Contributions of First Language Poetry Reading Strategies and Second Language Proficiency to Comprehension of Second Language Poetry Texts in Iranian and Indian Contexts

Seyed Hassan Talebi[1] (**Corresponding author**)
Farshid Nowrouzi Roshnavand[2]

A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T
	The current comparative study investigated the degree of contribution of awareness of poetry reading strategies in L1 and general proficiency in L2 to comprehension of poetic texts in L2 in EFL (Iran) and ESL (India) contexts of Iran and India. Totally, 221 Indian and Iranian pre-university students took the Nelson English proficiency test, poetry reading comprehension test in English, and a questionnaire about awareness of strategies for reading poetry in L1. Quantitative analysis of data using descriptive and regression analysis techniques showed the total regression weight for the two independent variables was more for the Iranian context than the Indian context. Likewise, separate analysis of each of the two independent variables indicated that the contributions of awareness of poetry reading strategies as well as language proficiency to English poetry reading comprehension are more in the Iranian context than in the Indian context. It was also found that poetry reading strategies and proficiency at two high and low levels do not contribute similarly to poetry reading comprehension for Iranian EFL and Indian ESL groups. As the context of learning affects the degree of the contributions of the awareness of poetry reading strategies in L1, and language proficiency in English to poetry reading comprehension in English, it is recommended that material developers and English languages teachers consider the importance of contextual factors (EFL vs. ESL) contributing to effective reading comprehension of poetic texts in English.
K E Y W O R D S Iranian EFL Indian ESL Poetry Reading Strategies Proficiency	

[1] Assistant Professor , Department of English Language and Literature , University of Mazandaran , Babolsar, Iran, Email: htalebi1@yahoo.com

[2] Assistant Professor , Department of English Language and Literature , University of Mazandaran , Babolsar, Iran, Email: f.nowrouzi@umz.ac.ir

1. Introduction

Relationship between L1 and L2 has been the focus of research from early 1970s. The first systematic theory about the L1-L2 relationship was introduced by Cummins (1979) in his linguistic interdependence hypothesis (LIH), suggesting that the level of L2 competence is a function of the type of competence the learner develops in L1. Therefore, according to Cummins (1991) L1 and L2 skills are shared and interdependent at some fundamental level. However, with regard to linguistic threshold hypothesis (Cummins, 1976) researchers (e.g., Bossers, 1991; Lee & Schallert, 1997; Taillefer, 1996) began to conceive the possibility that the relation between L1 and L2 skills might be moderated by the level of linguistic proficiency that the L2 learners obtains. Therefore, according to the linguistic threshold hypothesis (LTH), learner's current level of L2 proficiency determines the strength of the relationship between L1 and L2. Other researchers, however, considered other moderating variables to redefine the L1-L2 relationship. For example, Pae (2017) investigated the effects of task type and L2 proficiency on the relationship between L1 and L2 in reading and writing. According to Prevoo, Malda, Emmen, Yeniad, & Mesman (2015) the strength of the L1-L2 relationship depends on the amount of language use. This study is unique in that it attempts to investigate the relationship between L1 and L2 considering the context of learning (i.e., EFL vs. ESL) when students read poetic texts.

2. Review of Literature

After the Grammar-Translation Method fell out of favor, the use of literature has been rejected as a part of language teaching methodology for a long time (Carter, 2007). Arguments were raised against using literature in language classrooms for its unique use of language and structural complexity (McKay, 1982), its status as a work of art which makes it beyond the proficiency level of students (Bassnett & Grundy, 1993), and also its inclusion of diverse cultural viewpoints which may be too difficult for ESL/EFL students to make sense of (McKay, 1982). However, after communicative approaches came into vogue, the use of literature in language classrooms was reconsidered and valued (Lima, 2005). It was believed that the use of literature in L2 classrooms can develop students' language awareness (Celce-Murcia, 2001) and provide a powerful pedagogic tool in learners' linguistic development.

