachers can focus on.

Feedback strategy is prompting an exchange of comments between teacher and pupil. As a result, it is important for teachers to build up a positive relationship with the students as it is a major facilitating factor for enhancing students' motivation to learn.

The findings of this study also imply that teachers have to be better equipped theoretically in order to make effective use of teacher feedback as a motivating tool. To support teachers' professional growth in this regard, it is suggested that teacher education providers should cover theoretical background knowledge such as motivation theories with different motivation constructs, so that teachers can tailor their feedback to these ends. Training offered to in-service and pre-service teachers should also include feedback-giving techniques as one of the core elements in pedagogy.

## **6.3 Limitations of the study**

There were a number of limitations to the present study which should be highlighted so as to avoid any overgeneralizations and misinterpretations of the results. Although this study aimed at studying the impact of teacher feedback and praise on motivation and hence on achievement, the results of this study cannot be generalized because of the small number of the participants. Only 30 students in the two groups (experimental

and control group) were involved in the study; the sample might not be representative of the target population of EFL students. To determine its broader application, other populations would need to be examined.

Moreover, the study was mostly conducted during the third semester of the academic year; a thorough study should be done to reveal the effects on the long term. Sufficient time and practice were needed to reveal successful results. Finally, various instruments such as teachers' interviews, learners' interviews, class observations etc. should be used to triangulate and validate the results as much as possible.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for further research**

This study investigated the role of teacher's individual verbal feedback and praise in enhancing student motivation and hence their achievements. Despite the pedagogical significance of this study, I propose several areas for further investigation in the future:

It would be insightful to explore if the results of this study can be replicated in settings such as other schools and institutes of a different background in Iran or even other places outside Iran, where the context and cultural backgrounds are different.

This study did not plan to, and thus had not done any follow-up work in regard to how students put teachers' feedback into action. In any future longitudinal research, this can be done through lesson observations, study of student works, and follow-up interviews, so that student responsibility can be studied. For lesson observation, if teachers find it intimidating or if students find it uncomfortable for a research observer to be present, researchers can use a video-camera instead.

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# Managing Dishonesty in Students' Admission Process: Implications for Access to Higher Education in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process in Universities and how it is managed. The population of the study comprised 110 heads of department and 15 programme managers. A sample of 75 academic heads of department and programme managers from two public universities in Nigeria was used. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. Four research questions guided the study. A questionnaire tagged 'Management of Dishonesty in Students' Admission Questionnaire (MDSAQ) was developed, face validated by experts and used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability value stood at  $r = 0.86$ . Data were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation with a criterion mean of 2.50. The findings show that dishonest practices such as bribery, nepotism, racketeering, grade malpractice, distortion of application criteria, falsification of data, are prevalent in the students' admission process. The contributory factors among others include poor design of examination, low carrying capacity, high propensity for corruption, laxity in punishing offenders. Suggested strategies for curbing the menace include adequate supervision, ethical re-orientation of all those involved in students' admission process. It was therefore recommended among others that the management of universities should ensure constant and strict monitoring of the admission process.

Keywords: Dishonesty; Student admission; Access; Higher education; University

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria has the largest higher education system in Africa yet access to university education is still being criticized. This is especially true in view of the rapidly mounting demand for education, fueled by population growth, rising income levels and social mobility. The number of people who seek university qualification has grown enormously. Having a university education is a valuable commodity and choosing a university is one of the most important decisions for students. After all, being awarded a degree is a lifelong achievement and having it from a reputable school confers a non-physical advantage that will directly affect one's workplace competitiveness (Okpa, Okoi, Igbineweka & Udida, 2017). It can affect salary, job security and has power to influence society. The overall benefits of university education are strong. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) emphasized the need for provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of

the country at tertiary and other levels both inside and outside the formal school system. Equity of access to university education requires that admissions be open to those who successfully complete secondary school, or its equivalent, or present entry qualifications without any discrimination. But the problem of access in the country is currently so severe that sometimes less than one third of the applicants gain access to university. Yearly, out of the huge number of Nigerian youths who apply for admission into universities, only a small percentage is given admission. For instance, only about 30 per cent out of the 1.7 million candidates who wrote the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) were admitted in 2017 (Lawal, 2017).

Students' admissions refer to the process of applying for entrance to institutions of higher education for undergraduate study at one of the nation's colleges or universities. It is a formal process of accepting students into the school or a programme of choice having met the prescribed requirements. University admission is the legitimate gateway through which qualified citizens get enrolled for university education in Nigeria (National University Commission, 2012). The qualified prospective students are usually selected, screened and placed by Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) which is the coordinating body for undergraduate programmes. Admissions into the universities vary according to the programme of study, and this includes admission into the remedial programmes and part-time and full-time programmes for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The admissions process serves as a gateway to higher education opportunities and future career options and often places young adults at the beginning of a unique pathway that will lead them to a promising future. The importance of transparency and fairness in admissions processes cannot be over-emphasized.

The guidelines for admission to the Nigerian universities (federal, state, and private) are based on the quota system: 45% merit, 35% catchment/locality, and 20% educationally disadvantaged states and 10% to the discretion of the individual vice-chancellor (Odigwe & Tefa, 2016). The merit-based 45% admission guideline gives priority to candidates who score higher than the cut-off marks (required points) on each matriculation examination. These applicants are given first consideration for their first choice of course and institution. The quota system of university admission was introduced in an attempt to provide admission for candidates using the federal character policy of the federal government. Unfortunately, this has been greatly abused.

Access to university education has become very competitive with marginal possibilities. The screening of candidates takes various forms and poses multiple hurdles before intending candidates could secure admission into the university system (Ilusanya, 2012). The hurdles require the students to first pass the senior secondary school certificate examination, second, pass the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination and thirdly, passing the university of choice "screening tests"(Post-UTME). The Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) scores (set at national cut-off point) form the basis for admission into universities. Candidates attaining this score or higher are eligible for admission into undergraduate programmes. Beyond the minimum cut-off point universities are at liberty to set cut-off marks for specific programmes and conduct post-UTME. The quality of candidates admitted is based on the thoroughness of the conduct of the UTME and post-UTME. Unfortunately the chances of being admitted are further reduced due to logistics such as lack of examination numbers or/and centers, and distance to examination venues.

In spite of government attempt to provide equitable access to limited places by prescribing admission quotas to federal institutions and the massive expansion and development of universities through setting up of more federal and state universities as well as granting of licenses to private individuals to establish universities, which has brought a total of about 156 universities as at the last count, many young people are still unable to gain admission into these institutions. This indicates that the problem of access and equality of educational

opportunity still persist. While the demand for access to university education continues to increase, the most disturbing is the fact that the number of those who fail to secure admission increase yearly and the institutions lack capacity to absorb the number of students seeking admission yearly (Kanyip, 2013). The combination of underfunding and limited access to education becomes a fertile ground for petty corruption in admissions, as it creates asymmetrical dependencies between underpaid staff and students with limited options (Uduak and Ovat, 2018). *Osewa (2018) and Oloko & Edem (2016)* stated that the problem of gaining admission into a university is also aggravated by poor infrastructure and limited carrying capacity. An average university in Nigeria has the capability of admitting just 4000 students per session. If every university in Nigeria is properly upgraded to admit at least 10000 students per session problems of admission would drastically reduce. Other reasons include bad leadership, bribery and corruption, University politics and bad secondary schools amongst others. The inability of the universities to accommodate the teeming population of students seeking for tertiary education has led to large number of students pursuing tertiary education abroad.

Competition for admission to limited spaces have led to unintended and dishonest practices such as cheating in examination, bribery for admission, manipulation of examination scores, and denial of admission (Moja, 2000). Limited access has contributed to nepotism in favour of less qualified candidates and the use of personal connections to gain coveted places at universities, with some admissions officials reportedly working with agents to obtain bribes from students. There are indications that prospective students are able to purchase not only their university admission, but also passing grades. Parents of university applicants simply bribe the admissions body before the entrance examinations. Those who have no ability or willingness to resort to corruption face lost opportunities. Some of the most competent students who have great potential are denied admission because of geographical constraints, discretion, or over-emphasis on science majors as opposed to the arts. While those who should have been denied access, gain admission into universities, thus contributing to the decline in quality and growing mediocrity. This situation has a grave effect on the students and parents who have to face many challenges in seeking admission.

The suspicion of a double standard and a shadow admissions process that favors well-connected students and caters for applicants who are supported by public officials, University council members, and other prominent individuals in students' admission process is not new among Nigerian universities. Akerele (2008) reported that admission officials also get pressure from ministers or other top government officials to increase enrolment and sometimes work with student agents to demand cash for admissions. The cash is collected by other students who linger near admissions offices, telling hopefuls they can guarantee admission for a price (Murdock, 2012).

Gaining admission into the university is increasingly seen as a private benefit to individuals rather than as public benefit to the society. According to Wong (2016) the rankings of universities and colleges have helped to shape a world in which students are seen as consumers, and colleges and universities as commodities. The rankings are a key reason the higher-education landscape today operates like a marketplace in which institutions compete to convince the best students to buy their product. Universities that saw their revenues sinking have taken to desperate new promotional techniques to enroll enough students to balance their budgets. Others are turning to the business world for the techniques to keep themselves among the survivors of the academic squeeze to come. The proliferation of universities on the other hand has added a dead weight to the admission process thus lowering the standards and quality of the process through the recruitment of all sorts of characters with questionable higher degrees. Our universities have become associated with "sharp practices" perpetrated by unscrupulous students and unconscionable lecturers alike (Adedimiji, 2015). In some instances, being a son

of the soil or indigeneship is ranked higher than merit. Okolo (as cited in Joachim, Ene, & Victoria (2016) captured a sordid picture of what thrives in Nigerian universities during admissions thus:

“ . . . Universities suffered from arbitrary governance . . . Rather than being a place which justice and truth are to be nurtured; the universities triumphed on mediocrity and untruths. Promotion was earned through sycophancy and the admission procedure became systematically bastardized as wives, children and cronies of vice chancellors had their own admission quota without reference to the established procedure. University governance became unpredictable and university finances in shamble.”(p.3)

Joachim, Ene, and Victoria (2016) maintained that the conduct of students' admission procedure seems to be devoid of equity, as meritorious students are denied admissions; their grades are manipulated in favor of other students because of their background. Stakeholders of university education have expressed deep dissatisfaction on the conduct of admissions in universities. They alleged that admission procedure in these universities is unconventional, unethical, and unfavorable to meritorious candidates. Rules and regulations are compromised and certain mischievous behaviors seem to be condoned.

