



## Types of Perceptual Mismatches in Intermediate EFL Classes

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### Abstract

The present study is an attempt to delve into the most frequent perceptual mismatches that are prone to occur in intermediate EFL classes in Iranian context and to provide some remedies to minimize perceptual mismatches. The participants of this study were two classes of 44 intermediate EFL male students. Data, which consisted of all teacher-learners' interactions in the two classes, were collected using a voice recorder during 5 consecutive sessions, with each session lasting for one hour and forty-five minutes, as well as post-observational interviews with some students. Data were analyzed by two experienced English language teachers. The analysis of the verbal data and interviews with students indicated that cultural (23%), linguistic (20%), and communicative (18%) mismatches were the most frequent types of mismatches that occurred in intermediate EFL classes. Some remedies, techniques and strategies to minimize the perceptual mismatches in EFL classes conclude this study.

**Keywords:** perceptual mismatches, teacher intention, learner interpretation, intermediate EFL learners

### INTRODUCTION

One of the inevitable characteristics of human communication is misinterpretation. Quite frequently, a speaker's intention of sending a message is misinterpreted or misunderstood by the listener(s). A typical example of a context in which a speaker's intention and a listeners' understanding of a message may differ is language classroom. Language classes abound with differences between teacher's intention and learners' interpretation of class aims, expectations, teachers' and learners' roles, class management, teaching procedures and evaluation, to name just a few. The difference between teacher's intention and learners' interpretation is referred to as mismatch (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). An important responsibility of language teachers is to provide sufficient input to learners and to convert as much input into intake. Input refers to oral and written data of the target language to which learners are exposed through various sources, and recognized by them as useful and usable for language learning purposes (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Intake, on the other hand, is "what goes in and not what is available to go in" (Corder, 1967, p. 165, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Unless input

is turned into intake, learning cannot be said to have taken place. The corollary of the above mentioned argument is that language teachers are expected to make an attempt to identify the types of and minimize the amount of perceptual mismatches in their classes in order to enhance learning opportunities and to turn as much input as possible into intake. The first stage of this process is the identification of different types of perceptual mismatches in the language class. The second stage will be aiming at minimizing the identified mismatches and familiarizing students with the most common ones, so that students play their own part in this process.

More than two decades ago, Kumaravadivelu (1991) carried out a study to identify the sources of potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation among low intermediate ESL learners in the United States. The study revealed ten sources of potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation.

1. Cognitive mismatch: This source refers to the general, cognitive knowledge of the world that adult language learners bring with them to language classroom. It pertains to mental processes such as remembering, perceiving, recognizing, and inferencing. Learners use these processes to obtain a conceptual understanding of not only the physical and natural phenomena in general but also of language and language learning in particular. (Kumaravadivelu, 2003 p.81).
2. Communicative mismatch: This source refers to the communicative skills necessary for the learners to exchange messages or express personal views. Because the learners have only a limited command of the target language, they struggle to convey their message (p.82).
3. Linguistic mismatch: This source refers to the linguistic repertoire, i.e., syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge of the target language that is minimally required to do a task and to talk about it (p.83).
4. Pedagogic mismatch: This source refers to the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short- or long-term instructional objective(s) of language learning tasks (p.83).
5. Strategic mismatch: This source refers to learning strategies, operations, steps, plans and routines used by a learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information, that is, what learners do to learn and to regulate learning (p.84).
6. Cultural mismatch: This source refers to the prior knowledge of the cultural norms of the target language community minimally required for the learners to understand and solve a problem-oriented task (p. 85).
7. Evaluative mismatch: This source refers to articulated or unarticulated types of self-evaluation measures used by learners to monitor their ongoing progress in their language-learning activities (p. 86).
8. Procedural mismatch: This source refers to stated or unstated paths chosen by learners to do a task. The procedural source pertains to locally specified, currently identified, bottom-up tactics that seek an immediate resolution to a

specific problem whereas the strategic source, discussed earlier, pertains to any broad-based higher-level, top-down strategy that seeks an overall solution in a general language situation (p. 87).