Literature should not be viewed as inappropriate to the language classroom as literature is language and language can indeed be literary (Savvidou, 2004). It provides pleasure and enjoyment and can increase the students' "motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency" (McKay, 1982, p.531). Literature as course material helps students in achieving communication skills and raises students' and teachers' cross-cultural awareness (Celce-Murci, 2001; Collie & Slater, 1987; Dobkowska & Kuckelman, 2020). The use of literature in EFL/ESL classrooms provides learners with the opportunity to develop not only their linguistic and communicative skills, but also their knowledge about language in all its discourse types (e.g., drama, poetry, novels, short stories, etc.) (Savvidou, 2004). Studying the English classes for immigrant students in the United States, Paopla-Ellis, & Heineke (2019) contended literature discussions can play a significant role in an EFL class as it can help form a better understanding between teachers and learners. In literature, things are often deliberately left unexplained and the writer "leaves much for the reader to conjecture and imagine" (Irmscher, 1975, p.108). According to the schema theory, reading is essentially "an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text" (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p.556); in other words, the text does not by itself carry meaning; rather, it provides directions for the reader to construct meanings from their cognitive frameworks (schemata) composed of previously acquired knowledge, feelings, personality, and culture (Carrel1 & Eisterhold, 1983). Only through a close interaction with the text can a reader appreciate a literary text (Widdowson, 1975).

Poetry as one discourse type of literary texts, according to Rasinski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols (2016), is useful for reading instruction. It is regarded as an authentic material for foreign language teaching. Though sophisticated words are often presented in poems (Rasinski, 2014) the poetic rhythm and rhyme make the content of these texts easy to understand and commit to memory (Rasinski, 2014). To convey the meaning, mood, and feeling, poets use various literary techniques including the choice of speaker, form (order and arrangement), imagery, sound, and figurative language (Alberta, Manitoba, & Yukon, 1998).

There are many advantages in using poetry in foreign language classes including vocabulary enrichment (Lazar, 1996), improved grammatical knowledge (Kırkgöz, 2008), rich exposure to language input (Duff and Maley, 2007), improved cross-cultural awareness (Lazar, 1996), improved social competence (Chanmann-Taylor, Bleyle, Hwang & Zhang, 2016), and expression of personal ideas and feeling (Hess, 2003). In an interdisciplinary study Dobkowska & Kuckelman (2020) analyzed how memorization and rehearsal of some excerpts from English poetry helped Japanese EFL students become more intimately acquainted with the foreign language and culture.

However, poetic concepts are too challenging for language learners (Finch, 2003) making it controversial as a source for material development for non-native learners of English. The language of poetry manipulates grammar and lexis for orthographical and phonological congruence, making it deviate from the standard norms of language. Therefore, using poetry in language classrooms has not been well realized by language teachers and material developers so far (McIlroy, 2013). By using appropriate strategies for teaching poetry, teachers can evoke interests and motivation in students and help them communicate about things they care about (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014).

Research in reading has shifted away from a focus on the product of reading to the process of reading and particular attention was paid to reading strategies (Lin & Yu, 2015; Sprainger, Sandral, & Ferrari, 2011). Strategies are important in second language learning and teaching. By examining the strategies used by second language learners during the language learning process, we gain insights into the processes involved in language learning and can teach them to less successful language learners to become better language learners (Grenfell & Harris, 1999). Reading, among other skills, is probably the most important skill that learners need to succeed in their academic studies (Yorkey, 1970). Reading is a problem-solving activity; therefore, the idea of strategic reading became the matter of investigation in reading research. Urquhart and Weir (1998) defined strategies as "ways of getting around difficulties encountered while reading" (p. 95). Effective readers take immediate actions to monitor their reading process carefully, are aware of their own cognitive and linguistic resources, are capable of directing their attention to the appropriate clues in anticipating, organizing and retaining text information, etc. Such readers are strategic readers and their reading behavior is referred to as 'strategic reading' (Koda, 2005, p. 204). Anderson (1991) found that high and low scoring readers appeared to be using the same kinds of strategies while high scoring students seemed to be applying strategies more effectively and appropriately than low scoring students. This finding indicates that strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing which strategies to use, but also the reader must know how to apply them successfully.

As Ebrahimi (2011) mentioned there is not much research on reading strategies of poetry. As teachers or students do not have much knowledge of strategy use in poetry reading, having this knowledge is essential for a more efficient reading (Zare & Othman, 2013). According to Ebrahimi (2012) if students apply strategies to read poetry, they can understand the texts easily. Adopting a qualitative research design, using the think-aloud protocols, Ebrahimi and Zainal (2018) attempted to detect the actual poetry reading strategies used by 10 EFL postgraduate students in Malaysia,

while they read poetry in English. Results from the think-aloud protocols showed that the participants used global strategies more than support and problem solving strategies.