Lack of transparency, poor design of the examinations, the subjects' tolerance of corruption, high levels of corruption propensity, and high income expectations in future careers are identified as the main causes of corruption. Corruption in the examinations lowers student trust in the accountability of faculty and staff in higher educational institutions and this degrading trust in turn exacerbates bribery among new generations of examinees, which results in a vicious cycle of corruption. The prevalence of wide-scale dishonesty in students' admission increases the costs of education, thereby limiting access among lower income students. Corruption in students' admission processes deteriorates educational quality and increases the risk of unqualified practitioners in professions with critical public impact, such as medicine, nursing, education, architecture, or law. Duruji, Segun, Olarenwaju, Oviasogie, Ajayi, and Loromeke (2013) maintained that *the down-grading of merit as a basis for admission through racketeering has resulted in loss of faith in merit, fair play and justice, mediocrity and economic power take precedence over academic standards*. Lack of available university seats or merit-based admission increases the income gap between the rich and the poor, exacerbating security issues that threaten to destabilize the country (Murdock, 2012).

Kanyip (2013) pointed out that following the unethical practices inherent in the admission process in most Nigerian universities, some of the universities and departments are increasingly losing their credibility, integrity, and honor. This is largely due to a decline in the cherished values of objectivity, fairness, service to humanity, productivity, and search for the truth at all costs. The perpetuation of different dishonest practices have made most of candidates seeking admission to be discouraged, lose confidence in the entire system, changed their minds and decided to go into different fields of life. Some who gain admission through dubious means (personal connections and money), are unable to successfully complete university education. This situation consequently affects the quality of products and outputs in these institutions. According to Lawal (2017) the purpose of introducing the Post-UME screening policy is far from being achieved as successful candidates still turned out ill-equipped for university education. While that policy was aimed at addressing the problem of student quality, it reintroduced and entrenched many of the problems it sought to eliminate. It is also evident that the post-UME is an avenue of extortion and maximizing the income flows of universities. A fair and transparent admissions system is essential for all applicants. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated dishonesty in students' admission process in universities in Nigeria.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Find out the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process.
2. Investigate the factors aiding dishonesty in students' admission process.
3. Determine the consequences of dishonesty in students' admission process.
4. Suggest strategies to be adopted in curbing the menace of dishonesty in students' admission process.

## 3. Problem of the Study

Public universities are supposed to adopt the best practices of governance and follow a transparent process of admission, offering equal access into higher education to students from all categories based on merit and other agreed criteria. But in recent times, some stakeholders have raised a number of grievances with respect to the commercialization or racketeering of admission process. They have expressed deep dissatisfaction on the conduct of admissions and alleged that admission procedure is unconventional, unethical, and unfavorable to meritorious candidates. Rules and regulations are compromised and certain mischievous behaviours seem to be condoned. There are indications that explosive detail of illegalities and irregularities are committed under the leadership of those in charge of the process. Admission Officers arbitrarily change the quota criteria to prepare merit list of admission in the middle of the admission process. Also, at departmental level those in charge of admission use their arbitrary power and randomly select students/candidates with minimum eligibility or minimum qualifying marks for admission. This dishonest practice is attracting grievance complaints from students and other stakeholders. It is in the light of these discrepancies that the study was conceptualized to investigate the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process and its implication for access to higher education.

## 4. Research Questions

1. What are the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process?
2. What factors are aiding dishonesty in students' admission process?
3. What are the consequences of dishonesty in students' admission process?
4. What strategies can be adopted in curbing the menace dishonesty in students' admission process?

## 5. Method

The design adopted for study was descriptive survey involving two universities located in Cross River State- University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology. The target population was all 110 heads of department and 15 programme managers. 60 academic head of departments (HODs) and 15 programme managers were used as respondents. Out of this number, 50 HODs and 10 programme managers were selected from University of Calabar, while 10 HODs and 5 programme managers were taken from Cross River University of Technology. The research instrument was the researchers' constructed questionnaire titled 'Management of Dishonesty in Students' Admission Questionnaire (MDSAQ)'. The instrument contained two sections. Section A sought demographic information. Section B contained four open ended items. Item 1 sought information on the forms of dishonesty in admission process. Item 2 inquired into the factors aiding the increase in admission dishonesty, item 3 sought for information on the consequences of dishonesty in students' admission process, while item 4 sought for strategies for curbing dishonesty in student admission. The research

instrument was adjudged suitable for the study through face validation by three academic staff in the area of measurement and evaluation. Data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach alpha which had a coefficient of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. In analyzing the data, the response options in the questionnaire were weighted as follows: strongly agree (SD) = 4 Points, agree (A) = 3points, disagree (D) = 2points, and strongly disagree (SD) = 1. The mean score was compared with the criterion mean value of 2.50. Any score that was above 2.50 was accepted, while mean less than 2.50 was rejected.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Research question 1: What are the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process?

**Table 1:** Mean responses of respondents on the forms of dishonesty in students' admission process. N=75

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	DECISION
1	Admission racketeering	32	12	10	20	3.02	0.89	Agree
2	Applicants being given false hope or promised admission on the spot	28	31	8	8	3.00	0.79	Agree
3	Applicants not eligible for admissions are unduly charged a variety of fees	30	10	20	17	3.05	0.87	Agree
4	Applicants use fake documents or credentials to gain admission,	16	41	8	10	3.05	0.90	Agree
5	Indiscriminate recruitment of students as a means of chasing money	27	39	6	5	3.09	0.94	Agree
6	Applicants being charged by corrupt recruiters & agents for the falsification of documents that will qualify them for admission	12	41	4	18	3.01	0.78	Agree
7	Bribery of admission officers	34	17	14	10	3.06	0.81	Agree
8	Falsification of data files and result sheets(admission test scores or the ranking of students in the admission list being illegally changed)	33	30	8	4	3.17	0.97	Agree
9	Distortion in the application criteria	28	17	11	19	3.27	0.95	Agree
10	Grading malpractice (Collusion between the candidate and the grader, intimidation of graders by parents or intimidation of parents by graders seeking rewards from candidates parents)	17	33	15	10	3.66	0.66	Agree
11	poor design of the examinations	40	10	21	4	3.00	0.77	Agree
12	Sale of seats to students whose test scores do not qualify them for a position (at times through abiding process if the number of seats is limited)	16	48	1	10	3.11	0.95	Agree
	<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.12</b>		

Table 1 contains twelve (12) items showing the forms of dishonesty in students' admission. It can be observed that all the items were highly rated by the respondents. With the aggregate mean of 3.12, it shows that respondents are of the opinion that the items identified constitute forms of dishonesty in students' admission process in universities.

### 6.2 Research Question 2: What are the Factors Aiding Dishonesty in Students' Admission Process?

**Table 2:** Factors aiding dishonesty in students' admission in universities N=75



S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	x	SD	DECISION
13	Pressure from students/parents for admission to best universities and to professional programmes	20	20	15	20	2.52	0.78	Agree
14	A university degree now a prerequisite for most white-collar jobs	33	14	20	10	3.57	0.89	Agree
15	high income expectations in future careers	18	39	16	4	3.00	0.76	Agree
16	high levels of corruption propensity,	6	37	16	16	3.12	0.68	Agree
17	Difficult socio-economic conditions	40	11	10	14	3.66	0.69	Agree
18	Limited public funding for education	20	2	21	32	2.39	0.79	Disagree
19	Low carrying capacity(lack of infrastructure)	19	41	5	10	3.01	0.77	Agree
20	Greed for money	20	28	12	15	3.15	0.97	Agree
21	Lack of discipline/poor moral integrity	40	15	10	10	3.00	0.77	Agree
22	Entice by students to offer money/sex	22	29	14	4	3.25	0.95	Agree
23	Poor supervision of the admission process	18	38	17	2	2.97	0.79	Agree
24	Use of faulty procedure in student admission	32	15	18	10	2.68	0.83	Agree
25	Laxity in punishing culprits	33	22	9	11	3.12	0.96	Agree
	<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.03</b>		

Data in table 2 showed that mean scores of responses of respondents on the factors aiding dishonesty in students admission in universities in Cross River State. From the data presented above, it can be observed all the items were highly rated by the respondents and had a mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 except item 18 with mean scores lower than the criterion mean. With the aggregate mean of 3.03, it indicates that respondents are of the opinion that all the factors identified aid dishonesty in students' admission process.

### 6.3. Research 3: What are the Consequences of Dishonesty in Students' Admission Process?

**Table 3:** Consequences of dishonesty in students' admission N=75

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	x	SD	DECISION
26	Wasting of resources	22	33	8	12	3.08	0.83	Agree
27	Distortion of selection process	40	12	21	2	3.00	0.77	Agree
28	Overall devaluation of degrees	29	31	11	4	3.65	0.66	Agree
29	Under qualified professionals	23	25	20	7	3.22	0.95	Agree
30	Poor quality of students	33	30	4	8	3.58	0.89	Agree
31	Increase cost of education	32	23	10	10	3.00	0.77	Agree
32	Vicious cycle of corruption	28	32	9	6	3.66	0.67	Agree
	<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.31</b>		

Data in table 3 showed the mean scores of responses of respondents on consequences of dishonesty in students' admission in universities. From the data presented above, it can be observed all the items were highly rated by the respondents and had a mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50. With the aggregate mean of 3.31, it indicates that respondents are of the opinion that all the factors identified aid dishonesty in students' admission process.

### 6.4 Research question 4: What Strategies can be Adopted in Curbing the Menace Dishonesty in Students' Admission Process?

**Table 4:** Suggested strategies for curbing dishonesty in students' admission in universities N=75

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	x	SD	DECISION
33	Ethical values re-orientation through seminars and workshops	41	10	10	14	3.17	0.97	Agree
34	Proper supervision and monitoring of admission process	20	2	21	32	3.06	0.81	Agree
35	Appropriate sanctioning of guilty admission officers	19	41	4	11	3.07	0.92	Agree
36	Feedback mechanism put in place for reporting erring staff	28	20	12	15	3.66	0.66	Agree
37	Review of admission criteria to be more comprehensive	40	15	15	5	2.89	0.88	Agree
38	Adopting and following proper procedure for student admission	22	29	14	4	3.11	0.95	Agree
39	Employing qualified staff to handle admission process	19	38	16	2	2.58	0.71	Agree
	<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.08</b>		

Table 4 showed that mean scores of responses of respondents on suggested strategies to the menace of dishonesty in students admission process in universities. From the data presented above, it can be observed all the items were highly rated by the respondents and had a mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50. With the aggregate mean of 3.08, it indicates that respondents are of the opinion that all the factors identified aid dishonesty in students' admission process.

## 7. Discussion of Findings

To ascertain the forms of dishonesty in students' admission questionnaire items 1-12 were analyzed. From the data presented above, it can be observed all the items were highly rated by the respondents. With the aggregate mean of 3.12, it indicates that respondents identified with the items raised as forms of dishonesty in students' admission prevalent in universities. A close examination indicates that the issues related to bribery, falsification of data, poor design and administration of qualifying examination. Apparently some scrupulous admission officers in order to make illegal gains have employed agents to collect money on their behalf. This agrees with the views of Adedimiji, (2015) and Joachim, Ene, and Victoria (2016) that our universities have become associated with "sharp practices" perpetrated by unscrupulous staff and students and that the admission procedure has become systematically bastardized as wives, children and cronies of vice chancellors had their own admission quota without reference to the established procedure.