9. Instructional mismatch: This source refers to instructional guidance given by the teacher or indicated by the textbook writer to help learners carry out the task successfully (p. 88).
10. Attitudinal mismatch: This source refers to participants' attitudes toward the nature of L2 learning and teaching, the nature of classroom culture, and teacher-learner role relationships. Adult learners, by virtue of their prior experience, have fairly well-established attitudes toward classroom management, and these preconceived notions can easily contribute to the mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation (p. 88).

It is essential that language teachers do their best to create as many learning opportunities and provide as much comprehensible input for their students as they can. Nevertheless, language learners will not benefit from the provision of input unless it is converted into intake, and cannot improve their language skills unless all their doubts and ambiguities about what they hear and see in the language class are cleared up or at least minimized. Only then can teachers expect their students to progress through the difficulties of learning a second or foreign language. Due to the fact that "perceptual mismatches are unavoidable, identifiable and manageable" (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.90), the first step in this process is the identification of different kinds of mismatches that frequently occur in a language class through careful observation and meticulous analysis of teacher-learner interactions. The next logical step will be adopting context-specific techniques and strategies by teachers to reduce the amount of perceptual gap that exists between their intention and their learners' interpretation. The significance of this study lies in the fact that if language teachers have a clear understanding of potential perceptual mismatches in their classes, they will be in a better position to prescribe and implement certain specific techniques to avoid or minimize the gap between their intention and their students' interpretation in the class which, in turn, is expected to result in a much better learning environment and the accomplishment of learning objectives, which is the ultimate goal of teaching.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Kumaravadivelu (1989, 1991) tried to identify sources of potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation by exploring the learners' and teachers' perception of the nature, the goals, and the demands of a selected language-learning task carried out by low intermediate level ESL learners in the United States. He chose a task that dealt with newspaper advertisements. It focused on the rhetorical features of comparison and the grammatical features of *too* and *enough*. The task had two parts. The first part entitled "Finding an inexpensive wedding dress" presented information about a bride-to-be. This included information such as her budget and size. Also provided were six brief classified advertisements for wedding gowns. The second part was entitled "Finding an apartment". Information was presented about a renter couple (for example

their budget and flat specifications). Information concerning six brief classified advertisements for flat rentals was also provided. Learners had to decide which advertisement the bride-to-be and the renters would answer. The study involved two intermediate level ESL classes, taught by two different teachers. The teachers were given the same task and were asked to follow the guidelines given in the prescribed textbook. The selected task was introduced as a paired activity. Attention was given to two pairs of learners. One pair was a Japanese male and a Brazilian female. The other pair was a Japanese male and a Malaysian female. The classroom interaction was audiotaped and transcribed. During the analysis stage the researcher talked with the teachers and learners in order to clarify some of the questions and responses. The classroom transcripts formed the primary data and the interview scripts formed the secondary data. Analysis of the data (primary and secondary) as well as learner, teacher and researcher perspectives of classroom events gave insights into the mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Based on this study, Kumaravadivelu (2003) identified ten sources that have the potential to contribute to the mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation which were listed in the preceding section. Kumaravadivelu (2003) derived three broad pedagogic insights from his work. The first was that mismatches are unavoidable. He believes that even highly structured and well planned lessons will result in perceptual mismatches of one kind or another. In fact, Kumaravadivelu (2003) states that it would be surprising if perceptual mismatches do not occur at all. Secondly, he believes that mismatches are identifiable and that further research might reveal more than the ten he identified. Thirdly, he points out that mismatches are manageable and that a mismatch can be converted into a learning opportunity in class. Slimani (1989) investigated a group of first-year university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) in Algeria. She observed and recorded six lessons. She was particularly interested in uptake or the students' report of their perception of what they learned after each lesson. She found that the teacher often focused on various specific instructional features without the learners reporting them. She also found that the learners reported to have learned some items that were different from what the teacher had planned for them. She also found that the learners mentioned only 44 per cent of the explicit focus of the lessons, and the majority of the items unnoticed by the learners were instances of error treatment provided by the teacher. Slimani's study seems to confirm perceptual mismatches between teaching agenda and learning outcome. Block (1994, 1996) examined the ways in which learners describe and attribute purpose to the activities that teachers ask them to do. The study focused on the similarities and differences between learner and teacher perceptions of learning purposes. This study involved an EFL class for MBA students in Spain. The observed lesson consisted of five activities: a brief conversation warm-up, a vocabulary review, a review of a news broadcast, a practice mini-test and an extended activity about job advertisements. Block found that the learners talked most highly of the news reviewing task which was not important from the teacher's perspective. Interestingly, the learners were not interested in the job activity which was of importance from the teacher's perspective. This study highlights the autonomy of learner thought and also the existence of a gap between the way teachers and learners view the classroom. Tragant (1997)

