AN OUTPUT–BASED APPROACH TO TRANSLATION PRACTICE AND ITS EFFECT ON SPEAKING ABILITY OF EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The present research study attempted to examine the output hypothesis using oral translation from L1 to L2 and investigate its impact on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. To achieve the purpose of the research 80 homogenous English learners in Islamic Azad University of Khodabandeh were randomly put into two groups of experimental and control groups. Then, the two groups were given a speaking pretest to make sure that the difference between the two groups is not significant. The experimental group underwent the treatment which was orally translating specific sentences from Persian to English which were given to them by the teacher according to the linguistic elements they had just learned in that session. However, the control group enjoyed the speaking activities assigned in their text book, with no translation activity. After 24 sessions of instruction, the two groups took part in a post-test speaking test in the form of an interview. The results of the post-test demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in terms of speaking ability. The analysis of the data was done through *t*-test. It was concluded that oral translation from L1 to L2, as a teaching technique, can improve learners' speaking ability. Moreover, an error analysis of phonological features of the sentences uttered by the participants revealed that part of the erroneous prosodic articulation produced by participants was due to the negative transfer of Persian phonological system. However, in those types of sentences which had a similar type of intonation to Persian, the errors proved to be the least. Consequently, learners' resort to first language phonological system, in the absence of sufficient training in second language suprasegmental features, is one of the major reasons for first language-like rhythm of their speech.

Keywords: Speaking Ability- Output Hypothesis- Translation

INTRODUCTION

Teaching speaking skills, and especially making sure that how efficiently it is done, has always been a challenging issue for language teachers. To Many, being able to speak a language is equal to knowing the language and therefore they view learning the language as learning how to speak the language. The significance of this skill has led teachers to devise various approaches and methods to make students communicate orally in the classroom. What seems to be important, considering all these approaches and methods, is the effectiveness and usefulness of these activities. The present study aims at shedding light on improving speaking ability of Iranian students by proposing a specific kind of translation task technique on the basis of *Output Hypothesis*. In this study, Output Hypothesis refers to using oral translation from L1 to L2 with an emphasis on *pushed output*, to improve the speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners.

In order to appreciate the significance of Output Hypothesis in the present study, it is first necessary to briefly mention the Input Hypothesis as originally proposed by Krashen (1985). Simply put, Krashen believes that if second language learners are exposed to lots and lots of comprehensible input in a non-stressful situation, they will acquire the second language. This hypothesis seems reasonable until we consider the role of producing language in it. Obviously, the hypothesis refers only to "input" not production or output. Therefore, based on this hypothesis, a learner could theoretically get tons of comprehensible input over years without ever speaking, and then one day open his/her mouth and speak fluently. Nevertheless, Swain (1995) suggested that "output" is the missing factor and called the concept "comprehensible output" and has been credited with first articulating what has come to be called the "Output Hypothesis". Swain (1995) proposed that one possible way to account for the lack of

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grammatical accuracy is that learners are not being pushed to produce language output. Swain theorized that learners in immersion settings were not "pushed" to a deeper analysis of the target language because they could get their meaning across adequately without doing so.

In this study, *Comprehensible Output* is the heart concept based on which the translation technique operates. In other words, pushing learners to produce language through translating sentences from their mother tongue to the second language is a technique that is originated in comprehensible output and allows learners to express themselves in the target language. The next impression to be discussed in this research is Task-Based approach to language teaching. In fact, tasks are the purest realizations of the premises of output hypothesis as long as language production is concerned. Similarly, if oral translation from L1 to L2 is done through a systematic procedure to produce well-structured utterances, it can be used as a communicative task which will help learners to internalize L2 linguistic elements (Vaezi and Mirzaei, 2007).

Task-based approach to language teaching, as one of the most efficient approaches, has opened new horizons to implement activities to enhance language use skills in general and productive skills in particular. Task-based instruction is a second/foreign language teaching approach which takes a strong view of communicative language teaching (Ellis, 2003). In this type of instruction, teachers employ *tasks* as the central units in the syllabus with its primary focus on meaning, rather than on forms, and *tasks* are used by teachers as tools for communicative acts. Through learning *by* communicating in task-based instruction, as opposed to learning *for* communicating, students have greater opportunities for communicative language experience and intellectual growth (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

Moreover, speaking a foreign language is not a unidimensional skill; however, it consists of both segmental and suprasegmental components. The segmental component of speaking refers to the proper pronunciation of individual sounds including vowel and consonants. Nonetheless the mere correct pronunciation of phonemes but those which consist of stress and intone, suprasegmantal component deals with those features of articulation which are beyond action; that is, prosodic qualities of speech. In Raeiszadeh *et al.,* (2012) terms, suprasegmantal phonology, also called prosody, is concerned with those features of pronunciation that cannot be segmented because they extend over more than one segment, or sound. Such features include stress, rhythm, and intonation (also called pitch contour or pitch movement).