For research question two, the result revealed that mean scores of responses of respondents on the factors aiding dishonesty in students' admission in tertiary universities were highly rated and above the criterion mean of 2.50 except item 18 with mean scores lower than the criterion mean. With the aggregate mean of 3.03, it implies that the items are significantly related to factors aiding dishonesty in students' admission process. This agrees with *Osewa (2018) and Oloko and Edem (2016)* stated that the problem of gaining admission into a university is aggravated by poor infrastructure, limited absorptive capacity bad leadership, bribery and corruption, University politics and bad secondary schools.

The result of finding for research question three as observed from the data presented in table 3, shows that all the items were highly rated by the respondents and had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. With the aggregate mean of 3.31, it indicates that respondents are of the opinion that dishonesty in students' admission has severe consequences on the university. This finding agrees with Duruji, Segun, Olarenwaju, Oviasogie, Ajayi, & Loromeke (2013) that *down-grading of merit as a basis for admission through racketeering has resulted in loss of faith in merit, fair play and justice, mediocrity and preference of economic power over academic standards*. Lawal (2017) harped that the Post-UME screening by universities after JAMB results and before offering admission is still turning out ill-equipped candidates for university education. It has failed in addressing the problem of student quality, instead it is festering an avenue of extortion. *Also*, it corroborates with Kanyip (2013) findings that the unethical practices inherent in the admission process has made universities and departments to increasingly lose their credibility, integrity, and honor. There is also decline in the cherished values of objectivity, fairness, service to humanity, productivity and quality of University education.

The analysis on table 4 shows result of finding of research question four on viable suggestions for curbing the menace of dishonesty in students' admissions. It agrees with Kukogho (2015) suggestion that the fight against corruption in our universities must be done by creating and fostering attitudinal change, reorientation of values. The suggestion of ethical re-orientation is apt in view of high ethical standard is expected of the university managers given the crucial role university play in molding of youth and overall societal development. Equally, the university management should review admission criteria and ensure that qualified staff are put in place to handle the admission process. All other suggestions require departments, faculties and other management levels to take appropriate action in enhancing the quality of admission process. The need to properly supervise the admission process and prescribe appropriate sanctions for guilty officers has been

identified by respondents as necessary if universities are to make headway in reducing the prevalence of dishonesty in students' admission process.

## 8. Implication for Access

The risks of corruption can be found at every level of the education system and the measures taken to prevent it are geared towards enhancing quality, efficiency of the system and access to education. Concerned observers of public university situation in Nigeria insist that public universities are not only poorly funded, they are confronted by moral and social decay that demands a total overhaul of the system. Dishonesty in students' admission is a major challenge to expanding and ensuring equitable access to university education. It is obvious that universities have lost their good glorious prestige of strict admission process (Okecha, 2014). The beauty, the splendor and enduring legacy usually associated with the university globally, are no more in our system. The menace in the admission process leaves thousands of prospective students in anguish, hardship, spending more years at home before gaining entry into higher institutions.

Bribery, nepotism and falsification of data in the process of recruiting students bring unqualified students deficient in moral probity into classrooms. This portends danger and has adverse implications for educational quality and learning outcomes. It does not only distort access to higher education but also affects the quality of education, quality of the products of the system and the reliability of academic research findings. To foster and ensure the integrity of the admission process, universities must employ best practices. Recruitment and admissions policies should be disclosed to the public and should be consistent with stated university goals to garner public trust.

## 9. Conclusion

Managing students' admission process remains a challenging task for all universities. It requires sensitivity to the varied needs and requirements of the students seeking university admission. The findings of the study have indicated that dishonesty in students' admission has huge negative impact on access to university education. Curbing the menace of dishonesty in students' admission should be the concern of all stakeholders at all levels of the education sector. The study has provided some insight into the manifestation of dishonesty in students' admissions process and the factors aiding its prevalence. It has equally highlighted some the consequences of dishonesty and suggested strategies for curbing dishonesty. The management of universities should therefore strive to employ best practices, trained its staff, install effective supervision and monitoring process that aligns with the goals and objectives of the school. It is important that everyone should have confidence in the transparency and integrity of the admission process.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the finding the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should make deliberate effort to train Admission officers to equip them with practical skills on how to manage the admission process.
2. The management of universities should ensure constant and strict monitoring of the admission process
3. Educational managers must address the severe need to increase absorptive capacity of the institutions by expanding considerably some of the existing facilities to accommodate the rising number of applicants.
4. The management of universities should regularly organize submit on corruption and immorality on the university system to enable its members and other stakeholders to consciously map out relevant strategies to halt the plunging of the system into further immoral stench.
5. There should be appropriate sanctions for erring staff who engage in dishonest and image-tarnishing practices.

6. Universities should voluntarily and proactively disclosed basic information under a transparent admission process. They should uploaded omnibus list of candidates who participated in the written test and interview and marks secured therein.

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# **An Exploration of Inheriting Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in English Textbooks for Arts Colleges ---Taking the *New Journey Art College English* As an Example**

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## **Abstract**

Culture is the important force in the national survival and development. The Chinese excellent traditional culture is the root of the Chinese nation spirit and how to develop Chinese excellent traditional culture inheritance through national education has always been the heat issue to be discussed nowadays. After giving the analysis of current condition of English teaching, the paper is focused on the art college English teaching, introduces the English textbook, *The New Journey Art College English*, which covers 7 different themes of art, music, dance, film, drama, costume and architecture, aiming to help students learn, understand and love traditional excellent culture, inherit and innovate Chinese excellent traditional culture from four aspects, art history, art creation, art and life, and art and society. At the same time, suggestions are put forward on how to make full use of the characteristics of teaching materials in the teaching process to promote the inheritance, innovation and development of traditional Chinese excellent culture.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Culture; Inheritance; English teaching

## **1.Introduction**

Culture is the important force in the national survival and development. The Chinese excellent traditional culture has been regarded as the root and the soul of the Chinese nation. At the 18th Chinese communist Party congress, the CPC Central Committee also has attached great importance to the Chinese excellent traditional culture from the aspect of the depth of the deepest spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation, and has always taking great weight of excellent traditional culture from the aspect of the national strategies, emphasizing the importance of promoting the creative transformation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture(He lianzheng, 2020, p.14). The guidelines on the implementation of the Project of Inheriting and Developing China's Excellent Traditional Culture (2019) proposed that the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture should be carried out throughout national education.Taking traditional Chinese excellent culture education as an important task of cultural inheritance and development, as well as putting forward the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese excellent traditional culture, is the new mission of China's excellent traditional culture education in the new era.

At the same time, the guidance outline for ideological and political construction of college curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education( Zhang Hong, 2020, p.43) emphasizes that specialized courses for the art

major students should insist on aesthetic education, carrying forward the spirit of the Chinese aesthetic education actively, guiding the students consciously to inherit and spread the Chinese excellent traditional culture, improving the students' aesthetic and cultural accomplishment, enhancing the students' self-confidence. All these mentioned is not only the guidelines for the art colleges and universities in the English teaching, but also is the great challenge for the construction of English teaching materials to integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the whole teaching process.

## **2.An Analysis of the Current Condition of English Teaching Materials in Art Colleges**

Teaching material is the text giving an account of the subject contents systematically based on the curriculum standard, which is the embodiment of the teaching content, not only the media for pushing forward the teaching process, but also the object of teaching process. The present form of the teaching material is first scientific, and second conformed to the psychological law of development and cognitive characteristics of the students. Especially in accordance with the instructions from the Ministry of Education (2020) to promote Chinese excellent traditional culture and other major themes into the curriculum textbooks, and organic integration into the excellent traditional Chinese culture as one of the primary requirements of textbook development and revision, the teaching material is also an important carrier of systematic education of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

At present, extensive and beneficial attempts have been made in teaching materials for the general education system. However, as the public basic courses for the non-major students in art colleges, whether they are offered for four consecutive semesters in the first and second grades of the undergraduate stage, or two semesters in the graduate stage, both have the characteristics of wide audience and long duration. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the construction of the featured English textbooks in art colleges.

At the same time, generally, all the Chinese students in art colleges have weak English foundation, and are much more extrovert. Then how should we take advantages of the artistic appeal and the stronger expressive power of art in our English teaching so as to implement the inheritance, innovation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture? Teaching material construction has undoubtedly become the starting point and also the key point to answer the mentioned question above. However, the current English teaching material obviously cannot meet our needs to the unique humanistic and instrumental serving inheritance, innovation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, which is embodied in the following two aspects.

### **(1)The contents of the textbooks without good consideration about the excellent traditional Chinese culture**

The contents of the textbooks are mostly selected from the western classic works, which promote western moral values, paying attention to western culture and praise western civilization, rather than taking great concern or good attention to traditional Chinese culture to our Chinese students. In the long run, some Chinese students will gradually develop the worship to the western culture, the western civilization and even the Western figures. Consequently, the students may become ignore or indifference to our glorious traditional Chinese culture with a longer history. Forgetting our history means betray, as we know.

### **(2)The contents of teaching materials without good consideration about the distinguished features of students in art colleges**

The current textbooks mostly attach importance to the English level and reading taste of students from different majors, covering arts, science, industry, commerce, economics and management and other major categories, but pay less attention to some extent to a minority of the students whose major is music, sports, clothing, dance, opera, film and something like that. Especially they show less concern about the integration of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in English teaching to meet with the students' different needs resulting from their different English level, their different personality, their different major and their different career development. It is an urgent problem for us to solve in the new era.

### **3. What to Do Next to Meet with the New Needs to English Textbooks in Art Colleges**

#### **3.1 Clearly defining the concept of excellent traditional Chinese culture**

From the perspective of culturology, culture can be viewed from both the narrow sense and the broad sense. The former refers to the mentality culture composed of values, aesthetic tastes and thinking modes bred in human social practice and conscious activities, namely the implicit culture. The latter includes the whole content of human society and historical life, including physical culture, system culture and behavior culture, which is the explicit culture (Zhang Dainian, Fang keli.2004, p.4). In a broad sense, the excellent traditional Chinese culture includes the material civilization, spiritual civilization and system civilization that the Chinese nation has created in its development history, such as the four great inventions of ancient China, Chinese characters, folk art and traditional Chinese virtues, showing the overall characteristics of the coupling of explicit culture and implicit culture.

According to the guiding outline of ideological and political construction of college curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education in China(2022), it is required to carry out the fundamental task of establishing morality and cultivating talents by integrating the construction concept of value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. The key construction contents include strengthening the education of excellent traditional Chinese culture, which means vigorously promoting the national spirit centered on patriotism, reform and innovation, educating and guiding the students to have a deep understanding of the essence and values embodied in excellent traditional Chinese culture (Zhang Hong, Yu Rui, 2020, p.43) especially of the benevolence, values for the people, integrity, justice, harmony and unity. It is helpful to clarify the standard of cultural content selection in the field of Chinese excellent traditional culture education, and also provides guidance for the selection of college English textbooks on excellent traditional Chinese culture.

