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IRANIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS' COGNITIVE LEARNING STYLES IN READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The intent of the present study was to investigate the correlation between students' preferred learning styles and their reading comprehension. As such, the objectives of this study were two-fold. The primary objective of the study was to examine the relationship between language learning styles and reading comprehension among Iranian medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The second objective of the study was to investigate Iranian medical students' preferred learning styles. To this end, a 20-item reading comprehension test and a 30-item learning style preference questionnaire were distributed among 95 male and female Iranian medical students. The data gathered were analyzed descriptively utilizing central tendency (mean and standard deviation). Moreover, the collected data were analyzed inferentially using independent t-test and correlation. Learning styles were found to be significantly correlated with the English proficiency between two groups (i.e., high and low proficiency). The most preferred learning style for both groups was reflective style, while intuitive learning style was their least preferred learning style when they read English texts.

Key Words: Cognitive Learning Styles, English as a Foreign Language, English for Specific Purposes, Reading Comprehension, Index of Learning Styles.

1. Introduction

The ability to read English efficiently and effectively as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) is the most fundamental skill that influences student success at different academic levels (Koda & Zehler, 2008). In the Iranian context, Iranian ESP (English for Specific Purposes) instructors consider EFL reading as the core of instruction to help students to gain a high level of competence in academic literacy (Ghonsooli & Eghtesadee, 2006; Noora, 2008). In a similar vein, for many Iranian university students, reading is regarded as the most important of the four language skills, alongside listening, speaking, and writing (Sajadi & Oghabi, 2011). The usual justification for this is that comprehension of English text is an important tool for obtaining information about the latest technological and scientific developments in different fields of science (Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012). Moreover, the ability to comprehend English well also provides Iranian ESP students with better

opportunities to gain a wide range of knowledge as well as skills and a capability to compete in the job market and communicate well in social and professional settings (Erfani, Iranmehr, & Davari, 2010). Having high competence in comprehending academic texts is an important vehicle, especially for those students intending to enter and join a profession like medicine, where a huge amount of “the research literature produced is in English as well as many of the most widely-used texts” (Malcolm, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, not only would the ability to read English well lead medical sciences students to academic and educational success but it is also an important tool for professional accomplishment. However, there is a huge gap between Iranian medical sciences students’ reading abilities and the higher competence expected from EFL university students. That is, many medical sciences students in Iran possess low-level text comprehension and text interpretation skills (R. Kafipour, personal communication, August 2, 2012).

The comprehension problems of Iranian medical students can perhaps be attributed to a variety of factors including ineffective use of reading strategies, not well developed teaching methodologies, students’ lack of vocabulary, reading motivation, and language learning style (Al-Shaye, 2002; Bernhardt, 2005; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003; Lee, 2007; Morgan & Fuchs, 2007; Sungur, 2007), which is the focus of this study. Studies to date have confirmed a positive relationship between learning styles and students’ reading comprehension (Cheng, 2006; Chiu, 2002; Haywood, 2005; Hsu, 2007; Lee, 2004; Miller, 2005; Thomas & Mackey, 2010). According to Oxford (2003), language learning styles are among the major factors that contribute to our understanding of how and how well students learn and acquire a second or foreign language. Brown (2000 as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2012) defines these styles “as the manner in which individuals perceive and process information in learning situations” (p. 469). Reid (1995) has classified learning styles into three main categories: cognitive learning styles, sensory learning styles, and perceptual learning styles. In the ESL/EFL classroom, cognitive learning styles, which are the focus of this study, include four dimensions: active/reflective, sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, and sequential/global (Felder & Soloman, 2004). Active learners retain and understand information best by discussing it, applying it, or explaining it to others. Reflective learners prefer to think about information quietly before doing anything with it. Sensing learners like to learn concrete material and tend to be practical, intuitive learners often prefer discovering possibilities and relationships. Visual learners remember best what they see – pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, and demonstrations. Verbal learners get more out of words – written and spoken explanations. Sequential learners tend to obtain learning in linear steps, with each step following logically from the previous one whereas global learners learn in large leaps, taking knowledge almost haphazardly without seeing connections, and then suddenly “getting it” (Felder & Soloman, 2004). Based on these definitions, it is implied that every learner has his/her own unique learning preferences. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2012) state that “it is important for teachers to incorporate in their curriculum activities related to each of these learning styles, so that all students are able to succeed in their classes” (p. 469). Therefore, in order to aid students in

learning efficiently, language instructors should understand students' learning styles and give individuals education in areas suitable in their preferred ways (Ehrman et al., 2003).