Error analysis would allow teachers to figure out what areas should be focused on and what kind of attention is needed in an L2 classroom. So the language teachers can be better able to develop curriculum and select materials that can facilitate L2 learning processes (Shehadeh, 2005).

Correspondingly, a phonological error analysis was done to identify the areas in which the participants made prosodic errors. Although most of the studies related to teaching the phonological aspect of second language focus on the accuracy of segmental features of pronunciation, stress and intonation play a vital role in intelligibility of speech.

These suprasegmental or prosodic features are meaning distinctive; that is, an error in the correct use of stress or intonation may totally change the focus of the sentence. Therefore, identifying the areas that learners make such errors can help teachers better understand to predict those areas and how to deal with this problem.

Although there are numerous reasons for second language errors committed by learners, error analysis hypothesis states that one of the major sources of errors has been said to be the interference of the first language (Kern, 1994). Therefore, in this study, a phonological error analysis with a focus on prosodic features can play a very helpful part in recognizing how first language negatively affects the suprasegmental features of second language production.

As a fundamental part of contrastive analysis, error analysis was used primarily to help language teachers predict what problems a language learner would have due to the linguistic differences between the learner's native language and the target language. Errors that could not be attributed to language interference were virtually ignored and those most frequently focused upon, such as the omission of articles before unique nouns or phonological errors, were so well known that many teachers found the work of the researchers redundant (Ellis, 1984).

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In the field of language teaching and learning, error analysis can serve as a means to investigate the areas where language learners are most likely to make errors in comprehension or production of language. It can help teachers, to some extent, identify and/or predict why, how, and where their learners produce erroneous language. Therefore, errors made by learners in the process of language learning are not considered as a negative aspect of language learning but a natural step in development of language skills. Dually *et al.,* (1985) believe that analysis of errors made by language learners can help understand the process of language learning deeply; moreover, it will help teachers and curriculum designers to decide on teaching materials which best fit into learning needs of language learners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Methodology
The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of translation from L1 to L2 on the improvement of speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. To do so, 80 participants took part in the study that was between 19 and 24 years old. They were given a homogeneity test then, make sure that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of speaking ability; the researcher administered a speaking pre-test to both groups. The experimental group underwent the treatment which was to orally translate Persian sentences into English. On the other hand, the control group underwent the placebo. Finally, a speaking post-test showed that the treatment improved the speaking ability of the participants in the experimental group.

Participants
In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a population of 80 students studying at Islamic Azad University of Khodabandeh (2014) took part in the first phase of the research. They were Upper-intermediate learners of English, and their age ranged from 19 to 24 years old. Their first languages were Persian and Azari and they could speak both languages. Also, the population consisted of both male and female learners. In order to select a group of learners who were almost at the same level of proficiency in English, the researcher administered Oxford Placement Test to the participants. Having collected the required data from this test, the researcher selected 64 learners, whose scores showed them in the upper-intermediate level, as the participants of the main study.

Then, they were given a speaking pre-test to check their speaking skill before the treatment. The speaking samples were recorded, analyzed, and scored by two raters (the elaborated explanation of these will be discussed in the instrumentation and procedure sections). Based on the pretest 60 students were chosen as the subjects of the study who were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.

Instrumentation
In order to carry out the study, the first instrument was Oxford Placement Test (See Appendix A) which was used to check all the participants were at the same level in terms of their general language proficiency? Having scored the test, the researcher selected 64 learners as the participants of the study

The second instrument was a pre-test which was a teacher-made speaking test, including the linguistic elements of *Passages 1,* course book. It was developed in the format of interview (See Appendix D). In fact, the reason for developing such a test based on *Passages 1* was that the participants had already finished the book, and they were about to start *Passages 2* which was to be used for the treatment. This test enjoyed content validity since the questions were designed based on the linguistic elements— grammatical structures, vocabulary, language functions— of *Passages 1*. It should be mentioned that this series of books were selected because of their popularity and use in the city of Khodabandeh by Islamic Azad University.

Before administrating the pre-test, the questions were piloted with 20 participants outside the study and necessary changes were made so that the final version of the test was administrated as the pre-test. Then, the interview was conducted by two raters who were the teachers participating in this study. They were professional in the field since they held MA and PhD in TEFL. Having recorded the interviews, the raters assigned scores to the speaking samples according to FSI scale, Foreign Service Institute, which is language proficiency ratings (Jones, 1979) (See Appendix E). The inter-rater reliability of the scores was

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calculated to be 58%. The pretest was used in order to make sure that the two groups were not different in terms of speaking ability.