#### **3.2 Compiling college English textbooks that highlight the excellent traditional Chinese culture**

The Guiding Outline for Ideological and Political Construction of Curriculum in Colleges and Universities (2020) clearly proposes that we should make full use of the main channel of classroom teaching, admire the teachers playing an important role in the process of the curriculum construction, and propose that in terms of professional education courses, we should, according to the characteristics and advantages of different disciplines, have a further study on the educational objectives of different majors, deeply dig and refine the ideological value and spiritual connotation contained in the knowledge system of professional education

courses, expand its breadth and depth, and increase the knowledge and humanistic nature of the courses, so as to enrich and improve our teaching results.

Based on what we have mentioned above, according to the college English teaching guidance curriculum objectives and requirements from the Ministry of Education in China, the English teachers from more than 10 representative art colleges in China have a good communication with each other, make a good investigation of the current English teaching in art colleges and the further analysis of the current college English teaching, and predicate its future development trend based on the criteria of the specific requirements of English Proficiency Scale in China. Then the series of textbooks of *New Journey of Arts* college English have been compiled in this new condition.

The contents of the textbook focus on the general knowledge in arts and serve the good communication between China and the other foreign countries, considering the exploration in the theory and the application in practice and including the historical overviews from different angles, and also the presentations of the new media and new art forms. The series of textbook have been composed of the four volumes to fit for the students' needs of different English level, mainly considering the vocabulary of different levels in each unit.

Each volume of the *New Journey of Art college English* textbook consists of 8 units, which aims to provide students with a general knowledge of the arts and the most popular vocabulary of art English. The first unit of each volume aims to introduce the core knowledge, and the following 7 units are arranged from two angles, both from home and abroad, and there are 7 categories of art (art, music, dance, film, drama, costume and architecture) in each volume, aiming to help students learn and understand Chinese and foreign culture and art from four aspects: history, creation, life and society. Such study has just meant to lead the students to love the excellent traditional Chinese culture, inherit it combining with their own majors, and innovate the excellent traditional Chinese culture in their own field.

### **3.3 Emphasizing excellent traditional Chinese culture in English courses**

In English teaching practice, the textbook focuses on Chinese art and culture, integrates the ideological and political elements of the curriculum, and highlights the advantages and characteristics of different disciplines of art areas, such as art and emotion to be achieved through a comprehensive study on a full range of teaching material, through the five basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation) training, paying attention to the effective ideological elements, carrying forward the socialist core values, cultivating the students' emotion of "Family-country" and enlarging their international vision, enhancing the students' cultural self-confidence, improving the students' art accomplishment, promoting the students' cross-cultural communication abilities, so as to realize the inheritance, innovation and dissemination of Chinese excellent traditional culture in different ways.

At the same time, teachers should conform to the actual needs of the development of both arts colleges and the major students, pay attention to effective teaching, pursue the effective teaching and effective learning, focus on art topics and situations, help students to learn and practice gradually, emphasize learning by doing, and improve their language communication ability. Through the repeated practice of art criticism writing, research projects, application letter writing, the description of the data and table of current heat issues, and other writing styles, students are expected to improve their comprehensive ability in English application. With the help of corpus, modern technology is applied to scientifically select and guide the students to effectively acquire phrases related to their majors, improve their idiomaticness and fluency in English language expression, and



cultivate talents with international artistic characteristics who are familiar with Chinese and foreign music, dance, film, costume, painting and opera.

#### **4.Reflection of English Teaching Combining with the Moral Cultivation in Arts colleges**

English teaching is a complex system engineering, involving teaching environment, both the soft environment and hard environment. The former refers to the school's cultural atmosphere, teaching managers' ideological consciousness and an act of will; the latter refers to the teaching space, teaching facilities, teaching software and etc.. In the process of teaching English courses for art students, teachers should care about students' learning motivation, learning style, learning strategies, learning objectives and so on. They should take great care about the students, understand the students well, put themselves in their shoes and make friends with the students. And the teachers should also make clear the orientation of talent training that varies from school to major according to the situation of students, and make clear the specific requirements of different learning stages, from the basic stage, to the bridge course, and then to the whole learning stage.

Besides that, the teachers should strengthen cooperation and establish the idea of community. They should not only continuously explore teaching theories, but also summarize their own teaching practice, and form teaching modes with their own styles that meet the needs of students of different condition. They should learn from each other through sharing, cooperation and communication, and promote their teaching from different aspects through appreciation and learning to make good progress. Especially facing up the new technology nowadays, the teachers should take more flexible teaching approach. It can be a flip class, the students-centered class, or the production oriented approach class (Wen Qiufang,2015, pp145-180). But no matter what teaching approach has been adopted, the students' satisfactory is the most important, which means the adopted teaching approach should fit for the students' taste, fit for the students' future development, even though it is not really easy. So, it can be said that the teaching approach may vary from person to person, from place to place, and from time to time, only the teaching target as the guideline remains well.

Then, how about the teaching effect? It is mainly from the teaching feedback, that is, the evaluation of the teaching effect came from the leaders of the teaching administration department, colleagues and students, as well as all kinds of online data in the teaching process, including the length of the students' participation, the report data of participating in online learning performance test, the quantity and quality of the teachers' online answers to the students' questions, and students' learning performance test results and etc. All these can be used as evidences to verify teachers' teaching effects. In this paper, the construction of art teaching resources and the compilation of a series of teaching materials have been explored, which is the first step in the construction of teaching resources. Centering on the teaching materials, how to write a good teaching plans, make the model lessons and record micro-lessons and MOOCs and etc. needs to be constantly explored and improved in the future teaching practice.

#### **5.Conclusion**

It is a long way to integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture into the English course teaching of art colleges. The construction of teaching materials is only the first step in the long march. The textbooks have

been compiled by the senior teachers of the representative arts colleges and universities in China, paying attention to the actual needs of art college students' professional development, considering the idiomatic language expression and the urgency of inheriting excellent traditional culture in the topic selection of the textbooks. In the process of language study and practice, much care should be taken of students' interests and new demands for future career development. While helping students to have a deep understanding of Chinese excellent culture and art, students' confidence in national culture should be enhanced, their English language practice ability should be improved, and excellent traditional culture should be inherited and innovated and communicated to the outside world will be encouraged as well.

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# The Beneficial Effects of Non-received Choice: A Study on Intrinsic Motivation in Biology Education

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## Abstract

Previous research has found conflicting evidence in studies where students participate in the selection of their course topics in educational settings. Katz and Assor (2007), for example, have argued that the increase in student motivation is probably not due to the mere act of choosing, but to the value of the options with respect to personal interest. The aim of our study was to investigate the impact of choice on aspects of motivation during biology lessons. Our sample consisted of five classes with 118 children of whom 63% were female. Their average age was 10.4 years (SD=0.6). One group of students was asked to select one topic out of four in a majority vote during a biology class, while a control group was simply assigned the same topic. Results: Students who chose their topic reported a higher level of intrinsic motivation than students who were not given the option. A surprising result was that the students in the voting group who did not receive their preferred choice reported the same level of motivation as those who did.

Keywords: Choice; Student vote; Autonomy; Intrinsic motivation

## 1. Introduction

Perceived self-determination or autonomy is regarded as beneficial to learning. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) supporting student autonomy benefits their engagement in learning as well as their intrinsic motivation. Self-determination theorists assume that promoting a student's autonomy means promoting an internal locus of causality, a sense of volition as well as the perception of choice (Reeve, 2002). In other words, a student should perceive his or her behavior as initiated and regulated by a personal, and not by an environmental force. Further, the student should feel an unpressured willingness to engage in an activity, as well as to be able to choose among several options (Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003). Empirical findings on choice in educational settings remain ambiguous, at least to some extent (for an overview, see Katz and Assor, 2007). Reeve et al. (2003) suggested that internal locus and volition, but not perceived choice, constituted valid indicators of the experience of autonomy and of intrinsic motivation. They proposed that in studies where choice had increased intrinsic motivation, it might have had little to do with the experience of deciding between options, and more with an internal locus and a volitional sense of causality. These findings are relevant to science teachers, for instance, who may find themselves unable to accommodate each student's choice individually. Ultimately, should it be the case that choice alone can motivate students, it becomes less important to the teacher whether this benefit arises from having promoted an internal locus of causality and volition, or from the mere act of choosing itself. What matters is the positive end product.

However, given that in educational settings majority votes tend to be easier to implement, the response of students whose choice is not realized remains to be clarified. These students probably do not sense volition or an internal locus of causality. If it turns out that the mere act of choosing in fact does not have an impact on self-determination or intrinsic motivation, no benefits for these students should be expected. It is possible that a ‘frustration effect’ (Folger, Rosenfield, Grove, & Corkran, 1979) can emerge, which can, in turn, result in a negative impact on motivation. Baldwins, Magjukas and Lohers’ (1991) study on trainee motivation found precisely this effect. When trainees made a selection, but did not receive their choice, their motivation to learn declined significantly. Other findings suggest that the positive outcome of choice is dependent on the personal value of that choice, indicating that choosing itself may have no positive effect (Reeve et al., 2003; Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002). In this regard, our study has yielded some unexpected results. The goal of the present study was to investigate whether it was either the realization of the pupils’ choice, or participation in a collective decision, that was responsible for the development of the pupils’ intrinsic motivation.

## 2.Theoretical Background

In self-determination theory, autonomy is a core concept (Ryan & Deci, 2006). The development of motivation requires the fulfillment of the pupils’ need for autonomy (and competence). The importance of autonomy has been examined in hundreds of studies (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Students who are autonomously motivated thrive in educational settings and benefit from their teachers support of their autonomy (Reeve, 2002). To clarify, autonomy refers to self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Autonomy is not the same as independence, and is not influenced externally (Krapp & Ryan, 2002). People can feel autonomy even when they perceive external pressure to do something, if they wholeheartedly consent to an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Reeve et al. (2003) identified three qualities of autonomy: perceived locus of causality, volition and perceived choice. The perceived locus of causality reflects the perception of whether one’s behavior is initiated by a personal (internal locus of causality) or an environmental (external perceived locus of causality) force (Reeve et al., 2003). Volition describes how free (or forced) people feel during an activity (Reeve et al., 2003). The third quality of autonomy is perceived choice. Perceived choice “emanates from being afforded decision-making flexibility and opportunities to choose what to do” (Reeve, 2002). Choice is meant to be able to enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Research on choice has produced equivocal findings (Katz & Assor, 2007). Ryan and Deci (2006) suggest that this may stem from the fact that choice has several meanings. For Ryan and Deci (2006), the feeling of choice refers to a sense of autonomy, and not necessarily to the presence of multiple options. It is possible to feel autonomous with only one option (indicating no choice), provided one endorses this option (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Katz and Assor (2007) explain the inconsistencies using the missing integrative conceptual framework. This framework should be able to describe what makes a choice beneficial. They reviewed several studies about choice through the prism of SDT and found that choice was a motivating factor in the studies where the three basic psychological needs were satisfied, or at least not ignored (Katz & Assor, 2007). To satisfy the need for autonomy Katz and Assor postulate that the options have to be relevant to the voter’s interests and goals. As such, the effects of choice should be interpreted with caution because choice is often confounded by many other factors, i.e. interest (Reynolds & Symons, 2001). In a meta-analysis of 41 studies, Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008) examined the effect of choice on intrinsic motivation and related outcomes. Their results indicated a

beneficial effect of choice, with the circumstances surrounding the choice influencing the effects (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). Not all types of choice enhance intrinsic motivation. Choices that support the need for autonomy appear to have a greater impact on motivation, performance and learning, for example. As such, the choice should reflect the values, goals or interests of the voter (Patall et al., 2008).