conducted a study to reveal, categorize and interpret the instances where mismatches occur. Results indicated that there were occasions where what the teacher told students to do turned out to be different from what they were asked to do in groups or individually. As a result, there often exists a mismatch between teachers' expectations of desirable learning activities and students' actual performances. Barkhuizen's (1998) study involved high-school students learning English as a second language (ESL) in South Africa. He focused on the students' perceptions of learning and teaching activities carried out in class. He found that students' perception of classroom aims and events did not match those of their teachers. This study revealed that many teachers were surprised that the students ranked the acquisition of mechanical skills highly in terms of learning English. In the light of these findings, Barkhuizen advises teachers to pay close attention to learner perceptions. These experimental studies confirmed that there are perceptual mismatches between teaching objectives and learning outcomes and between the instruction that makes sense to teachers and instruction that makes sense to learners. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003) the studies above confirm our experiential knowledge that there are indeed perceptual mismatches between teaching objectives and learning outcomes and between the instruction that makes sense to teachers and instruction that makes sense to learners. Hawkey (2006) found perceptual mismatches when he asked his learners to rate the importance of 13 activity categories, such as listening to the teacher talk to the whole class and pair discussions. Learners considered things quite differently so that whereas, for example, the teacher thought that pair discussions were the second most common activity type, for learners they came as number eight.

Dehghan Harati (2011) conducted a piece of research on the differences between learners' beliefs and teachers' beliefs. The purpose of this study was to investigate the undergraduate EFL learners' beliefs toward FLL and those of their teachers to see whether there is any gap between the beliefs of the two above mentioned groups or not. The mismatch between learners' and teachers' beliefs was more apparent in the greater emphasis of students on the role of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and translation, highlighting the fact that their beliefs are more in line with traditional approaches to language learning. They also tended to underestimate the length of time it takes to become fluent in L2. Moreover, students and teachers had different beliefs as far as the influence of one's gender and intelligence on foreign language acquisition processes was concerned. In another study, Büyükyazi and Solhi Andarab (2013) studied the significance of non-native speaker teachers of English. During the observation stage, the interaction between the teacher and the learners was closely considered. In general, the mismatches found between the non-native teacher intention and learner interpretation are in the following order: communicative (37 %), strategic (26%), instructional (18.5 %), and linguistic (11.1 %), and procedural mismatch (7.4 %). However, during the observation, no cases of cognitive, pedagogic, cultural, evaluative, and attitudinal mismatches were encountered. Analyses of data showed the mismatches between the non-native teacher intention and learner interpretation. Although a body of research has been conducted to study the types and frequency of perceptual mismatches in language classes to date, no study has yet investigated the types and frequencies of perceptual

mismatches in the Iranian EFL context and among intermediate proficiency learners. The present study is an attempt to fill in this research gap.

## **THE STUDY**

This study aims to reveal the most frequent types of perceptual mismatches which are prone to occur in intermediate EFL classes in Iranian EFL context. It also intends to provide remedies for minimizing the perceptual mismatches that occur in EFL classes in Iran. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the most frequent types of perceptual mismatches in intermediate proficiency level EFL classes?
2. What remedies can be provided to minimize the mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation in intermediate EFL classes?

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

The present study made use of observation of teacher-learners' interactions by the teacher/researcher in order to reveal perceptual mismatches that occurred in the intermediate EFL classroom. The goal of observation in educational research is providing a complete description of individual teachers' or learners' behavior without any prior hypotheses or predictions. In other words, "observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site" (Creswell, 2012, pp. 213).