The next instrument which was used as the treatment of the study was a series of Persian sentences which were developed in accordance with the linguistic elements which had already been taught in each session (See Appendix C). The teachers, including the researcher herself and two other teachers who were adequately trained and aware of the procedure of the study, read the sentences in Persian and randomly called on individual students in the class to translate the sentences into English using the specific linguistic elements they had learnt in that session.

Finally, the post-test, which was another teacher-made interview, with the same format as the pre-test but a different content, was designed and administered after the treatment was given to the experimental group and the placebo to the control group. The questions in the post-test were designed according to the linguistic elements of the lessons of *Passages 2* included in the treatment (See Appendix D). Therefore, like the pre-test, the post-test enjoyed content validity since all the questions included in the test were those present and practiced in the treatment. Before administrating the post-test, the questions were piloted with 20 participants outside the study and necessary changes were made to the questions so that the final version of the test was administrated as the post -test. Having recorded the interviews, the two raters analyzed and scored them using FSI scale, and the inter-rater reliability was calculated to be 81%.

The scale according to which the performance of the participants was scored was FSI (Jones, 1979, Cited in Fuelberg *et al.,* (2014) .The extension of lightning flashes from thunderstorms near Cape Canaveral, Florida.

FSI, an analytic scale for assessing speaking ability, has a range of 11 possible scores: 0, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+, 4, 4+, and 5. The candidate's performance is divided into five areas: Accent, Grammar, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. The total mark one could obtain in this scale is 99. The detailed procedure to give numerical values to speaking samples is presented in Appendix E.

Using the analytic FSI scale for scoring speaking ability, the raters rated the recorded speaking samples of both the pre-test and the pos-test.

Procedure

This study required learners of approximately equal English language proficiency who had already studied the linguistic elements—grammatical structures, vocabulary, language functions— of *Passages 1* course book.

To select the participants of approximately equal level of language proficiency, the researcher administered Oxford Placement Test to 80 learners. 64 participants whose scores showed them in the upper-intermediate level were selected for the study. After that, they were given a speaking pre-test and based on the pretest 60 students were selected and randomly assigned into two groups. The test which included the linguistic elements of *Passages 1* course book was developed in the format of interview. In fact, the reason for developing such a test based on *Passages 1* was that the participants had already finished the book, and they were about to start *Passages 2* which was to be used for the treatment. This test enjoyed content validity since the questions were designed based on the linguistic elements— grammatical structures, vocabulary, language functions— of *Passages 1*.

Before administrating the pre-test, the questions were piloted and necessary changes were made so that the final version of the test was administrated as the pre-test. The interview for the pretest was conducted by two raters who were professional in the field since they held MA and PhD in TEFL. Having recorded the interviews, the raters assigned scores to the speaking samples according to FSI scale (Jones, 1979) (See Appendix B). The inter-rater reliability of the scores was calculated to be 58%.

The next step was to carry out the experiment. The experimental group received the treatment in the following way: having been taught the new lessons of *Passages 2* in each session, the participants were given a number of oral sentences in Persian by their teachers which were developed in accordance with the linguistic elements which had already been taught in that session. The participants had to orally translate those sentences into English, individually, using the specific structures and vocabulary items they had learnt in that session.

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The participants were to do the task inside the classroom and individually. After translating each sentence, the teacher checked the participants' answers and corrected their errors. In addition, the teacher provided the participants with adequate explanations on the proper translation of the sentences. That is because the purpose of utilizing this treatment was not to test, but to teach; in other words, during the treatment phase, the participants' performance on the translation task was not evaluated to be scored or be used in the results of the post-test. The whole number of sessions needed to conduct the study was 24.

On the other hand, the control group received the placebo in the form of the exercises available in their course book which were done monolingually. In other words, the placebo was the tasks and the speaking exercises that the participants were to perform as directed in the course book.

Having finished teaching all the linguistic elements, the researcher administered a post-test to the participants. The purpose of such a test was to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching technique used for the experimental group. A test of speaking ability was given to both experimental and control group, and the results from both groups were compared through *t-test* which showed whether this technique was effective in enhancing speaking ability of the experimental group.

Finally, the post-test, which was another teacher-made interview, with the same format as the pre-test but a different content, was designed and administered after the treatment was given to the experimental group and the placebo to the control group. The questions in the post-test were designed according to the linguistic elements of the lessons of *Passages 2* taught to both groups (See Appendix D). Therefore, like the pre-test, the post-test enjoyed content validity. Before administrating the post-test, the questions were piloted, and necessary changes were made so that the final version of the test was administrated as the post -test. Having recorded the interviews, the raters analyzed and scored them using FSI scale, and the inter-rater reliability was calculated to be 81%.

Having the oral data available, the researcher used the data from the post-test to conduct an error analysis. As for the error analysis of the phonological features of uttered sentences, the researcher carefully listened to the recorded data and examined them only in terms of prosodic features. In other words, the pronunciation of individual words was not considered in the phonological analysis in this study, and only the prosodic features; that is, stress and intonation of the sentences were investigated. Other aspects of proper sentence formation such as grammatical, discoursal, and semantic characteristics were not considered in this analysis.