The goal of the current study was to investigate a choice-treatment with the potential to affect autonomy (e.g. Patall et al., 2008; Katz & Assor, 2007). We designed our study to be maximally relevant to a “real-school-context” where classes of approximately thirty pupils are taught by a single teacher. We used a majority vote paradigm where students could vote on the topic for their next biology lessons. The students had four options, and all had positive connotations. Our study investigated the effect that a majority vote selection on subsequent lessons might have on motivation. We considered motivational differences between those students who received their selection, and those who did not.

### 3.Hypotheses

Since choice appears to support the basic needs of students, and in particular of autonomy, we propose that it has a positive effect on pupil motivation. The first hypothesis reads as follows:

H1: Pupils with the option to select the topic of their next biology lessons have higher intrinsic motivation than pupils without choice.

Presumably, the option to choose a topic can only serve to increase the motivation of an individual pupil when that topic is selected for teaching. In this case, the attractiveness of the topic alone should be responsible for the increase in intrinsic motivation, and not the act of choosing.

H2: Pupils whose vote helped select the winning topic have higher intrinsic motivation than those who did not.

### 4.Methods

The participants were 118 children (63% girls) from five classes. The average age was 10.4 years (SD=0.6). The fifth-grade pupils came from similar schools in the same region. The students were taught by graduate students who planned and practiced the lessons together. There were two conditions, a choice condition, and a no choice condition that served as the study’s control. In the *choice* condition, three classes (N= 73) participated in a majority vote to select one out of four biology topics. These were ‘exercise and sports’, ‘injuries’, ‘healthy diet’ and ‘nutrition’. The chosen topic (‘exercise and sports’) was then taught as a sequence of four biology lessons. The four topics were presented in an unbiased manner by the student-teacher. At least two of the topics were thought to be of interest to pupils at this age. The attractiveness of various biological topics has been well researched in Germany (cf. for example: Löwe, 1992). The two remaining classes (N=45) were placed in the no choice condition and were simply assigned the same topic. Since a majority vote was taken, there were students in the choice condition that received their choice (*choice received condition*, N=30) as well as students that did not (*choice not received condition*, N=43), resulting in a total of three choice conditions. To compare the conditions (*no choice*, *choice received*, *choice not received*) with regard to their effect on intrinsic motivation, all students were asked to complete a translated, modified version of Deci and Ryan’s (2010) Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI). This modified version of the IMI consisted of four subscales: *interest/enjoyment*, *perceived choice*, *perceived competence*, and *pressure/tension*. *Interest/enjoyment* ( $\alpha=.85$ ), was used to assess

intrinsic motivation per se. *Perceived choice* ( $\alpha=.76$ ) and *perceived competence* ( $\alpha=.78$ ) are positive predictors of intrinsic motivation. The subscale *perceived choice* should have been better named *perceived autonomy* since it is used to measure feelings of autonomy. Ryan and Deci (2006) define choice as a sense of volition or autonomy, and does not necessarily imply having many options. A sample item was, “I could work in the way I wanted to work”. *Pressure/tension* ( $\alpha=.63$ ) is a negative predictor of intrinsic motivation. Validity (factor analyses and criterion validity) for this adaptation of the IMI was provided by Wilde, Bätz, Kovaleva and Urhahne (2009).

## 5.Results

We present results for all three conditions: pupils who (a) did not choose a topic (no choice), (b) those who chose and received their choice (choice received) and (c) those who chose but did not receive their preference (choice not received). The overall results of the multivariate ANOVA found no principal effect for gender on intrinsic motivation as well as no interaction between gender and condition, thus ruling out gender differences. However, overall results did show a significant effect of ‘condition’ in relation to the dependent variables interest/enjoyment ( $F(2,109)=5.58, p<.01, \eta^2=0.1$ ), perceived choice ( $F(2,109)=3.91, p<.05, \eta^2=0.07$ ) and pressure/tension ( $F(2,109)=3.49, p<.05, \eta^2=0.06$ ). No difference was found for perceived competence ( $F(2,109)=2.27, p=ns$ ). Orthogonal contrasts between the conditions were conducted to further explore the nature of the observed differences. The first contrast compared the control group, namely the *no choice* condition, to the *choice* condition (regardless of whether choice was received or not). The results showed a significantly higher level of interest/enjoyment for the *choice condition* ( $CI: .546\pm.327; p<.01$ ), as well as for perceived choice ( $CI: .447\pm.322, p<.01$ ), and for perceived competence ( $CI: .294\pm.276, p<.01$ ). Pressure/tension were found to be significantly lower ( $CI: .311\pm.307; p<.05$ ). Of interest are the findings concerning the comparison between the *choice received* condition and the *choice not received* condition (second contrast). There was no difference between these two groups for any of the subscales: interest/enjoyment ( $CI: -.110\pm.427, p=ns$ ), perceived competence ( $CI: .063\pm.361, p=ns$ ), perceived choice ( $CI: -.109\pm.420, p=ns$ ), pressure/tension ( $CI: .356\pm.402, p=ns$ ). Figure 1 shows our findings.

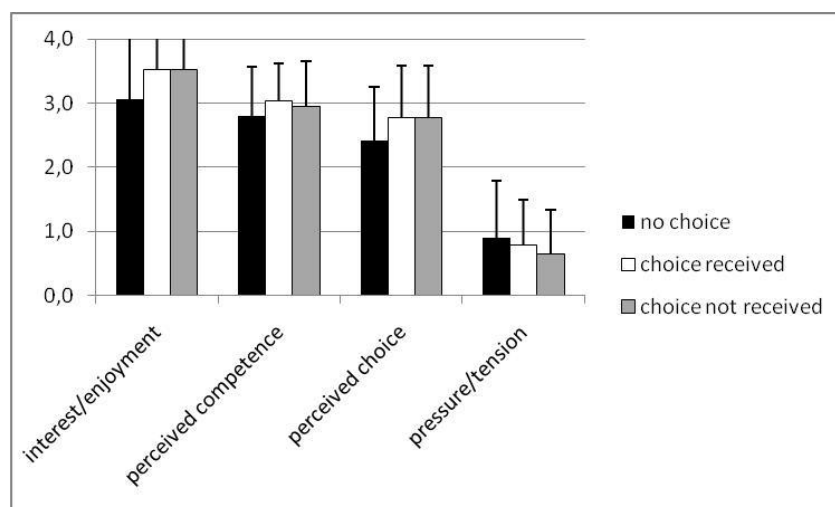


Figure 1. Results of the modified version of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory with four subscales (N=118)

## 6. Discussion

Firstly, we hypothesized a positive effect of students' choice on intrinsic motivation. Our study results support our hypothesis. Findings on the effects of choice on autonomy (and motivation) are ambiguous in the literature. For example, Katz and Assor (2007) reported positive, negative or no effects of choice in a range of studies. Patall et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis, and concluded that choice might have positive effects on autonomy, given certain circumstances, i.e. the options and the number of options (see also Iyengar & Lepper, 2000) need to be adequate and, in particular, the surveillance and the attendance of the students need to be appropriately controlled. The options should not conflict with the attitudes of the students or their parents. Furthermore, at least one of the options should be interesting so as to make the process attractive and meaningful to the students (Meyer -Ahrens & Wilde, 2013). These are prerequisites for a meaningful choice and an effective impact on the students' autonomy. We assume that the positive effect on intrinsic motivation found in the current study was strongly dependent on the students' perception of autonomy and the operationalization of the vote. This context appears to be appropriate for eleven year -olds: four options, including interesting options; an explanation of the selection process; transparency of the procedure; a report of the outcome in the same lesson; a caring attitude by the teacher towards the students. Presumably, the basic needs were incorporated appropriately in the selection process and in the subsequent lessons. In addition, it appears that the students were affected positively by the choice of their topic, and their perceived autonomy.

Secondly, we were interested in knowing if the process of choosing alone might influence motivation, or if only a fulfilled choice had a positive effect. The comparison of the two main conditions, i.e. "choice received" and "choice not received" led to an unexpected result when compared to previous research (Folger et al., 1979; Baldwin et al., 1991). We found no difference in motivation between the groups. Unlike in most other studies, the difference between choice and no choice cannot entirely be attributed to the congruence of the chosen topic and individual interests (Katz & Assor, 2007; Patall et al., 2008). The students who voted for their topic, but didn't receive their choice, reported the same level of motivation as those students who received their choice. Their higher motivation seems attributable to the voting process itself. Further, no frustration was found when choice was not realized. The students who participated in the voting process showed no significant differences with regard to their perceived competence, perceived choice and perceived pressure during the lessons. Despite the fact that not all the students were taught their chosen topic, the group as a whole seemed to perceive the selection process as self-determined. This suggests that the lesson might have been experienced as „commonly determined". The pupils understood that in a democratic vote not all wishes can be satisfied. Therefore, we assume that the individuals' locus of causality and volition (Reeve, 2002) did not suffer when not receiving their choice. A caring and appreciative attitude towards the pupils, as well as openness and transparency in the choosing process (see also Patall et al., 2008) might have prepared the pupils who did not receive their choice to fully accept the results of the vote. They may have felt connected to their fellow pupils (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and feeling a part of the class may have led them to embrace the group decision as their own. Consequently, all pupils of the choice treatment perceived autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

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# On the Translation of Trademark Names from the Perspective of Aesthetics

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## Abstract

Trademark is a kind of sign made of words and patterns used by enterprises on their goods. As the business card of enterprises, it plays an important role in market promotion. Its main function is to publicize products, attract potential customers and turn customers' purchase desire into consumer behavior. Therefore, successful trademark words are the catalyst for enterprises to improve their market share. In the process of translating trademark words, the translator should reproduce the aesthetic characteristics of trademark words, so as to realize the function of trademark. From the perspective of translation aesthetics, taking the trademarks of Fortune Global 500 enterprises as an example, the author analyzes the aesthetic characteristics of trademark words of major enterprises, and discusses the translation strategies of trademark words from the perspectives of meaning beauty, shape beauty, sound beauty and cultural beauty.