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were two classes of Iranian male students with intermediate proficiency in English as a foreign language in a major state language institute in Iran, whose ages ranged from 15 to 18 and an experienced teacher-researcher. Gender was considered as a control variable in this study. There were 20 students in one class and 24 in the other. They all came from the same sociocultural background and spoke Farsi as their native language. They had completed two years of English education at the institute before this study was conducted. They received a combination of meaning-focused and form-focused instruction. Based on the institute's placement test and the levels of the EFL courses in which they had enrolled, they were considered to be intermediate learners. They attended their English class twice a week which lasted for one hour and forty-five minutes each.

### **Instruments**

To collect data, i.e., teacher-learner interactions in the classes, a voice recorder was used to record all the interactions between teacher and learners. Since the researcher was the teacher of both classes, it was possible to walk around the class and listen to student-student interactions and jot down any discrepancies between teacher's intention of asking students to do a task or to say something, and students' interpretation of it. The

two classes were recorded for 5 consecutive sessions over 2 weeks using a voice recorder, and then the recorded data were analyzed for finding any differences between what the teacher had meant and what the students had interpreted. As to the materials which were used in this study, the *Iran Language Institute's English Series (Intermediate 1)* (Iran Language Institute, 2006) was the major course book used by the researcher for instruction to the participants, since it was their course book at the institute. To reveal mismatches that had occurred during the observational sessions, the researcher counted and tallied the differences between teacher's intention and learners' interpretation, and put the differences in different categories of mismatches according to the nature of that mismatch. To ensure credibility in qualitative research, peer review or peer debriefing technique (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker, 2014) was applied. Recorded data and interview data were analyzed by an experienced colleague to see whether the same findings will emerge from the raw data or not. Peer review corroborated the findings of the original researcher. The analysis of the recorded data, written data, and interview data are presented in the following section.

## RESULTS

Through the analysis of verbal data, the following types of mismatches that had occurred in the classroom emerged.

1. Cognitive mismatch: This type of mismatch occurs when a learner does not have the necessary background knowledge to understand the teacher or a point in the textbook. A total of 5 cognitive mismatches were observed. The following are observed cases of this type of mismatch.

T: He had an English test on Friday but he had not studied anything and failed the test. He should have studied for the test...

S: He had a test on Friday? (looking confused)

T: Yeah on Friday.

S: But Friday is holiday!

This student looked confused due to the fact that he did not have the background knowledge that Friday is a weekday in non-Muslim countries as opposed to his own Muslim country. In fact, most Iranian EFL learners express amazement when they realize that there is a two-day weekend in western countries such as England and the United States. Another case of cognitive mismatch was revealed when the teacher asked his students about the capital cities of some First World countries and, to his chagrin, the majority of students gave wrong answers, as the following episode depicts.

T: What is the capital city of the United States?

S1: New York?

S2: No teacher it's not New York. I think Los Angeles.

T: It's Washington.

A common cognitive mismatch which occurred frequently was that students often could not distinguish between boys' names and girls' names which, in turn, resulted in using wrong subject or object or possessive pronouns.

2. Communicative mismatch: This kind of mismatch occurs when a student does not have an acceptable command of the target language to communicate what he/she means and to express his/her personal views and experiences. A total of 6 communicative mismatches were observed. The following exchange is an example of this kind of mismatch.

T: Do you consider yourself an introvert or an extrovert?

S1: I'm an extrovert because I like to .....uh ....go out and ....you know hang with friends....

T: Hang with friends? Do you mean hang out with friends?

S1: Yeah hang out with my friends and....

Here, the student could not come up with the appropriate verb "hang out" to clearly express himself although he seemed to have heard this particular verb before in context. In the same vein, some students frequently resorted to their native language, Farsi, to compensate for a deficiency in their communicative competence when asked to recount their personal views and experiences and they asked the teacher to provide the English equivalent of some Farsi words.

3. Linguistic mismatch: This kind of mismatch concerns the linguistic repertoire that is minimally required to do and talk about a task. A total of 7 linguistic mismatches were observed in this study, an example of which is presented below when the teacher was teaching a passage and was paraphrasing the passage and providing synonyms and antonyms only for the words and expressions which were in bold and, presumably difficult and problematic for the students to understand.