In cross-linguistic influence (CLI) studies different factors (e.g., the typological/psychotypological similarity, cultural similarity, proficiency level, and status of the learner's non-native languages) are believed to be operative simultaneously in the learner's mind, which stimulate the interactions between languages (e.g., De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011; Hammarberg, 2009). The relationship between L1 and L2 reading and the possible effect of linguistic proficiency on this relationship have mainly been acknowledged in linguistic interdependence hypothesis (LIH) (Cummins, 1979) and threshold hypothesis (Clarke, 1980). According to LIH, in a multilingual mind, it is believed that the development of skills in L2 is closely related to the development of the same skills in L1, and the learner's L2 competence depends in part on the level of the competence they have already attained in the L1. Therefore, the more developed the L1, the easier it will be for the learner to develop the L2. In their study comparing L1 literacy and L2 learning, Swain et al. (1991) concluded that transfer of knowledge across languages did take place and that the development of L1 literacy improved student's learning of subsequent languages. Verhoeven (1991) also found positive transfer of L1 literacy skills to later-acquired skills in the L2. Therefore, according to LIH, one does not need to relearn the concepts in L2 if they are already developed in L1.

Clarke (1980, p. 206) argued that good L1 readers who were weak in L2 suffered a 'short circuit' that reverted them to poor L2 readers. Alderson (1980) raised the debating question as to whether problems in foreign language reading stem from reading problems (i.e., higher order mental processes such as predicting, analyzing, synthesizing, inferencing, and retrieving relevant background knowledge) which are common across languages, or second language proficiency problems (i.e., knowledge and skills, such as orthographic, phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discoursal knowledge specific to L2 which are required for processing L2 linguistic properties). However, as Alderson (in Alderson & Urquhart, 1984) pointed out, the variation in the relative influence of both factors can be explained by Clarke's (1980) well-known short-circuit hypothesis, also known as the language threshold hypothesis according to which the reader has to reach a threshold of L2 knowledge in order to be able to transfer his reading skills effectively from the L1 to the L2; otherwise, insufficient knowledge of the L2 would short circuit the reader's reading system. This hypothesis suggests that the correlation between L1 and L2 reading scores should be non-significant by low knowledge learners, but beyond the hypothetical language threshold, the transfer should start showing itself in high and significant correlations between scores in L1 and L2 reading

(Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995). Likewise, Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) in their study concluded that neither variable mentioned by Alderson could fully explain the L2 reading process and both were significant contributors. Some other studies (e.g. Fecteau, 1999; Lee & Lemonnier-Schallert, 1997; Taillefer, 1996) addressing the question have also shown both variables to be significantly related to L2 reading. Bossers (1991) reported evidence that there is direct transfer of L1 reading skills to L2 reading after the learner has acquired a certain amount of knowledge of the L2.

However, later researchers studying the relationship between languages in a multilingual mind concluded that the assumed interdependence between languages varies for different variables, such as types of language skills (Proctor, August, Carlo, & Snow, 2006; Uccelli & P´aez, 2007; Verhoeven, 1994), language typology (Proctor, August, Snow, & Barr, 2010), and different levels of contextual factors, such as language exposure (Proctor, August, Snow, & Barr, 2010; Verhoeven, 1994). According to Proctor, et al. (2010) the interdependence between languages seems to be stronger for language skills involving a small learning challenge (e.g., word-level skills) or for languages that are more alike than for language skills that require a broader range of knowledge (e.g., oral language), or for languages with a smaller typological resemblance. However, according to Verhoeven (1994), Cummins's (1979) hypothesis neglects the role of contextual factors in defining interdependence between languages.

According to Verhoeven (1994), Cummins's (1979) hypothesis neglects the role of contextual factors in defining interdependence between languages. Our hypothesis in this study is that it is likely that there is a difference in relationship between the reading comprehension ability in L1 and L2 among ESL and EFL learners. Moreover, the current study hopes to highlight the role of L2 proficiency in the contribution of L1 reading ability to enhancing L2 reading comprehension in the two contexts. Further, although reading poetry is a good method of comprehension instruction for young readers, little time and attention have been allocated to it (Rasinski, 2014). No study has ever investigated LIH and threshold hypothesis for reading literary works, especially for poetic texts. Therefore, regarding the potential effect of text type on reading comprehension in L2, we further hypothesize that comprehension of poetry reading in the two contexts is different.