Key words: Trademark words; Aesthetics; Translation strategy

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, many products have entered foreign markets, and in the sales process, trademarks play an important role. Trademark can be divided into two parts: trademark names and trademark symbols. The former includes words, letters and numbers, i.e., the part of trademarks that can be expressed in words; the latter refers to the part that can be recognized but cannot be expressed in words such as graphics, three-dimensional signs and colors (Wang & Du, 2020). When a product enters a foreign market, its trademark name needs to be translated into the target language, while the symbol usually remains unchanged. Therefore, the translation of trademarks discussed by the author in this article refers to the translation of trademark names. Only trademark names that meet the aesthetics of target consumers can attract the majority of consumers. Hence, in the translation process, translators should highlight the beauty of the form, sound, meaning and culture of trademark names while conveying the product information completely.

## 2. Aesthetic Characteristics of Trademark Names

Aesthetic factors play a vital role in the process of product promotion and sales. Moreover, successful commercial advertisements are embodied with both connotative and linguistic beauty. As for connotative beauty, it includes: contextual beauty, form beauty, emotional beauty and cultural beauty. Therefore, translators should be able to appreciate the beauty of trademark names both in English and Chinese, and reproduce the aesthetic quality and content of the original trademark names as completely as possible in the translation process. First of all, translators must have a solid foundation in both English and Chinese; then, translators should have professional knowledge of commercial aesthetics and the aesthetic ability to analyze the characteristics of the original trademark names from an aesthetic point of view so that the two aesthetic qualities of the source language and the target language are the same.

### 2.1 Form Beauty of Trademark Names

The form beauty of trademark names refers to the beauty of its shape or structure. In the translation process, the form beauty of trademark names means that the translated version of trademarks or brands uses beautiful

words that are similar to the form and characteristics of the original version. For example, (华润集团 Hua Run Ji Tuan) China Resources Group (pharmaceuticals), (碧桂园 Bi Gui Yuan) Country Garden Holdings (real estate), (正威国际 Zheng Wei Guo Ji) Amer International Group (metal products), (美的集团 Mei Di Ji Tuan) Midea Group (electronics, electrical equipment), (苏宁易购 Su Ning Yi Gou) Suning.com Group (specialty retail), (兴业银行 Xing Ye Yin Hang) Industrial Bank (bank), and other trademark names of Chinese companies are inherently aesthetic in character, because 润 (Run), 碧 (Bi), 威 (Wei), 美 (Mei), 宁 (Ning) and 兴 (Xing) are all positive and beautiful words in Chinese, which reflects enterprises' psychology of seeking beauty to give consumers a good feeling. Furthermore, for the translation of foreign trademark names such as Carrefour (家乐福 Jia Le Fu) (food and grocery stores), AXA (安盛 An Sheng) (life and health insurance), Tesco (乐购 Le Gou) (food and grocery stores), Johnson & Johnson (强生 Qiang Sheng) (pharmaceuticals), Peugeot (标致 Biao zhi) (vehicles and parts), and Vinci (万喜 Wan Xi) (engineering and construction), the Chinese characters 乐 (Le), 福 (Fu), 安 (An), 盛 (Sheng), and 喜 (Xi) can mean auspicious, and translators have fully catered to the aesthetic needs of Chinese consumers.

## 2.2 Meaning Beauty of Trademark Names

The meaning beauty of trademark names refers to its contextual and content beauty, which means that trade names set off a certain context through the associative meaning of words or the connotative combination of constituent words, so that people can have rich and beautiful associations, and people's desire and pursuit for beauty can be provoked (Hu & Chen, 2000). For instance, in Huawei Harmony Operating System (OS), there is a blue horizontal line below letter O. Its designer says that the inspiration for the horizontal line comes from the Chinese character Dan (旦) which first appeared in the oracle bone script. Its glyph is a circle with a horizontal line underneath, signifying the sun rising from the horizon, which can be derived to mean the beginning of the universe; and at the same time, the blue color symbolizes the deep color of the universe, reflecting the interconnected nature of Harmony OS. Therefore, the design and intention behind this brand name have indicated the contextual beauty of the trademark names. Another example is Nestle (food). In German, nestle means little bird's nest, and in English, it means settling down comfortably and snuggling. The earliest product of Nestle is milk cereal, and its popularity stems from the story behind the brand telling the founder Henry took in and fed an abandoned child with milk cereal. Eventually, the milk cereal spread all over the world and Nestle thus takes a triumphant step forward. To this day, Nestle products use this name because it represents happiness, hope, love, nature and nutrition. When consumers buy products, although they pay much attention to the overall cost performance of the products, what resonates more with consumers' values is the story behind brands. Nestle is cleverly using the trademark name and the story behind it to create a context of happiness and love, thus attracting a large number of consumers.

## 2.3 Sound Beauty of Trademark Names

The sound beauty of trademark names refers to phonetic beauty. Most English trademark names consist of loud vowels with large openness (mainly diphthongs and long vowels) and consonants with little obstruction and easy spelling features. Because of those vowels and consonants, the pronunciation of trademark names is crisp, loud and easy to remember and spread (Zhu, 2010). For example, the pronunciation of trademark names such as Compass Group (food service), Mckesson (health care), Daimler (vehicles and parts), Amazon (Internet services and retail), and Canon (computers and office equipment) are rhythmic and crisp. In addition, the sound beauty of trademark names is also reflected in its rhyme beauty, which means that the pronunciation of trademark names is loud and has a strong stretch. The pronunciation mostly uses rhyme such as head rhyme, meta rhyme and stacked rhyme to achieve rhyme harmony and easiness to remember. For example, in trademark names such as Samsung Electronics (electronics, electrical equipment), Sysco (food), Humana (health care), Volvo (vehicles and parts), Woolworths (food stores and grocery stores), Schlumberger (oil and gas equipment and services), the repeated use of the same or similar consonants or vowels creates the rhythmic beauty of trademarked names.

## 2.4 Cultural Beauty of Trademark Names

The cultural beauty of trademark names refers to the fact that trademark names themselves carry a rich culture, and the process of translation is the process of docking two cultures. The acceptance of a certain commodity by consumers is a manifestation of cultural demand and cultural identity, and a successful trademark name should reflect the history and culture of a country or nation from the side and meet the national culture and demand of consumers. For example, the Chinese translation for the U.S. brand Citibank is 花旗银行 (Hua Qi Yin Hang). The translation has no direct connection with the source language. It is actually derived from the characteristics of the U.S. flag. When the bank entered the Shanghai market, the red stripes, blue background and white stars on the rising U.S. flag were called 花旗 (Hua Qi) by the people, which was a kind of recognition of American culture by the general consumers. Therefore, the bank was also called 花旗银行 (Hua Qi Yin Hang), and the translation is still in use today. Hence, the translation of trademark names should be an organic combination of cultures of the source language and the translated language, so as to reproduce the cultural beauty of the source language.

## 3. Discussion on the Translation Methods of Trademark Names

The famous American linguist Eugene Nida put forward the translation theory of dynamic equivalence in 1969, or the theory of functional equivalence, in which the equivalence includes four aspects: a. lexical equivalence; b. syntactic equivalence; c. chapter equivalence; d. stylistic equivalence. Nida believes that "meaning is the most important, and form is the second most important" (Guo, 2000: 67). Form will imprison the cultural meaning of the source language. Therefore, in the translation of trademark names, translators should take Nida's functional equivalence theory as the principle of translation, so as to accurately reproduce the aesthetic quality of the source language in the translated language.

### 3.1 Transliteration

Transliteration is the conversion of the pronunciation form of a trademarked name into another pronunciation form of the target language, while preserving the phonetics of the source language. For example, the translation of trademark names such as Metro (Ma De Long), Paccar (Pa Ka), Mazda (Ma Zi Da), Bayer (Bai Er), Walmart (Wo Er Ma), Chevron (Xue Fo Long) uses the transliteration method, reflecting the phonetic beauty of the source language. Another example is the brand of Coca-Cola. In the 1920s, when this brand was produced in Shanghai, its Chinese name was 蝌蚪啃蜡 (Ke Dou Keng La), which was not well accepted by consumers, and thus, consumers' awareness of the product were little. As a result, the export company responsible for overseas business offered a reward for the translation of the brand, and Jiang Yi, a Shanghai professor at the time, won the gold medal with the translation 可口可乐 (Ke Kou Ke Le). The translation 可口可乐 (Ke Kou Ke Le) not only reproduces the phonetic rhyme of the source language, but also contains the Chinese cultural word 乐(Le), which stands for happiness. Therefore, the translation conveys the characteristics of the product to consumers. In summary, the translation of trademark names should conform to the national aesthetic psychology. The aesthetic function of trademark names is mainly reflected in catering to the national aesthetic psychology and beauty-seeking psychology of consumers. So, when foreign brands are introduced to China, they should skillfully use or cater to this aesthetic psychology of the Chinese nation (Hong, 2006). For instance, the translation 可口可乐 (Ke Kou Ke Le) reproduces the beauty of sound, meaning and culture, reflecting Chinese popular culture and catering to the aesthetic psychology of Chinese consumers.

### 3.2 Literal Translation

The literal translation refers to the method that does not change the form and content of the original text. The literal translation can retain the form of the original text more completely and can directly translate the beauty of the original trademarked names. There are examples such as Shell (Ke Pai 壳牌) (oil refining), Microsoft (Wei Ruan 微软) (computer software), General Electric (Tong Yong Dian Qi 通用电气) (industrial machinery), Facebook (Lian Shu 脸书) (Internet services and retail), Crown (Huang Guan 皇冠) (automobiles).

However, since the differences between the English and Chinese languages are much greater than their similarities, the literal translation method is not widely applicable and should only be used when the two cultures are compatible. Nevertheless, many Chinese companies use Chinese pronunciation for the translation of their trademark names, such as Yankuang Group (mining, crude oil production), Honghai Precision Industry (electronics, electrical equipment), China Baowu Steel Group (metal products), Pingan Group (life and health insurance), Huawei Investment & Holding (network, communication equipment), etc. Although Westerners believe that the targeted audience of Chinese pronunciation is limited to Chinese consumers and the Chinese pronunciation does not meet the aesthetic needs of consumers in other countries, with China's increasing international status, more and more Chinese products are recognized by global consumers, and consumers in other countries are gradually starting to accept Chinese pronunciation as international trademarks.