Therefore, the error analysis of the speech samples had two major subcategories, stress and intonation. As for stress, the one, two, three, and more-syllable words were identified and analyzed separately. The intonation pattern of sentences was divided into two types of sentences namely statement (affirmative and negative) and question (*Yes/No* questions and *Wh* questions).

To analyze the errors of stress pattern of each single word uttered by the participants. The total number of nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs the participants uttered was 2240. Then all the words were divided into one, two, three, and more-syllable words. The descriptive table of the word types is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Word-type Stress Patterns

Types of Words	Example	Frequency	Percentage
one-syllable words	'ball	1536	69%
two-syllable words	a'gain	512	23%
three and more-syllable words	infor'mation	192	8%

The error analysis of intonation patterns of the sentences said by the participants was done by dividing the sentences into two types, that is, statements (affirmative and negative) and question (*Yes/No* questions and *Wh* questions). Generally speaking, intonation patterns are either rising, falling, or both in one sentence. These patterns are shown by arrows (see table 2).

However, in certain types of situations, the ordinary intonation patterns may alter to some extent, such as emphatic speech. As mentioned before, the interviewers attempted to elicit as many types of sentences as possible. In fact, they sometimes wanted interviewees to ask them some questions as well in order to have

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different types of data for analysis. The total number of the sentences collected for analysis was 1088. The descriptive table of the sentence types is shown in the table below.

Table 2: Sentences-type Stress Patterns

Types of Sentences	Example	Frequency	Percentage
Statements	I have two brothers.	640	59%
Yes/No questions	Is this a real test?	128	12%
Wh questions	How old are you?	192	17%
Negatives	I don't like to watch soccer on TV.	128	12%

Design

This study focused on the following questions:

1. Does the use of oral translation from L1 to L2 have any effect on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability?

2. Is first language a potential source of phonological errors made by Iranian EFL learners?

The design to carry out this study to answer the first question was experimental, with a pretest, a treatment for experimental group, and a placebo for the comparison group, as well as a posttest for both of the groups. As for the second research question, a descriptive approach was used which mainly focused on quantifying types of sentences in terms of their phonological type.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

After the administration of the pre-test, the descriptive analysis of the pre-test scores was conducted. On the pretest, the mean score and the standard deviation showed to be 59.50 and 12.55 for the experimental group; and 59.00 and 10.93 for the control group, respectively. The descriptive analysis of the pre-test scores is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of the Pre-test

Group Statistics					
Pretest	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Ex	30	59.50	12.550	2.291
	Con	30	59.00	10.939	1.997

In order to determine if the difference between the means of the scores of the two groups had been significant on the pre-test, an independent t-test was conducted between the scores of the participants in both groups. The observed t-valve of the df= 58 was 0.16, which is a smaller than the critical t-value that equals 2.00 at the same degree of freedom (df= 58). Therefore, it can be concluded that the difference between the means of the pre-test scores in the two groups was not significant, i.e. the two groups performed fairly similar to each other on the pre-test. The result of the independent *t*-test for the pre-test is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test for Pre-test Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
E x C o	Equal variances assumed	.975	.328	.165	58	.870	.500
	Equal variances not assumed			.165	56.938	.870	.500

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In order to find out the effectiveness of using oral translation from L1 to L2 on the improvement of the speaking ability of the experimental group and compare their improvement with their counterparts' in the control group, both groups took part in a post-test of similar format but different content to the pre-test. In the post-test, the mean score of the participants in the experimental group was 83.17, and the standard deviation was 12.06 while the mean score for the control group was 73.50, and the standard deviation turned out to be 8.11. The descriptive analysis of the post-test is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of the Post-test

Group Statistics

Posttest	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Ex	30	83.17	12.069	2.203
	Con	30	73.50	8.110	1.481

After administering the post-test to both groups, and independent *t*-test between the scores of the participants in the experimental and the control groups was conducted to determine the significance of the mean difference between the scores of the two groups. As shown in Table 6 below, the observed t-value for the post-test was 3.64 (df=58), which is greater than 2, i.e. the critical t-value at the same degree of freedom (3.64>2; df=58).

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for Post-test Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		Mean Difference
Ex Co	Equal variances assumed	4.727	.034	3.641	58	.001		9.667
	Equal variances not assumed			3.641	50.755	.001		9.667

From the t-test table (i.e. Table 6), it is quite obvious that the effect of using oral translation from L1 to L2 on the improvement of the speaking ability has been significant since the *t*-observed value is greater than the set value of *t* critical. Therefore, as the results of the above-mentioned analyses reveal, the hypothesis formulated in this study can be rejected. In other words, it is concluded that using oral translation from L1 to L2 improves the speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners.