Despite the wide range of studies in the domains of learning style preferences and learning strategies, there is still a scarcity of research into the relationship between these factors and specific language skills (e.g., reading or listening) (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2010; Vaseghi, Ramezani & Gholami, 2012). In particular, the relation between reading comprehension performance and learning style preferences is the least examined area (Sadeghi, Kasim, Tan & Abdullah, 2012). Also, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no research has investigated the relationship between Iranian medical students' learning style preferences and their reading comprehension performance in the Iranian context. Hence, the purpose of the present study was to investigate medical students' language style preferences and their relationship with reading comprehension. In order to add to the body of existing knowledge in this area, this study attempted to answer to the following questions:

1. What are high- and low- English proficiency Iranian medical students' preferred learning styles while they are reading English?
2. What is the relationship between Iranian medical students' learning style preferences and reading comprehension?

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study is of significance to ESP instructors, teacher educators, and administrators in Iran, who need to know which factors contribute to English instruction. The main findings on medical students' learning styles and their relationship with reading comprehension would make language instructors aware that different students learn differently. As a result, they will approach teaching from different perspectives and arrange the suitable teaching activities in reading comprehension instruction.

This study will also aid medical students to recognize and use many different learning styles that will improve their English language potential in general and reading comprehension in particular. According to Aqel and Mahmood (2006), "knowledge of the personality and learning styles of students may be helpful in allowing individuals to have insights into their strengths and vulnerabilities and thereby avoid situations in which they become stressed" (p. 604).

Last but not least, this study might be useful for ESP curriculum developers, ESP syllabus designers, and ESP material developers. For example, understanding ESP students' general preference inclinations will enable material developers to prepare materials that are more congruent with students' learning styles.

2. Literature Review

Alumran (2008) aimed to investigate the preferred learning styles of Bahraini university students. The study further attempted to examine the contribution of learning styles as predictors of the academic achievement of students. Results showed that the total sample preferred the visual learning style and the following learning styles: Active over reflective; sensing over intuitive; visual over verbal, and sequential over global. In addition, the findings revealed that the learning styles that were good predictors of student academic achievement were visual/verbal and sequential/global.

Jhaish, (2010) sought to determine the relationship between language achievement and learning style of 60 EFL Palestinian students at Al Aqsa University. The results of the study revealed a statistically significant correlation between language achievement and auditory style, but there were no statistically significant correlations between language achievement and visual, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning, and individual learning styles. With respect to students' learning styles, kinesthetic learning and tactile learning fell into the major learning style preferences. Individual learning fell into the minor learning style preferences.

Yang (2010) studied college students' preferred cognitive styles and frequently used reading strategies in EFL reading courses. With respect to preferred learning styles, the most popular learning style was reflective style followed by visual learning style and active learning style. In addition, a significant correlation was found to exist between reading comprehension and the intuitive learning style, but the other five types of learning styles had no significant correlation coefficient with student's reading comprehension.

Yeow, Tan, Loh and Blitz (2010) carried out an investigation into the learning styles, English proficiency, and assessment performance of Malaysian medical students. The researchers selected the Felder and Soloman (2004) Index of Learning Style (ILS) in order to assess the participants' learning styles. Based on the findings, the Malaysian students had a preference for a visual learning style. Furthermore, the results indicated no relationship between self-rated proficiency in English and learning style preference.

Zeinol-Abedin, Rezaee, Abdullah and Balbir-Singh (2011) aimed to identify the relationship between learning styles and overall academic achievement. The study involved 317 upper secondary class students in Malaysia. The Learning Style Survey (ILSS) was used in this study. The findings revealed a significant relationship between overall academic achievement and learning styles. Additionally, it was found that the high, moderate, and low achievers have a similar preference pattern of learning in all learning styles.

Naqeed and Awad (2011) conducted research at the Arab American University, Palestine, to determine the learning styles of Palestinian EFL learners. They also

examined the relationship between students' learning style preferences and their English proficiency level. Based on the results of the study, no differences were found among the students regarding their level in English.

Tao, (2011) tried to investigate whether the subclasses of learning styles could significantly predict English proficiency. The sample of the study consisted of 300 Chinese EFL students. Results showed that only seating design responsibility, authority orientation, kinesthetic, and mobility were significant predictors of English achievement.

Tuang (2011) examined EFL students' preferred learning styles, and linkages between learning style preference and individual attributes such as field of study, length of tertiary study, gender, age, learning language experience, and English proficiency level. 172 Vietnamese students took part in the study. The dominant learning style preferences were kinesthetic and tactile. There was a significant relationship between students' learning style preferences and English proficiency level.