3. Research Questions

Traditionally, terms ESL and EFL describe the difference conceived to exist between English in countries where it is a widely used language (e.g. India, Nigeria, Singapore) and countries where English is not a widely used language (e.g. Columbia, Japan, Germany), respectively

(Richards, 2011). According to Stern (1983) foreign language means the language that is used outside the country, learnt for purposes such as tourism, communicating with native speakers, and reading foreign journals. But Second language refers to the language that plays the same important role as mother tongue. However, the two terms can be distinguished according to language environment and language input. Iwai (2011) defined EFL learners as those who learn English in non-English speaking countries, and ESL learners as those who learn English where it is used as a medium of communication and is formally spoken.

For Iranian EFL learners, Persian is the language used out of the classroom and English is used in the classroom context; however, for the Indian ESL learners, the context is a multilingual context in which at least a minimum of three languages (i.e., Kannada, Hindi, and English) coexist. English, in the Indian context is not the native language, but is used extensively "as a medium of communication in a variety of domains like education, administration, and commerce" (Nayar, 1997, p. 15). As Karbalaei and Golshan (2010) stated compared to Iranian students, Indian students have more access to educational materials in English and are more exposed to English through different mass media. Studies investigating the role of literary texts and context of learning (ESL vs. EFL) in testing linguistic interdependence are few. The current study attempts to test the role of L1 poetry reading strategies and L2 language proficiency on L2 reading comprehension of poems among Iranian and Indian learners. Therefore, the following questions are put forward:

Q1: Is there any correlation between awareness of strategies for reading poetry (ASRP) in L1, General English proficiency (GEP) and comprehension of poetry reading in L2 for the Iranian group?

Q2: Is there any correlation between awareness of strategies for reading poetry (ASRP) in L1, General English proficiency (GEP) and comprehension of poetry reading in L2 for the Indian group?

Q3: Do ASRP and GEP predict performance on comprehension of poetry reading in L2 for Iranian and Indian learners of English, similarly?

Q4: Do ASRP in L1 and General English proficiency at two high and low levels contribute to L2 RC similarly for both the Iranian and Indian groups?

A null hypothesis has been formulated for each question.

4. Research Method

Through convenience random sampling from 2 colleges, 175 Indian ESL learners, who were aged between 16 and 18, participated in the current study. They were first year students selected from pre-university colleges in Mysore, in the southern part of India, in Karnataka state. The Kannada language was the medium of instruction and English language is a compulsory course. Hindi is also used in this context. 96 Iranian EFL pre-university students aged from 17 to 19 participated in this study. They were also selected through convenience random sampling from pre-university centers from the city of Babolsar, located in Mazandaran province in the North of Iran. Persian language was the medium of instruction and English is used only in classroom environment in Iranian EFL context. English language in Iranian education system is an obligatory course. Instruments of study were:

A) Language proficiency test (Nelson, series 400B): It is comprised of multiple-choice cloze passage, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation sections. In order to have a reliable test of proficiency at the piloting stage the test was give to 15 students. Its reliability through the K-R21 formula turned out to be .83 for the Indian group and .71 for the Iranian group.

B) Researcher-made test of reading comprehension for poetry in English: three poems entitled 'Annabel Lee', containing 301 words by Edgar Allan Poe, 'All the World's a Stage', containing 211 words by William Shakespeare, and 'We Are Seven' containing 418 words by William Wordsworth, were employed in this study. The poems were selected out of the five poems based on the interest of the students in the topic and their teachers' analysis of the content difficulty of the poems. Ten items testing different reading abilities (i.e., vocabulary knowledge, informational questions, inferential questions, and understanding main idea) were developed for each poem. The time allowed was 45 minutes as determined at the piloting stage both for Iranian and India students. To have a reliable test, it was piloted on 15 Indian students and 15 Iranian students and through the K-R21 formula the reliability turned out to be .79 and .68, respectively.