The second part of the study was dedicated to the phonological error analysis of the data available. As pointed out in the procedure section, the interview in the post-test was used to gather data for the purpose of error analysis of the phonological; in general, and prosodic features, in particular, of Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' speech. The results of the analysis revealed the following facts about the errors the participants made in stress and intonation of their sentences. The tables below describe the amount of deviation the speakers had in their speech from Standard English prosodic patterns. The descriptions of stress and intonation errors are stated separately in the tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Description of the Stress Pattern Errors

Types of Words	Number of Words	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
one-syllable words	1536	8	0.5%
two-syllable words	512	110	21%
three and more-syllable words	192	118	61%

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According to the table, the most erroneous area for participants was the stress of three and more-syllable words with the percentage of 61%. The second most erroneous type of words was two-syllable words, and one-syllable words were the words which were uttered with the fewest errors with the percentage of 21% and 0.5% respectively. Although a number of words were not said correctly in terms of stress, the pronunciation of them was quite understandable, and the faulty utterance of the single words did not lead to major misunderstanding.

On the other hand, the error analysis of the intonation patterns of the sentences revealed that all types of sentences, that is statements, (affirmative and negatives) and questions *(Yes/No* questions and *Wh* questions) underwent almost the same number of errors. However, the point that was common for the errors made in all types of sentences was that the participants did not seem to have been trained for the different intonation patterns of English language. For example, the fact that the words that carry the most of the sentence meaning receive more prominence was not something that could be recognized clearly in the speech of participants. Table 8 manifests the frequency of the occurred errors of intonation for the four types of sentences.

Table 8: Description of the Intonation Pattern Errors

Types of Sentences	Number of Sentences	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
Affirmative statement	640	337	52%
Yes/No questions	128	22	17%
Wh questions	192	42	21%
Negative statement	128	63	49%

As the table illustrates, the most erroneous types of sentences in terms of intonation were affirmative and negative statements with the percentage of 52% and 49% respectively. On the other hand, *Yes/No* questions were the sentences which were uttered with fewest errors with the percentage of 17%. Interestingly, the intonation of *Yes/No* questions in English and Persian are almost the same, i.e. in Persian, *Yes/No* questions have rising intonation. This similarity can be the main reason for the low rate of errors in this type of sentences.

Another interesting point which was noticed while analyzing both stress and intonation was the interference of first language in the stress and intonation pattern of the English words and sentences. Some of the errors made regarding stress showed that the mis-utterance of them was due to the subconscious replacement of the stress pattern of the Persian equivalent with the English words. In other words, some of the participants tended to say words with the stress pattern of the meaning of those words in Persian. For instance, the words "fifty", "seventy" and "eighty" have their stress on the first syllable while their equivalents in Persian /pændʒah/, /hæftad/, and /hæʃtad/ are stressed on the second syllable. It was seen that some of participants placed the stress of these words on the second syllable the way they say them in Persian.

Moreover, cognates proved to be another source of stress errors. There are a plenty of words that have been imported from English to Persian. However, they have undergone changes in their stress patterns and have gained new stress according to Persian phonology system. For example, the word "internet" has a first-syllable stress in English; however, in Persian we pronounce this word with the stress on the second syllable. Therefore, it was observed that in 78% of the cases that this word was used by the participants, they pronounced it with the second-syllable stress.

The same interference of first language happened in the intonation of the sentences much more evidently. In most of the sentences said by the participants, it was easily recognizable that the Persian intonation pattern governed much of their speech as if they were speaking Persian with English words, or replacing Persian words with English ones in the framework of Persian prosody.

In addition, monotonous speech proved to be a major drawback in participants' speaking samples. In effect, in the speech of those with most errors and unintelligiblity, the lack of rhythm in their sentences

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seemed like saying each word separately without contribution to the flow of natural speech. However, English is a language in which tone has a crucial contribution to the meaning of utterance and the rise and fall of pitch can be meaning distinctive. Another shortcoming of participants' erroneous speech was that they did not notice the unstressed words in normal English sentences. Certain words in English such as prepositions, pronouns, and conjunctions have a low pitch in normal sentences; however, in most of participants' erroneous speech, they received equal stress as other words such as nouns and verbs. Consequently, one of the prominent reasons for making monotonous sentences is stressing all the words equally and failing to recognize which words or phrases should normally be unstressed.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was to examine the effect of using oral translation from L1 to L2 as a teaching technique in the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability. Considering the review of the literature and what happens in real language classes, the researcher observed contradictory findings and ideas. As a result, the following questions and null hypotheses were put forward. First, the research questions are as follow:

1. Does the use of oral translation from L1 to L2 have any effect on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability?
2. Is first language a potential source of phonological errors made by Iranian EFL learners?