T: (reading from the course book) .....A **backward** glance from this side of the new **millennium** reveals that the role of married women in the U.S. has changed **radically** since the 1950s ....

After the teacher wrote synonyms and definitions of the words in bold on the board and explained the meanings of them through making some sentences with them, a student raised his hand and asked for the meanings of the words "glance" and "reveal", which were, from the teacher's point of view, quite clear and very easy and did not need any explanation.

4. Pedagogic mismatch: This type of mismatch concerns the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short- or long-term instructional objective(s).

In the observed classes, only 1 pedagogic mismatch occurred when the teacher was explaining a grammar point and expected the students to focus only on the grammar point he was explaining and to provide some examples while some students raised questions about the meaning of some new words in the examples.

5. Strategic mismatch: This source refers to learning strategies: operations, steps, plans and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of



information, that is, what learners do to learn and to regulate learning. This type of mismatch occurred once, when the teacher asked his students to discuss a picture and to ask questions using the passive form. Although an example had been provided by the teacher to clarify the task, the teacher noticed that some students were simply using the active voice to do the task.

6. Cultural mismatch: This type of mismatch can be observed when language learners are not familiar with cultural norms of the target language community which can in turn lead to difficulties in understanding and doing a task and even problems in expressing their views. A total of 8 cases of this type of mismatch occurred in this study. The following are some observed cases.

6.1. After the teacher had finished teaching a passage which included this sentence: "I went home with all my brothers and sisters", one student raised the following question:

"Excuse me, did she go home with her real brothers and sisters or her religious brothers and sisters?"

This kind of question reveals the cultural and religious differences that exist between Iranian EFL learners' Iranian-Islamic culture and the American culture. According to Islamic teachings, all Muslims are brothers and sisters regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Upon interviewing this student, it turned out that this belief had led this particular student, who was apparently religious, to raise the above-mentioned question.

6.2. In doing tasks which required the students to say their parents' names, including their mother's or sister's names, some students were reluctant to do so, and only provided the names of the male members of their family. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that it is considered rather awkward in Islamic communities to ask one's mother's or sister's name.

6.3. It was difficult for some students to distinguish between English male names and female names, which resulted in using wrong pronouns.

6.4. When the teacher was explaining one American cultural norm that employers in the United States are not entitled to ask job applicants questions about their religion or religious beliefs and questions that are not specifically related to that job, most students were astonished and could not believe it. The clear reason for this phenomenon lies in the fact that the majority of state-run companies and organizations in Iran employ people mainly on the basis of their religious beliefs and their commitment to Islamic principles as well as a variety of other criteria.

7. Evaluative mismatch: This source refers to the self-evaluative strategies and measures that language learners utilize to monitor and verify their own learning and progress. In the observed classes, no instance of this type of mismatch occurred.

8. Procedural mismatch: This source refers to stated or unstated paths chosen by the learners to do a task. The procedural source pertains to locally specified, currently identified, bottom-up tactics that seek an immediate resolution to a specific problem. In this study, no instance of this type of mismatch occurred.

9. Instructional mismatch: This source concerns the instructional guidance given by the teacher or indicated by the textbook writer to help learners carry out the task successfully. A total of 5 cases of instructional mismatches occurred during this study. The following are a few observed cases.

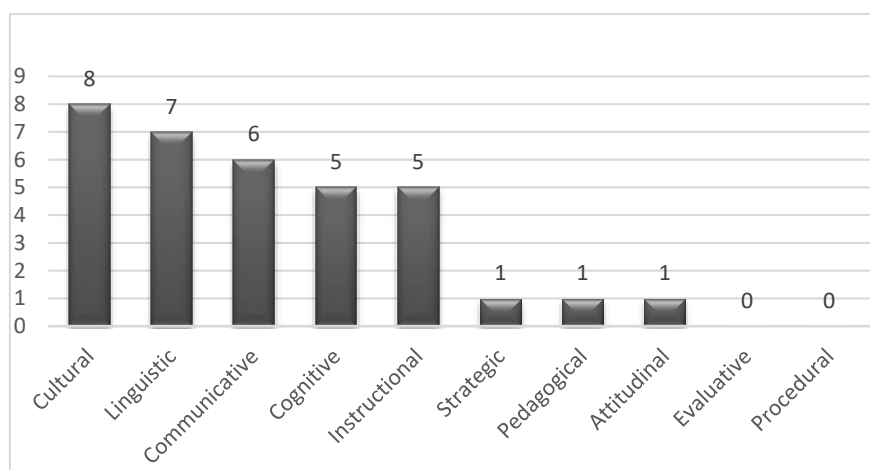
9.1. Before teaching a reading, the teacher asked his students to read the passage silently to get a general idea of what the reading was about. Nevertheless, it was observed that some students were not reading the passage and looked confused. The teacher had to tell them again that they were expected to read the passage silently before he could start paraphrasing the passage.