C) Questionnaire for poetry reading strategies: Strategic approach, or the process of reading comprehension of poetry, was measured by means of a 37-item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire (Never/ Seldom/ Sometimes/ Usually/ and Always true of me). As there was no well-designed and validated questionnaire about poetry reading strategies, this instrument was

adopted from the available resources (Kohl, 2000; Spiegelman, 1999; Wolosky, 2001) on strategies for reading poetry and adapted for the purpose of this study. In order to make sure of the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the instrument it was piloted on 15 Indian and Iranian students and based on the data gathered, the reliability coefficient alpha was calculated to be 0.72 and .81, for the Indian and Iranian students, respectively. Two experts in the field also gave their opinions about the instrument in terms of how effectively it reflected significant aspects of its purpose for providing estimate of content validity.

By approaching the pre-university authorities in order to get their consent for conducting the research and by explaining purpose of the study to them first, two pre-university centers in the Indian context and two pre-university centers in the Iranian context agreed to cooperate in this research. Then, by approaching the students in different classes, they consented to participate in the research, as well. The participants were informed that their answers would be kept confidential and would not have any negative effects on their course evaluation. The conditions for data collection were strictly followed as far as possible in the two contexts. In case of any difficulty, the participants were encouraged to ask question and were provided with help. The whole study was completed in three phases in both contexts as follow. In session 1, the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered to the students in the two contexts. Then, for the purpose of data analysis, they were divided into two groups above and below the means score. In session 2, the reading comprehension test was administered among the student to have an assessment of their comprehension ability in reading poetry texts in English. In session 3, after completing the reading comprehension test the subjects were given the reading strategies questionnaire for poetry, which was a retrospective measure of their reading strategy knowledge. There was no time limit to fill out this questionnaire. The questionnaire was in English but each item was explained to the students and they put their appropriate answer in one of the boxes from 1 to 5 to show how much each item applied to them. This comparative study which is quantitative in nature is descriptive and correlational in design. Regression analysis is used to find out about the contribution of independent variables on the dependent variable.

5. Results

One way of validating the linguistic interdependence hypothesis is to use correlational research where the variables involved are correlated by regression-based design (Leider, Proctor, &

Silverman, 2018). Descriptive and inferential statistics are provided below to test the four research hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics:

Tables 1 and 2 indicate the means and standard deviations of the measures for the Iranian and India groups, respectively.

Table 1.
Means and Standard Deviations of the Measures for Iranian Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ASRP	96	26	125	71.75	16.932
Proficiency	96	10	19	15.14	2.545
Poetry Reading	96	7	23	14.52	3.040

Table 2.
Means and Standard Deviations of the Measures for Indian Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ASRP	125	59	115	81.80	12.328
Proficiency	125	8	20	16.21	2.616
Reading	125	10	26	15.74	2.754

In comparison with Iranian group, Indian group had higher mean scores for Proficiency, Strategy and Reading. Furthermore, the standard deviations of the groups indicate that the Iranian group had higher standard deviation scores on poetry reading and ASRP, indicating more diversity among this group than the Indian group. However, the Indian group had a higher standard deviation score on Proficiency.

What follows, tests the three research hypotheses using inferential statistics

Hypothesis 1: Regarding the first null hypothesis which considers no correlation between ASRP, proficiency, and poetry reading comprehension for the Iranian group, the correlation matrix of the variables for the Iranian group is displayed in Table 3. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$). They are all relatively moderate. The correlation is 0.40 between ASRP and proficiency, 0.57 between poetry reading and ASRP, and 0.738 between poetry reading and proficiency measures. Therefore, the first, null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3.
Correlation Matrix for all the Variables for Iranian Group

		ASRP	Proficiency	Poetry Reading
ASRP	Pearson Correlation	1	٠.400**	٠.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		٠.000	٠.000
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation		1	٠.738**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			٠.000
Poetry Reading	Pearson Correlation			1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Hypothesis 2: Regarding the second null hypothesis which considers no correlation between ASRP, Proficiency and poetry reading comprehension for the Indian group, the correlation matrix of the variables for Indian group is displayed in Table 4. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant (p≤0.01). They are all relatively moderate. The correlation is 0.327 between ASRP and proficiency, 0.297 between poetry reading and strategy, and 0.659 between poetry reading and proficiency measures.