The hypothetical answers to these questions are:

1. The use of oral translation from L1 to L2 has no effect on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability?
2. First language is not a potential source of phonological errors made by Iranian EFL learners.

In order to test these null hypotheses, 80 students studying at Islamic Azad University of Khodabandeh took part in Oxford Placement Test. 64 participants who were proved to be upper-intermediate learners were chosen for the next phase of the study (since 4 participants did not take part in the whole steps of the study, the total number of participants decreased to 60). Next, they were split into two homogenous groups— namely experimental and control groups—randomly in order to make sure that the two groups were similar in the very beginning. The experimental group received treatment in the form of oral translating Persian sentences into English using the newly learned structures during 24 sessions.

On the other hand, the control group received the same amount of speaking exercises but from their course book, not to mention, in English. Consequently, contrary to the experimental group, the control group received no exercise which included Persian language.

After 24 sessions of instruction, the participants in the two groups were given a posttest similar in format but different in content to the pretest. The data gathered from the pre-test and post-test included participants' scores on these two tests.

Regarding the first question, it should be mentioned that the results of the post-test demonstrated that the treatment, which was translating sentences from Persian to English, was effective in improving participants' speaking ability. The second research question was investigating the role of first language in participants' English pronunciation with a focus on prosodic features. The results of the phonological analysis of the speaking data proved that many of the errors made by the participants were due to the effect of their first language.

The findings of the present research are in line with the findings of Vaezi and Mirzaei (2007) who demonstrated that using translation from L1 to L2 is effective in improving learners' linguistic accuracy. Moreover, they support Cook's (2001) idea who believes that translation is a *teaching technique* which can promote learners' accuracy as well as fluency. The results also support Atkinson's (1987) statements who introduced translation from L1 to L2 as a means of presentation and reinforcement of language:

An exercise involving translation into the target language of a paragraph or set of sentences which highlight the recently taught language item can provide useful reinforcement of structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages. This activity is not, of course, communicative, but its aim is to improve accuracy.

The findings of this research are also in line with Duff's (1989) belief: "translation as a teaching technique can be used to help students learn a second language more thoughtfully and effectively" (p. 6).

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As for the role of L1 and the significance of translation, this research project supports Nunan (1999) who states that:

In some cases it is inevitable that language learners use their dominant languages (L1) as a resource. Indeed it is a kind of individual learning style for some students. They need to be able to relate lexis and structures of target language into their equivalents in their mother tongue. Therefore, sound pedagogy should make use of this learning style.

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Appendix A
Persian Sentences to be translated into English

در اینجا ترافیک زیادی هست.
در شهر ما هیچ چراغ راهنمایی وجود ندارد.
آیا می توانی به زبان خارجی صحبت کنی؟
من در فروختن خوب نیستم.
جالب به نظر میرسد. (fun)
من هیچ وقت روی یک کشتی نبوده ام.
من از کار کردن در این اداره متنفرم.
ای کاش 2 ساعت دیگه اینجا می موندی.
ای کاش هیچ وقت دیر نمی کردی.
ای کاش کتابت را با خودت آورده بودی.
کاش پول کافی برای خریدن این ماشین را داشتم.
ای کاش لاغرتر بودم.
پدرم به من گفت هیچ وقت تقلب نکرده است.

Research Article

علی گفت که درمال رانندگی نمی تواند با موبایل صحبت نکنید.

سارا قول داد که به من کمک کند.

مریم گفت که به یک مهمانی دعوت شده است.

علی گفت که بول کافی برای خرید این ماشین را ندارد.

ای کاش برای ناهار پیتزا داشتیم.

من می توانم یک معلم صبور بشوم. (could)

بعد از صحبت با مشاور شغلی فهمیدم که این شغل برایم مناسب نیست.

این فیلم ارزش دیدن رو داره.

برج ایفل در سال 1889کامل شد.

بزرگترین سازه ای که تا کنون ساخته شد چیست؟

هزینه ساخت آن ساختمان دو میلیون دلار بود.

اشعه ایکس کی کشف شد؟

چه کسی اشعه ایکس را کشف کرد؟

اهرام مصر به چه دلیل ساخته شدند؟

از کجا باید بدانم؟ (How)

ساخت این کارخانه 5 سال طول کشید.

چه جاذبه های توریستی در ایران. ای کاش می توانستیم به انگلستان سفر کنیم.

ای کاش خیابانها شلوغ نبودند.

ای کاش در یک روستا زندگی می کردم.

ای کاش لباس جدیدم را دوست داشتی.

ای کاش تکالیفم زود تمام می شد.

ای کاش الان برادرم اینجا بود.

علی به من گفت که نمیتواند به کلاس بیاید.

سارا از من خواست که با او صحبت کنم.

علی به من گفت که هر شب فوتبال بازی میکند.

علی به من گفت که برنامهای برای آخر هفته ندارد.