9.2. The teacher asked his students to write some questions with answers on the reading and dialog that he had taught for the following session. Still, some students had not written the answers to their questions.

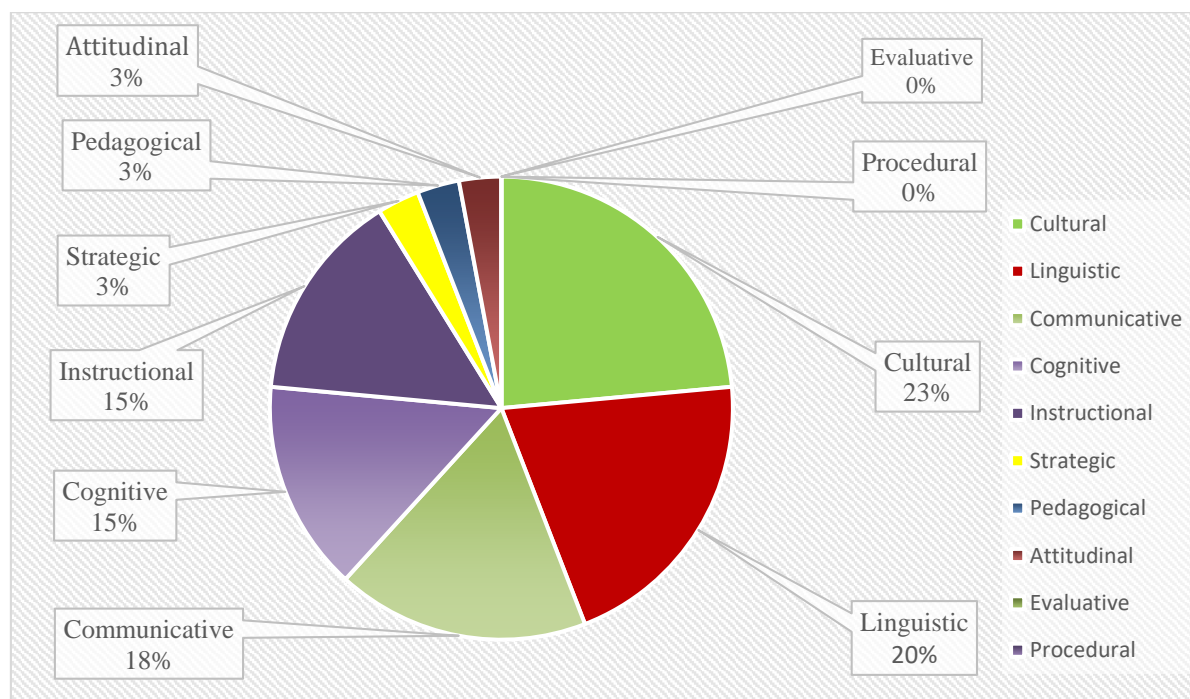
9.3. In one listening follow-up task, the teacher made it clear to the students that they were supposed to describe their house or apartment using the adjectives provided in a box. After a few minutes of pair work, some students described their house or apartment in a single sentence using few adjectives, rather than use the adjectives that the course book had provided to be used.

10. Attitudinal mismatch: This source refers to participants' attitudes toward the nature of L2 learning and teaching, the nature of classroom culture, and teacher-learner role relationships. The following attitudinal mismatch was observed during the observational sessions.