Table 4.
Correlation Matrix for all the Variables for Indian Group

		ASRP	Proficiency	Poetry Reading
ASRP	Pearson Correlation	1	٠.327**	٠.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		٠.000	٠.001
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation		1	٠.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			٠.000
Poetry Reading	Pearson Correlation			1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Therefore, the second research hypothesis stating there is no correlation between ASRP, proficiency and poetry reading in the Indian groups was rejected as the correlation between the three variables for this group was relatively moderate.

Hypothesis 3: Regarding the third research null hypothesis which considers that ASRP and GEP do not predict similarly comprehension of poetry reading in English for Iranian and Indian learners of English, the ASRP and proficiency scores of both Iranian and Indian students were regressed

against their Reading scores. The results of multiple linear regression analyses for Iranian and Indian groups are shown in table 5 and 6, respectively.

The result of multiple linear regression analysis for the Iranian group is as follows. In model 1 (the first model presented in table 5 in the first column) ASRP was the sole predictor, accounting for 32% of reading score variance (adjusted R2=0.318). In model 2 (the second model presented in table 5) proficiency was the sole predictor, accounting for 54% of reading score variance (adjusted R2=0.539). When Proficiency was introduced to the regression equation in model 3, the regression weight for ASRP remained significant (T>1.96, B=0.327, P=000). Proficiency also added significantly to the prediction of reading with R2 change of .46 and (T>1.96, B=0.607, P=000). Both ASRP and proficiency emerged as significant variables (factors) in predicting reading. Together, the two variables accounted for 63% of shared variance in reading.

Table 5.
Result of Linear Regression for the Iranian Group

Model	B	SE	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
1. ASRP	0. 102	0. 015	0. 570	6.727	0.000	1, 94	0. 325	0. 318	45.248	0. 000
2.Proficiency	0. 881	0. 083	0. 738	10.596	0. 000	1, 94	0. 544	0. 539	112.281	0. 000
3. ASRP	0.059	0.012	0.327	4.784	0.000	2,93	0.634	0.626	80.657	0.000
Proficiency	0.725	0.082	0.607	8.870	0.000					

The result of multiple linear regression analysis for Indian group is rather different. In model 1, (the first model presented in table 6 in the first column) strategy was the sole predictor, accounting for 8% of reading variance (adjusted R2= 0.08). In model 2 (the second model presented in table 5) proficiency was the sole predictor, accounting for 43% of reading score variance (adjusted R2=0.430). When proficiency was added to the regression equation in model 3, the regression weight for strategy was non-significant (B=0.091, T<1.96, P>0.05). Indeed, strategy had no significant contribution to the predication of reading. Yet, proficiency contributed significantly to the prediction of reading with R2 change of 0.44 and F change of 48.32 and (T>1.96, B=0.629, P=000).

Table 6.
Results of Linear Regression for the Indian Group

Model	B	SE	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
1. ASRP	0. 066	0. 019	0. 297	3.453	0. 001	1, 123	0. 088	0. 081	11.925	0.001
2.Proficiency	0. 694	0. 071	0. 659	9.723	0. 000	1, 123	0. 435	0. 430	94.538	0. 000
3. Strategy	0.020	0.016	0.091	1.275	0.205	2,122	0.442	0.433	48.322	0.000
Proficiency	0.662	0.075	0.629	8.793	0.000					

By comparing tables 5 & 6 six, it can be inferred that the two independent variable in the Iranian context contribute more to L2 poetry reading (R2= 0.626) than in the Indian context (R2=0.442). However, if each of the two independent variables are compared separately, the contribution of ASRP to L2 poetry reading is more in the Iranian (R2=0.325) context than in the Indian context (R2=0.088) showing a large difference, and the contribution of proficiency to L2 poetry reading is more in the Iranian (R2=0.544) context than in the Indian context (R2=0.435) showing a slight difference. Therefore, the third hypotheses stating that ASRP and Proficiency do not predict performance on poetry reading for Iranian and Indian learners of English, was similarly approved as context of learning changes contributions of the independent variables on the dependent variables differently.

Regarding the fourth research null hypothesis which considers that ASRP and proficiency at two high and low levels do not contribute similarly to poetry reading, for both the Iranian and Indian groups, the proficiency mean score of 15.74, as calculated by dividing the total proficiency score of both Iranian and Indian students into the total number of Indian and Iranian students, was chosen to form the four groups. In other words, those who scored lower than 15.74 were considered as the low group of proficiency, while those who scored higher than 15.74 were considered as the high group, in Iranian and Indian groups.