سارا از علی خواست که در اتاق سیگار نکشد.

علی به من از معلمش گفت که 3 سال انگلیسی خوانده است.

علی به من گفت که دیر خواهد آمد.

سارا به علی گفت که دارد درس میخواند.

سارا به علی گفت که شاید فردا یک مهمانی باشد. (may)

سارا از علی خواست که دراین مورد به کسی چیزی نگوید.

سار گفت باید معلمش را ملاقات کند.

سارا از من خواست که او را به مدرسه ببرم.

علی گفت که باید یک نفر را در فرودگاه ملاقات کند.

علی گفت که دارد طرف خانه اشان رانندگی می کند.

سارا گفت ممکن است آن شب به خانه نیاید.

سارا ازمن خواست که به بدرش چیزی نگویم.

علی گفت که نمی تواند بیاید چون آنفلوانزا گرفته بود.

من اصالتا" اهل ایران هستم .

من در زبان فرانسه خوب نیستم.

من هیچ وقت ورزش نمی کردم ولی الان می خواهم خوش اندام باشم. (used to)

در کجا تعطیلات را می گذراندی؟ (used to)

وقتی که در مدرسه ابتدائئ بودم شطرنج

علی به من گفت دارد مادرش را به بیمارستان می برد.

علی گفت که ماشینش را جلوی خانه پارک کرده است.

دیوار چین حدود 3000 سال پیش ساخته شد.

کلیدهایت کجا گم شدند؟

به نظر تو این مشکل چگونه حل میشود؟

در کانادا زبانهای انگلیسی و فرانسوی صحبت میشوند.

Research Article

<div dir="rtl">

در ۵۰سال آینده در خودروها از بنزین استفاده نخواهد شد؟

کودک نباید به خاطر اشتباههایش تنبیه شود.

تخت جمشید چگونه تخریب شد؟

در ایران چه زبانهایی صحبت میشوند؟

غنا در کجا واقع شده است؟

در چه کشورهایی زبان فرانسوی صحبت میشود؟

در این مدرسه چه زبانهایی تدریس می شود.

در این مکان اتومبیلها تعمیر می شوند.

. بعضی حشرات توسط حشرات دیگر خورده می شوند.

اسباب بازیها از پلاستیک ساخته می شوند.

برق توسط ادیسون اختراع شد.

این بسته ها باید به مغازه برده شوند.

در این شهر بنزین زیادی می سوزد.

چه مقدار از این کیک خورده شده است.

دراین سالن ورزشی ورزشهای زیادی انجام می شوند.

دیروز در شهر سه تصادف مشاهده شد.

امروزه اینترنت در تمام دنیا استفاده می شود.

این زبان به راحتی یاد گرفته نمی شود.

دو اتومبیل برای این کمپانی خریداری شد.

جوابها در صفحه ی بعد توضیح داده شده اند.

برای برادرم مهم نیست که در هوای سرد کار کند.(mind)

معلم من نمی تواند اشتباهات گرامری من را تحمل کند.

آیا ناراحت می شوی اگر پنجره را باز کنم؟

من یک روبات می خواهم که کارهایم را برایم انجام دهد.

تو هیچوقت نمی توانی یک فوتبالیست خوب شوی. (make)

یافت می شوند؟

در فرانسه چه ارزی استفاده می شود؟

در کجا به مدرسه رفتی؟

چه درسهایی را دوست داشتی؟

آیا از دوران بچگی ات لذت می بردی؟

کی و کجا به دنیا آمدی؟

آیا در تهران بزرگ شده ای؟

آیا در آموزشگاه انگلیسی آرمان به کلاس می رفتی؟(take classes)

بازی می کردم.

بازی ات چقدر خوب بود؟ (How)

چقدر خوب بازی می کردی؟ (How)

</div>

Appendix (D)
The Questions in the Pre-test and Post-test
The Questions in the Pre-test
What forms of entertainment are out there?
What is your favorite?
Who is your favorite musician? Why?
What type of music is most advanced?
Why do we need entertainment?
Which public transportation do you use most often?
Do you want a motorcycle or a car?
When can you get a driver's license?
Do you have a bicycle? How often do you ride it?
Do you go to a public school or a private school?
Do you have to wear a school uniform?