10.1. When an adult student made a mistake in providing the appropriate word and said a wrong word, another student who was listening intently tried to correct his classmate by providing the appropriate word which was quite an acceptable technique. That is, peer correction is preferred over teacher correction in language classes. In spite of the fact that the word which the younger student had suggested was quite acceptable and that the teacher expected the older learner to use that word, the older learner refused to use that word and asked the teacher for the correct word. This behavior can be justified on the basis of the fact that this learner considers the teacher as the sole authority and source of knowledge in the class who is expected to correct all mistakes.



**Figure1.** Types and Frequency of Observed Perceptual Mismatches



**Figure 2.** Percentage of Observed Perceptual Mismatches

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study delved into the most frequent types of perceptual mismatches that are prone to occur in intermediate EFL classes in Iran. Data were collected through recording classroom interactions and post-observational interviews with some students, and were analyzed to uncover the types of differences between teacher intention and learner interpretation. The most frequent types of mismatches that were revealed in this study are the following which are listed in order of frequency.

1. Cultural mismatches occurred the most frequently in the observed classes. It can be reasoned that this type of mismatch occurred more often than other types of mismatches due to the fact that learning English in a country where it is not spoken outside the context of the classroom, which is called English as a foreign language, and where there is very little or no access to native speakers, is conducive to lack of cultural knowledge of the target language community. Teaching and learning English in Muslim countries, particularly in Iran, where there is strong resistance against cultural norms of the West, including the United States, is a highly challenging and demanding experience. As a consequence, English classes are rather devoid of teaching English culture.

2. Linguistic mismatches were the second most frequent ones which occurred. The reason behind the occurrence of this type of mismatch was teacher's belief that some points were quite easy to understand by learners or that learners already know those points whereas, in actual fact, it was not the case.

3. Communicative mismatches were the third most frequently occurring mismatches that were observed. In spite of the fact that the participants of this study had completed two years of studying English, they still had problems to express nuances of meanings when

they were trying to communicate what they exactly meant. They also resorted to their native language and spoke Farsi when they could not find the appropriate English words or asked their teacher to provide the English words they could not think of.

4. Cognitive and instructional mismatches were the fourth most frequently occurring mismatches that were noticed. The former occurred because students lacked enough background and world knowledge to clearly understand and carry out tasks. The latter occurred when the teacher had not clarified the steps involved in doing tasks. Had the teacher clearly and repeatedly explained the stages involved in doing tasks, the students would have completed those tasks with more accuracy.

5. Strategic, pedagogic and attitudinal mismatches were the fifth most frequently occurring mismatches which were observed. In actual fact, only one instance of each type was observed during all the sessions.

6. Evaluative and procedural mismatches were not observed during this study.

The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that cultural mismatches, linguistics mismatches and communicative mismatches occurred more frequently than other types of mismatches. To answer the second research question posed earlier in this paper concerning remedies, techniques and strategies that language teachers can apply in their classes to minimize types and amount of perceptual mismatches, it should be noted that language teachers can familiarize their students with different types of mismatches through explaining them along with clear examples. In fact, EFL students should be part of mismatch reduction process by trying to understand their teacher's intention of having them do a task. If language learners are fully aware of their teacher's intention of having them do a language task in the class, they will have a clear picture of what they are or are not expected to do while they try to carry out a task. Another beneficial strategy that language teachers can adopt in their classes is to constantly monitor their students to make sure that they are exactly following the pre-specified procedures in completing a task. In order to minimize cultural mismatches in EFL classes, language teachers may include teaching culture as an integral part of learning any second or foreign language and point out any cultural differences that exist between learners' native culture and English culture.

In addition, language teachers can ask their students to acquaint themselves with the target culture. To alleviate linguistic mismatches in EFL classes, language teachers can ask language learners, both during and after instruction, whether they have thoroughly grasped the material or not, and try to disambiguate uncertainties of meaning by providing further explanations and clarifications. To handle communicative mismatches in EFL classes, it is advisable that language teachers actively participate in the negotiation of meaning, especially when a learner seems to lack enough communicative skills and strategic competence. Remaining silent when a language learner is struggling to convey their message and leaving him with all the burden of expressing meaning in a second or foreign language, and not providing any assistance does not seem to result in building communicative competence in a language learner.

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