To test the fourth H0 for the Iranian and Indian groups, first a descriptive statistics of data is provided in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7.
Means and SDs of Variables of the Low and High Levels of Proficiency for Iranian Group

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	ASRP	57	66.46	15.132
Low	Proficiency	57	13.40	1.545
	Poetry reading	57	12.93	2.120
	ASRP	39	79.49	16.608
High	Proficiency	39	17.67	1.264
	Poetry reading	39	16.85	2.671

Table 8.
Mean and SDs of Variables of the Low and High Levels of Proficiency for Indian Group

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	ASRP	43	77.12	10.514
Low	Proficiency	43	13.26	1.916
	Poetry reading	43	13.77	1.974
	ASRP	82	84.26	12.553
High	Proficiency	82	17.76	1.233
	Poetry reading	82	16.77	2.540

A regression analysis was run, where ASRP and proficiency are the independent variables, and reading is the dependent variable. The students' level of proficiency was divided into two groups of low and high to investigate the influence of ASRP at the low and high level of proficiency on reading.

Results of regression analysis of the two Iranian groups (high and low groups) are presented in tables 9 and 10, respectively.

Table 9:
Results of Linear Regression and ANOVA for Iranian Low Proficiency Group

Model	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
ASRP	0.563	5.451	0.000	2,54	0.440	0.419	21.215	0.000
Proficiency	0.270	2.610	0.012					

Table 10:
Results of Linear Regression and ANOVA for Iranian High Proficiency Group

Model	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
ASRP	0.194	1.656	0.106	2,36	0.518	0.492	19.371	0.000
Proficiency	0.662	5.639	0.000					

As the results in tables 9 and 10 show, the role of ASRP was significant, explaining about 41% (β=0.56, T>1.96, F=21.215, P<0.01) of variances of reading for the low group. But the role of ASRP was not significant in predicting reading (β=0.194, T<1.96, P>0.01) for the high group. On the contrary, the role of proficiency was significant, explaining about 49% (β=0.66, T>1.96, F=19.371, P<0.01) of variances of reading for the high group. But the role of proficiency was not significant in predicting reading (β=0.270, T>1.96, P>0.01) for the low group. For the Indian group the result was different. The role of strategy for the low and high groups was insignificant (T<1.96, P>0.05, β= 0.129 & β=0.103). But, the role of proficiency for the low group was significant (T>1.96, β=0.455, P<0.05, F=7.014) explaining about 22% of variances of reading for the low group. The contribution of proficiency was significant for high group (β=0.498, T>1.96, P<0.05, F=14.658). It accounted for 25% of shared variance of reading. (see tables 11 and 12)

Table 11.
Results of Linear Regression and ANOVA for Indian Low Proficiency Group

Model	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
ASRP	0.129	0.903	0.372	2,40	0.260	0.223	7.014	0.002
Proficiency	0.455	3.177	0.003					

Table 12.
Results of Linear Regression and ANOVA for Indian High Proficiency Group

Model	β (std)	T	Sig.	Df	R2	Adj R2	F	Sig.F change
ASRP	0.103	1.069	0.288	2,79	0.271	0.252	14.658	0.000
Proficiency	0.498	5.154	0.000					

Therefore, the fourth hypothesis stating ' ASRP and proficiency (at two high and low levels) do not contribute similarly to reading for both the Iranian and Indian groups' was approved.