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How many subjects do you learn?
What is the worst punishment you can get?
What do you use the internet for?
When did you first use the internet?
What is dangerous about the internet?
What is great about using the internet?
What changes do you expect on the internet?
Have you done your homework using the internet?
What do you think are the responsibilities of a father?
What do you think are the responsibilities of a mother?
What jobs have become male-dominated?
What jobs have become female-dominated?
Do you think men and women are equal in intelligence and ability?
How often do you think about the future?
What is going to be different in the future?
Do you think there will be more robots?
What job would like to get?
Which colleges are considered good in your country?
Which one are you thinking about attending?
Are college tuitions high?
Is it difficult for people without college education?
Have you thought about going to college in another country?
What kind of degree do you want to get?
What is the most difficult thing about learning English?
Do you think you can order food over the phone in English?
How often do you practice your English?
What do you think is the best way to practice English?
Are you good at small talk?
On what topic do you think you can have a long conversation about?
How old do you have to be to vote?
How is voting conducted?
Why is voting important?
Can one vote make a difference?
How do people make decisions about who to vote for?
The Questions in the Post-test
Are you interested in politics?
Is there enough government contribution to your school's education?
Could you talk about your country's election process for government officials?
Do you think the government should keep any information from its citizens?
Tell about one current political issue.
What effects are you aware of from global warming?
How satisfied are you of your community's recycling program?
What is the most urgent pollution problem your city faces today?
What types of energy are used in your country?
Tell about the air quality where you live. Any suggestions?
What do you think was the greatest scientific advancement in the past century?
What about a medical breakthrough?
Do you know of any famous scientists?
What has the invention of computers done to the world?
Do you think there is life on other planets?

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Research Article

What do you think about cloning?
What forms of news are you interested in?
How important is current events to you?
Do you think people's personal lives are worth mentioning in the news?
Why is there so much bad news?
Are you concerned with censorship?
 Who are the owners of the media?
Why is it difficult for people to say I'm sorry?
If there was a rule for your life, what would be the first rule?
What would make someone to have a heart made of stone?
If you could wake up with an improved body, what would you like to see improved?
If a phone rang in a phone booth while you were passing by, would you answer it?
Is it possible to cry underwater?
Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons?
Why doesn't Tarzan have any facial hair?
 Why does Donald Duck wear a towel when he comes out of the shower, but he normally doesn't wear any pants?
Why does bottled water have an expiration date?
If a lightning hits a big body of water, do all the fish die?
Why do people eat three times a day? Why not little bits five times a day?
What interesting Chinese foods have you seen people eat?
What food has the most preservatives?
What do you think about a vegetarian diet?
What kind of raw foods do you enjoy?
Tell about a dish that you can prepare well.
What do you think is the best way to learn a language?

Appendix (E)
FSI Scale
Instructions for use of the checklist to determine S- Rating

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Accent	0	1	2	2	3	4
Grammar	6	12	18	24	30	36
vocabulary	4	8	12	16	20	24
fluency	2	4	6	8	10	12
Comprehension	4	8	12	15	19	23

TOTAL = 99

Score	**Rating**	**Score**	**Rating**	**Score**	**Rating**
16-25	S-0+	43-52	S-2	73-82	S-3+
26-32	S-1	53-62	S-2+	83-92	S-4
33-42	S-1	63-72	S-3	93-99	S-4+

Accent
1. Pronunciation frequently unintelligible.
2. Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent which make understanding difficult and require frequent repetition.
3. "Foreign accent" which requires concentrated listening, mispronunciations which lead to occasional misunderstanding, and apparent errors in grammar or vocabulary.
4. Marked "Foreign accent" and occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.

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5. No conspicuous mispronunciation, but not like a native speaker.

6. Native pronunciation, with no trace of foreign accent.

Grammar

1. Grammar almost entirely inaccurate except in stock phrases.

2. Constant errors showing control of very few major patterns and frequently preventing communication.

3. Frequent errors showing some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding.

4. Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns but no weakness that causes misunderstanding.

5. Few errors, with no patterns of failure.

6. No more than two errors during the interview.

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary inaccurate for even the simplest conversation.

2. Vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas.

3. Choice of words sometimes inaccurate, limitations of Vocabulary preventing discussion of some common professional and social topics.

4. Professional Vocabulary adequate to discuss special interests, general Vocabulary adequate for discussing any nontechnical subject.

5. Professional Vocabulary broad and precise, general Vocabulary adequate to cope with complex practical problems.

6. Vocabulary apparently as accurate and extensive as that of an educated native speaker.

Fluency

1. Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.

2. Speech is very slow and uneven except for short or routine sentences.

3. Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky. Sentences may be left uncompleted.

4. Speaker is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and grouping for words.

5. Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptively nonnative in speech.

6. Speech on all professional and general topics as effortless as a native speaker's.

Comprehension

1. Understands too little for the simplest type of conversation.

2. Understands only the simplest and slow speech on common social and touristic topics; requires constant repetition and rephrasing.

3. Understands careful, somewhat simplified speech directed to him, with considerable repetition and phrasing.

4. Understands quite well normal educated speech directed to him, but requires occasional repetition or rephrasing.

5. Understands everything in normal educated conversation except for very colloquial or low frequency items, or exceptionally rapid or slurred speech.

6. Understands everything in both formal and colloquial speech, to be expected of an educated native speaker.