### 3.3 Creative Translation

The creative translation does not stick to the form of trademarks, but focuses on the function of trademark names. For example, Lenovo used to be translated into English as Legend; however, this English name had been registered in many other countries before, and Lenovo's products cannot use the trademark Legend for overseas marketing. Therefore, Lenovo created its own word: Lenovo, in which, Le comes from the previous part of Legend, remaining the meaning of Legend; novo is a Latin root, representing new ideas, innovation. So, the whole word means innovative thinking and thought innovation, reflecting the core innovation culture of Lenovo's brand. It can be concluded that the translated name is only detached from the linguistic form, but obtains the equivalent aesthetic quality. There are many examples of creative translation of trademark names. For instance, if Volkswagen is translated literally, the name will be bland and uninteresting, and it will not win the favor of consumers quickly. Its logo is composed of the V of Volks and the W of Wagen, and when the logo is turned upside down, it is similar to the Chinese character 众 (Zhong). Therefore, it is translated by the creative translation method as 大众 (Da Zhong), meaning the national car, which is not only in line with the original intention of the brand founder, but also brings consumers a sense of affinity. Similarly, for the U.S. home building supplies retailer Home Depot, if it is directly translated or transliterated as 家的仓库 (Jia De Cang Ku), the Chinese version will be slightly rigid. Although it can achieve its purpose, but it cannot bring the comfort as the name 家得宝 (Jia De Bao). When consumers buy the products, they can have the feeling of obtaining a treasure. Therefore, when there is a cultural difference between the source language and the translated language, the creative translation method can resolve the conflict brought by this difference.

Take the translation of Chinese and Western numbers as an example, the meaning of the same number in Chinese and Western cultures is different, and the translation of fuzzy numbers cannot stick to the numerical value of the number itself. Translators should carefully choose appropriate words to translate the image and momentum of numbers. For instance, the English translation of 中国五矿集团公司 (Zhong Guo Wu Kuang Ji Tuan Gong Si) is China Minmetals Corporation. If it is directly translated as Five Minerals, the target readers will have misunderstanding. In ancient China, five refers to water, wood, gold, fire and earth, and the company is mainly engaged in the development, production, trade and comprehensive services of metals and minerals. Therefore, the choice of Minmetals, a combination of minerals and metals, as the name of the company, not only represents the image of the company, but also directly reflects the main business scope of the company. It is thus possible to obtain aesthetic effects through creative translation that direct translation cannot bring. It can be concluded that "the creative translation is the most flexible method, which can set aside the restrictions of the form and pronunciation of trademark names in the source language and give maximum play to imagination and creativity to create a new term that is loud and eye-catching and perfectly fits the cultural environment and aesthetic psychology of the target language according to the nature and characteristics of a product" (Gu, 2012: 142). The use of creative translation to translate trademark names is able to reproduce the aesthetic quality similar to that of the trademark names in the source language. Therefore, creative translation is used more frequently in trademark translation.

## 4. Conclusion

In summary, the trademark name is the carrier of the basic information of a commodity, the unique identity of the commodity, and moreover, the mark where a certain type of commodity distinguishes itself from other commodities in the market. Only when a commodity has a trademark, it has its own unique value and can clearly position itself in the market (Cui, 2019). Therefore, in the translation process, translators must recognize the deeper meaning of trademark names, and should also be aware that the translation of trademark names is not a process of rigid conversion between English and Chinese, but a cross-cultural communication activity and an aesthetic activity. The most direct purpose of the translation is to let consumers familiarize with a product and its efficacy, so as to stimulate their desire to buy the product. The indirect purpose is to promote an enterprise and open up the market, so as to bring commercial benefits to the enterprise. Therefore, translators should translate trademark names through literal translation, transliteration and creative translation strategies to directly or indirectly reproduce the aesthetic quality and aesthetic effect of trademark names in the source language, so as to convey the attributes of commodities to the maximum extent, attract consumers, and trigger their desire to buy the commodities.

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# The Water Babies and Aesthetic Modernity

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## Abstract

Darwin's *The Origin of Species* came into the world in 1859. The evolution theory in the book triggered anxiety among the British at that moment. Therefore, Charles Kingsley wrote the book *THE WATER BABIES*, a Children's Literature, to express his own views. Nowadays, scholars have realized contributions the book made to the evolution theory. They prefer to analyze Tom's experience (from human being to a water baby and from the water baby to human being) to demonstrate the meaning of the book. However, previous writings ignore the truth that *THE WATER BABIES* also has an influence on Aesthetic modernity. This thesis tries to understand the book from the perspective of modernity.

Key Words: *THE WATER BABIES*; Aesthetic modernity; Charles Kingsley

## 1. Introduction

Victoria Era was a stage in which aesthetic modernity contradicted with mechanic modernity and headed for independence. On the one hand, mechanic modernity with process as its core dominated British society and became a universal ideology. On the other hand, in the art field aesthetic modernity with rebellion as its core rose against the main trend. Charles Kingsley(1819-1875), a distinguished British writer in Victoria Era, wrote a book *The Water Babies*. There are some scenery describing the influence made by industrial evolution in this book. It reflects the aesthetic modernity to some point.

## 2. Background

Ethical Literary Criticism holds the point that literature is a unique form of expression of ethical ideas and moral life in a specific historical period. It is emphasized that we are supposed to understand the work from the real situation of that time. *THE WATER BABIES*, masterpiece of Charles Kingsley, was first published in 1863. That totally belongs to Victorian Era. Victorian Era is defined by the reign of Alexandriana Victoria, which began in 1837 and ended in 1901. During that period, England was in paradigm shift, from agricultural civilization to industrial civilization. Victorian had faith in science. They were optimistic about the industrial revolution. The advent of the steamboat led to an unprecedented boom in trade. Extensive railway traffic spread all over the country. Discourse of progress dominated the society. The first Industrial Revolution did give England a new appearance. But at the same time, bad things followed. People wanted to conquer the nature. Plenty of wastes of factories harm the environment. Nihilism existed. Utilitarians believed it is absolutely right to pursue the profits which can meet the need of the majority of people. Therefore, some far-sighted writers were acutely aware of this change. They criticized the so-called "discourse of progress", product of mechanic modernity. George Eliot, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray(*Vanity Fair*), Thomas Hardy(*Far from the Madding Crowd*) and Charles Kingsley were all the pioneers.

## 3 Aesthetic Modernity and Mechanic Modernity

Modernity is the philosophical thought that answers what is modern value and modern thinking. Modernity

is an indispensable modern cultural thought and modern consciousness (Tong, 2008, p.3). It is an ideal blueprint for the future proposed by Enlightenment thinkers under the passion for change.

### 3.1 Basic concepts

Matei Calinescu, an American writer, wrote in his book *FIVE FACES OF MODERNITY* "What is certain is that at some point during the first half of the nineteenth century an irreversible split occurred between modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization -- a product of scientific and technological progress, of the industrial revolution, of the sweeping economic and social changes brought about by capitalism -and modernity as an aesthetic concept. Since then, the relations between the two modernities have been irreducibly hostile, but not without allowing and even stimulating a variety of mutual influences in their rage for each other's destruction." (Calinescu, 1987, p.41)

As Matei Calinescu's description, the first one is Mechanic Modernity (Philistine Modernity, Bourgeois Modernity). Believing in the beneficial possibilities of science and technology, it is featured by the doctrine of progress. By contrast, the other is Aesthetic modernity. It hates the values of middle class, and expresses its disgust through the most diverse means. There are many representatives of the aesthetic modernity around the world. For example, Gustave Flaubert and Charles Pierre Baudelaire in France, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky in Russia, Franz Kafka in Austro-Hungary and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in German. But this thesis focuses on Charles Kingsley and his work *The Water Babies*.

### 3.2 The origins of modernity

The modernity stemmed from the Enlightenment Movement, which is the struggle that the progressive class of the bourgeoisie fight against the feudalism. Its peak in England is from 17th century to 18th century. The exciting words, "Science", "Reason", "Knowledge" and "Progress", formed the grand narrative of the Enlightenment. It presented a promising and beautiful future. Under the doctrine, someone was inspired and became successful, while someone was at loss and suffered failure. Based on that, the media contributed to the development of modernity as well. The opportunistic publisher began the practice of cheap reprints, providing the yellowback series to working class and extending the reading market.

### 3.3 The reasons why people advocate the Aesthetic modernity

First, in Victoria Era, Science was emphasized excessively. When all the people think that science is equal to truth and order, then new kind of superstition appears. And the great narrative of Enlightenment is by nature fraud. Second, The mechanic modernity believes the perfectibility of man, holding the point that man are flawless as same as robot and progress is inevitable. So they put forward that human being is capable of defeating poverty, weakness, disease and even death. That view obeys law of nature.

## 4. Exemplifying with Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*

*The Water Babies* is considered as a milestone that marks the liberation of children's imagination. It expounds adult problems from the perspective of children. Different from others, it is an innovation.

### 4.1 The images

*The Water Babies* is a fairy tale for land babies. It, of course, comprises many creatures living in water, such as seals, salmon, trout and bass. However, we are supposed to notice other images. The first one is chimney. Before becoming a water baby, Tom was a chimney-sweeper. Under the cruel governess of Grimes, he is responsible for cleaning endless chimneys. Tom has to climb the dark flues, and the soot got into his eyes. In the book the chimneys are always dirty and sordid. It is these chimneys that make him like a little black ape. The second one is ship. In the chapter 7, Charles Kingsley mentioned the ship and described it as an ugly sight. As we all know, England finished the First Industrial Revolution in 1840s. People racked their brains to make progress, even at the expense of the environment. Both the chimneys and the ships are the symbols of Victoria

Era and the results of the bourgeoisie's pursuit of profit. When Charles Kingsley described them, he was inclined to choose the negative words. This implies Kingsley's attitude toward Bourgeois modernity to a certain degree.

#### 4.2 The environment

Apart from the images, there are some interesting and convincing sentences in the book. I would like to choose three of them to be examples. At the beginning of the book, Grimes and Tom are on the road to Harthover Place. The following sentence is what they saw. "They passed through the pitmen's village, all shut up and silent now, and through the turnpike; and then they were out in the real country, and plodding along the **black dusty** road, between black **slag** walls, with no sound but the groaning and thumping of the pit-engine in the next field" (Kingsley, 1863, p.6). these words, "Black", "Dusty" and "Slag", reveal the author's dissatisfaction. Coal was the main energy source of the First Industrial Revolution. It stood for Bourgeois modernity and its excessive use brought harm to the earth. Then, when Tom tries to find the way to Shiny Wall, he meets an old lady, the last of the Gairfowl. The old lady complains about her experience to Tom. "But men **shot** us so, and **knocked** us on the head, and **took** our eggs...At last, there were none of us left...for one day, when I was quite a young girl, the land rocked, and the sea boiled, and the sky grew dark, and all the air was filled with smoke and dust..."(Kingsley, 1863, p.124). "shot", "knocked" and "took", these three verbs that are juxtaposed reveal the people at that time were nonchalant to the nature. It is also a manifestation of Bourgeois modernity. The following is another example showing the indifference of Victorian. "...lest men should go there and shoot the birds, and stuff them, and put them into **stupid** museums..."(Kingsley, 1863, p.126). In our common knowledge, museum is modern, having no relations with "stupid". Obviously, Kingsley expressed his hates by using such an emotional word.