6. Conclusion

This study showed a significant correlation between ASRP, proficiency and poetry reading both in the Indian and Iranian contexts. However, the findings showed that ASRP and GEP do not predict comprehension of poetry reading in English, similarly for Iranian and Indian learners of English. The two independent variables, all together in the Iranian context contributed more to L2 poetry reading than in the Indian context. However, if each of the two independent variables are compared separately, the contribution of ASRP to L2 poetry reading is more in the Iranian (R2=0.325) context than in the Indian context (R2=0.088) showing a large difference, and the contribution of proficiency to L2 poetry reading is more in the Iranian (R2=0.544) context than in the Indian context (R2=0.435) showing a significant difference. Finally, it was found that ASRP and Proficiency at two high and low levels do not contribute to poetry reading, similarly for the Iranian and Indian groups. For the Iranian group, in prediction reading in L2, the role of ASRP was significant for the low group, explaining about 41% of variances of L2 reading for the low group, but non-significant for the high group. For the Indian group, in prediction reading in L2, the role of ASRP for the low and high groups was non-significant. For the Iranian group, in prediction reading in L2, for the high group, but non-significant for the low group, the role of proficiency was significant, explaining about 49% of variances of reading. For the Indian group, the role of proficiency for both the low and high groups was significant explaining about 22% and 25% of variances of reading. Therefore, context of learning affects the relationship between languages in mind and the contribution of strategic reading ability and L2 language proficiency to reading comprehension of poetic texts in L2 is affected by contextual features. Linguistic interdependence hypothesis, according to Chung, Chen, and Geva (2018), is so broad a term that it fails to explain about the underlying mechanisms for transfer. Nor does it pay much attention to contextual variables (Prevoo, et. al., 2015). According to Murphy (2003) context of learning is among the many variables that affect cross-linguistic transfer. Findings of the study are similar with the findings of the following studies. In an attempt to investigate factors contributing to reading comprehension in L2 (English) in EFL and ESL contexts among Iranian and Indian Students, Maghsoudi, Khodamoradi, and Talebi (2019) employed measures of general English proficiency (GEP), reading comprehension (RC) of informational texts in L2 and reading strategy awareness (RSA) in L1. Their findings which did not indicate a similar pattern for the variables under study showed that RSA accounted for 10% and 41% of variance in

L2 RC for the Indian and Iranian groups, respectively. The regression weight for RSA was not significant for the Indian group, but it was significant for the Iranian group. For both the high and low Iranian GEP groups, they also found that only the contribution of RSA was significant in the prediction of RC in L2. However, for the Indian group the role of RSA was insignificant in predicting RC in L2, for both high and low groups. They finally suggested that reading teachers reconsider the significant role of factors that contribute more to L2 reading regarding the contextual factors in the EFL and ESL contexts. However, it should be mentioned that Maghsoudi et al. (2019) used informational reading texts to test L2 reading comprehension, while in the current study poetry texts were employed for this purpose. Carrell (1991) analyzed the relative contribution of L1 reading ability and L2 proficiency to L2 reading by multiple regression analysis for English native speakers studying Spanish and Spanish native speakers studying English in the USA the relative contribution of the predictor variables was different for different groups, in such a way that for English L1 speakers L2 proficiency was a stronger predictor, and for Spanish L1 speakers L1 reading ability was found to be a stronger predictor. Carrell mentioned this difference can be due to factors such as the learning environment (foreign vs. second language).

On the relationship between L1 and L2, Cummins (1980) states, "the interdependence hypothesis also presupposes adequate exposure to both languages|" (p. 179). Therefore, reading teachers and material developers in EFL and ESL contexts are recommended to regard the effects of contextual variables on language learning, in general, and effective reading of poetry texts, in particular. LIH does not pay much attention to contextual variables (Prevoo, et. al. 2015). Regarding the importance of learning context, some researchers (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997) hold the view that a good model of SLA considers the interaction between psycholinguistic elements and social activity and base their view on social constructivism which considers knowledge as a social phenomenon which is affected by historic and cultural variables (Burr, 1995). Therefore, educators, educational policy makers and program designers need to consider contextual variables in developing curricula to facilitate the process of language acquisition (Collentine & Freed, 2004). This is quite in keeping with what Hymes (1972, as cited in Collentine & Freed, 2004,) noted as, "the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language but with context… [and then to] systematically relate the two" (p.153).

In this study, ESL and EFL contexts were regarded as a contextual variable which would affect the relationship between L1 and L2 in the reading comprehension ability of poems. It is recommended that other researchers consider other contextual factors (e.g., quantity of exposure,

formal/natural learning, cooperative/individualistic learning context) in investigating the relationship between L1 and L2 reading of poetry texts. In addition, compared to other studies in the related literature which used informational texts, this study employed the poetry texts to find out the relationship between L1 and L2 reading. It is suggested that the relationship between languages in one mind be studied on reading tests with other text types and genres, such as short stories and novels. According to Snow (2002), the features of any given text have a large impact on comprehension. As Alderson and Banerjee (2001) stated, in L2 reading studies, research on comprehension differences between different types of texts is very few and needs to be explored.

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