### 5. Conclusion

During the period of Victorian Era, England was in paradigm shift, from agricultural civilization to industrial civilization. Discourse of progress dominated the society. However, in the art field aesthetic modernity with rebellion as its core rose against the main trend. *The Water Babies* is an example. The images and environmental descriptions in the book reflect Charles Kingsley's Aesthetic modernity advocacy.

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## **From Beast to Prince**

### **—Oedipal Beauty’s Psychosexual Development**

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#### **Abstract**

As a well-down fairy tale, *Beauty and the Beast* has many variations. But no matter how different they are, there are three common features: absence of mother; oedipal love between Beauty and her father; and because of father, Beauty meets Beast. These three features best interpret a girl’s psychosexual development from love attachment to father to her real lover. When it happens, Beast becomes prince, girl becomes woman.

**Key words:** Oedipal complex, Psychosexual development

*Beauty and the Beast* is a traditional fairy tale around the world. There are hundreds of different versions. The popular one is Disney’s animated film in 1991, and the newly-released is the live-action adaptation in 2017 which is largely faithful to the 1991 animation.

The story was written and published firstly in 1740 by French novelist Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve--- a novel-length story with nine chapters intended for adult readers and addressing the issues of the marriage system of the day in which women had no right to choose their husband or refuse to marry. Then it was abridged and rewritten by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont in 1756 with name *La Belle et la Bete* and by Brothers Grimm in 1884, Andrew Lang in 1889, to produce the versions most commonly retold. After that, many story variations appear from America, Greece and Scandinavia to Africa, Indonesia and China, among others. The Beast also takes different forms from bear, pig, and snake to frog, bull or horse. All the stories are classified into Animal-Groom story.

The different versions differentiate mainly from the following two aspects:

Family members are different. In Villeneuve version, the family has twelve children, six sons and six daughters; In Beaumont version, the family has six children, three sons and three daughters; in Cocteau’s film version, three girls and one boy; In Brothers Grimm version, three girls. And In Disney’s animation, Beauty is only-one child. It seems that with the family smaller, the story is shorter and simpler.

No matter how big the family is, if there are sons, they must be good-for-nothing. If there are other daughters, they must be selfish, pompous and unloving. Beauty, as the youngest, is always independent, courageous, and well-read with a pure and loving heart.

Father’s job is different. In Villeneuve and Beaumont version, Beauty’s father is a very rich merchant which match with the big family with twelve and six children because if he had immense wealth, he had also a great many children (Villeneuve, 1740, P1). The fortune makes the two eldest daughters have a great deal of pride. They gave themselves ridiculous airs, and would not visit other merchants’ daughters, nor keep company with any but persons of quality. They went out everyday to parties of pleasure, balls, concerts, and they laughed at their youngest sister, because she spent the greatest part of her time in reading good books. They said they

would not marry until met with a duke or an earl at least, but Beauty very civilly thanked the young men who courted her that she was too young yet to marry, but chose to stay with her father a few years longer.

Then, all at once the merchant lost his whole fortune, excepting a small country house at a great distance from town. The two eldest said they would not leave the town, for they had several lovers, who they were sure would be glad to have them, though they had no fortune; but the good ladies were mistaken. Everybody said, they do not deserve to be pitied, we are very glad to see their pride humbled, let them go and give themselves quality airs in milking the cows and minding their dairy. But we are extremely concerned for Beauty, she was such a charming, sweet-tempered creature, spoke so kindly to poor people, and was of such an affable, obliging behavior. Several gentlemen would have married her, though they knew she had not a penny; but she told them she could not think of leaving her poor father in his misfortunes, but was determined to go along with him into the country to comfort and attend him. When they came to their country house, Beauty rose at four in the morning, and made haste to have the house clean and dinner ready for the family. After she had done her work, she read, played on the harpsichord, or else sung whilst she spun. On the contrary, her two sisters got up at ten, did nothing but saunter about the whole day, lamenting the loss of their fine clothes and acquaintance. (Beaumont, 1756, P.1-2) This big change in life makes a good contrast between Beauty and her elder sisters.

In Disney animation (1991) and live-action (2017), Beauty's father is a music-box maker--- a little romantic job. He and his only daughter Beauty stick together and help each other to make ends meet. There is no big fortune, no big misfortune and no contrast between the daughters.

No matter how different the versions are, there are three common features for all: absence of mother, oedipal love between Beauty and her father and because of father, Beauty meets the Beast. This thesis will analyze these three core elements based on Beaumont version to conclude that Beauty and the Beast is a story about transformation of a virgin attached to her father into a mature female no longer afraid of her sexuality---that is a young girl's psychosexual development.

## 1. Absence of Mother

In *Beauty and the Beast*, all the versions don't tell anything about Beauty's mother. Only in the 2017 live action, with the help of Beast's enchanted book which can take you everywhere you want, Beauty knows before her mother's death of plague, they three lived happily in Paris. After her mother died, her father took her fled to a small village living the provincial life.

This condition can best explain Oedipus complex----a very important term of psychoanalysis

In a letter to Fliess dated 15 October 1897, Freud discusses the progress of his self-analysis:

*I have found, in my own case too, falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father, and I now regard it as a universal event of early childhood... if that is so, we can understand the riveting power of Oedipus Rex, in spite of all the objections...the Greek legend seizes on a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he feels its existence within himself. Each member of the audience was once, in germ and in phantasy, just such an Oedipus...*

Freud's understanding of the complex is that the son competes with his father for his mother and wants to eliminate him as his rival, and the daughter competes with her mother for her father and wants to do away with her. He names it "Oedipus Complex" firstly in a letter to Ferenczi, dated 28 June 1908 and underscores its importance at end of his life stating that: "No other achievement than the discovery of the repressed Oedipus complex...alone would give it a claim to be included among the precious new acquisitions of mankind".

The absence of mother implies Beauty's oedipal fixation and attachment to her father because as a girl, according to Freudian theory, her death-wish is directed against her mother. ABSENCE here means a natural

parricide. Without mother in her way, she is able to be attached to her father unconsciously especially on sex.

## **2. Oedipal Love between Beauty and Father**

It is obvious that Beauty and her father love each other. When the family is rich, the other daughters are dreaming marriage with duke or earl. The Beauty just says she doesn't want to marry because she wants to stay with her father a few years longer and take care of him.

When the family loses fortune, Beauty gives up chances to marry a gentleman and stays in town because she can not think of leaving her poor father in his misfortunes. When they are living in country, other daughters are idle everyday, but Beauty shoulders the wife's or mother's role to take care of her father and whole family.

When Father has to go on a trip with hope to regain some money, He asks girls what gifts they want. The elder girls ask new gowns, headdresses, ribbons, and all manner of trifles; but Beauty asks for nothing for she thinks to herself, that all the money her father is going to receive, will scarce be sufficient to purchase everything her sisters want. It is really like a sort of consideration from wife, not a desire from daughter. When asked again and again, she says to her father: "since you have the goodness to think of me, be so kind to bring me a rose."

Rose is a symbol of love, sexual love. It is usually a gift for Valentine's Day. On leaving castle, the father steals a rose to bring to his best-loved youngest daughter. His doing so symbolizes both his love for her and also an anticipation of her losing her maidenhood, as the broken flower---particularly the broken rose---is a symbol for the loss of virginity(Bruno Bettelheim P306) . This echoes Freud's view that "the Oedipus complex is a reflection of the sexual behavior of the parents" (Nunberg and Federn, 1975, P.234) and "child's Oedipus complex reflects that of his parents" (Fenichel's 1931, P.421).

When Beauty is determined to live with Beast in exchange of her father's life, she says: "I will deliver myself up to all his fury, and I am very happy in thinking that my death will save my father's life, and be a proof of my tender love for him" (Beaumont, 1756, P5).

But because of incest taboo, this Oedipal love between Beauty and her father usually goes hand in hand with terror. It is doomed that they have to suffer some beastly experience. So, a frightening Beast appears just as the father picks up rose.

## **3. Because of Father, Beauty meets Beast**

The Beast appears and says to Father that he has stolen his favorite rose and has abused his hospitality and should die. Father pleads with him and is finally allowed to go home under the condition that one of his daughters come willingly and suffer for him. Father accepts and goes home having in mind not to keep his promise. But when Beauty hears about it she insists on going to stay with the Beast and save her father's life.

So, it is the father who gets lost in the dark forest and finds the enchanted castle, it is the father who makes Beast appears. And to rescue her father, Beauty finally meets with Beast.

It implies father, especially his unconscious masculinity plays a crucial role on girl's developing sexual identity and sexuality. Plato said, 2500 years ago, opposites define each other. If masculinity and femininity are opposites, on this axis, how to position her is the difficulty for a girl to master.

Freud maintains the girl is bound to idealize father and devalue mother by the fact that her first relationship with mother is full of frustration and conflict. Melanie Klein agrees that the girl will devalue mother (first object) because she is castrated and idealize father (second object) because he is a powerful possessor of penis.

But behind the idealization, there is persecutory anxiety coming from girl's perception of the father's unconscious primitive masculinity which is as frightening as Beast. Idealization is just a defense against the

father as a persecutor.

So, idealization and persecution is a split in girl's unconscious toward masculinity. For Beauty, real idealized father and Beast is this split. She has to choose to live with father or Beast, but not with both of them at the same time. In order to save her idealized father, she chooses to stay with Beast. Although being treated royally, she refuses Beast's request to marry because of feeling disgusted. It shows the split is hard to be bridged.

Until one day, Beauty knows her father falls ill and gets permission to visit him. She stays with her father for longer than she had promised. She dreams on the tenth night that Beast extending on the grass plat seems just expiring and in a dying voice, reproaches her with her ingratitude. Beauty bursts into tears: "Am I not very wicked to act so unkindly to Beast, that has studied so much, to please me in everything? Is it his fault if he is so ugly, and has so little sense? He is kind and good, and that is sufficient. Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with the monster than my sister are with their husbands; it is neither wit, nor a fine person, in a husband, that makes a woman happy, but virtue, sweetness of temper, and complaisance, and Beast has all these valuable qualifications." (Beaumont, 1756, P9). This is an announcement for a girl to grow up to be herself. So, Beauty goes back and says to the dying Beast: "you must not die. Live to be none but my husband...I cannot live without you." (Beaumont, 1756, P.10) At that moment, Beast becomes charming prince. That is the reward of her judicious choice. Because she has preferred virtue before either wit or beauty, and deserve to find a person in whom all these qualifications are united.

It shows the healing of the split comes about by the lessening of both idealization (father being ill) and persecution (Beast dying of a broken heart). At that moment Beauty realizes the vulnerability in both the father and the Beast and perceives the humanness in both. The extremes of idealization and persecution collapse. Beauty is now ready to love a man by seeing the vulnerability of the Beast. And the Beast can turn into a man only through Beauty's love and through giving up his own beastly power. (Christina Wieland, 1984)

Thus, when the Beast turns into prince, Beauty, as a girl, finishes her psychosexual development, detaches from her idealized father and transforms love from father to her lover.

It is the process of maturation and self-discovery for women. It is the riddle of femininity.

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