Al-Hajaya and Al-Kheresheh (2012) conducted a study at Tafila Technical University in Jordan to determine the effect of a reading instructional strategy and the cognitive learning style on the reading achievement of Jordanian freshmen English majors. The subjects of the study were 104 freshmen English majors enrolled in the Reading Skills 1 in the autumn term 2008. The findings of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the students' mean scores on the reading achievement test between the analytical learning style group and the global learning style group due to the instructional strategy or the learning style. However, the only factor that influenced students' achievement and motivation for reading in English was the interaction between the instructional strategy and the cognitive learning style.

Tsai (2012) tried to investigate the correlations among learning style, motivation and strategy use in reading English as a foreign language. Significant differences were found between skilled and less-skilled readers on visual style and reflective style. The responses of the students indicated that reflective was the most preferred learning style for both group of the students, whereas intuitive was the least preferred style. Furthermore, no significant correlations were found between learning styles and reading performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

As Hatch and Lazaraton (1991 cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012) suggested, a basic rule of thumb is that, for a sample to be representative, it should include 30 or more cases. The participants of this study were, therefore, 95 freshman and sophomore Iranian medical students studying medicine at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. They were selected through *convenience sampling*. All 95 participants volunteered to

take part in the study, and the confidentiality of the students was assured. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 22. In terms of gender, 55 (58%) were female, and 40 (42%) were male. At the time of study, the students were all enrolled in the "General English" course. This course was worth four credits. The participants attended the "General English" class for two hours, two times a week and the main purpose of the course was to improve reading comprehension. The participants all spoke Persian as their mother tongue. All of the participants had already studied English for seven years before entering Shiraz University of Medical Sciences.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. English Reading Comprehension Test

The reading comprehension test was the first instrument that was used in the present study. Passages and questions were chosen from an official TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language) administered in the past by Educational Testing Service (ETS). Written permission to use the passages and questions for an educational research purpose was obtained from the publisher, ETS.

The reading comprehension test for this study contained two passages, and each passage had ten multiple-choice questions. The present study used this English proficiency level test to assess the participants' language proficiency level (i.e., high- and low-reading achievement). According to the results of this reading comprehension test ($M=10.39$), the participants were divided into two levels: high language proficiency level and low language proficiency level. The students whose scores of reading comprehension test were higher than 10.39 were grouped into high English proficiency ($N=41$). On the other hand, the students whose scores of reading comprehension test were lower than 10.39 were classified into the group of low English proficiency ($N=54$).

3.2.2. The Persian version of Index of Learning Styles (ILS) developed by Felder and Soloman (2004).

In the present study, the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) developed by Felder and Soloman (2004) was adapted as the instrument for identifying the cognitive learning styles of students. The ILS was selected for the present study because the relevance of the ILS to language learning has been discussed (Felder & Henrique, 1995 as cited in Bailey et al., 2000) and because studies, especially among undergraduate medical students, on the validity and reliability (test-retest reliability; internal consistency; reliability and construct validity) of the ILS scores have been reported (Felder & Spurlin, 2005; Cook & Smith, 2006). The ILS has been widely used for college students to self-test their learning style preferences and is cited by many researchers (Felder & Spurlin, 2005; Alumran, 2008). Furthermore, according to Vaseghi et al. (2012), most of the previous studies in this area have used the Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) and "too much reliance on one single instrument and the overuse of this rather old instrument can be a cause for concern among those working in this area of research" (p. 449). The adapted version of the ILS consisted of thirty statements, each of which uses a five

point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”. The thirty statements were divided into six groups, each of which represents a particular learning style. The first group -visual- consists of statements 1 to 5. The second group -verbal- includes statements 6 to 10. The next one - active- covers statements 11 to 15. The reflective preference consists of items 16 to 20. Statements 21 to 25 are about sensing preference. The last learning style - intuitive preference- includes items 26 to 30. The Cronbach's Alpha of the Persian version of ILS administered in this study was 0.81, which was acceptable for the purpose of the study.

The ILS questionnaire was originally in English, but was translated into Persian in order to avoid students' misunderstanding. In order to ensure the accuracy of translation, the process involved the original English version being translated into Persian by a native Persian-speaking researcher, then translated back into English by two native Persian speakers specialized in the field of English language teaching (i.e., M.A. English students) (Warden & Lin, 2000).

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the initiation of the study, one of the researchers contacted English instructors of the selected classes and obtained permission to ask their students to take part in the study. Administration of instruments was in the context of class period. Before administering the instruments, the researcher orally stated that “participation will be entirely voluntary and you will have the right to withdraw at any time. Personal demographic information will be kept highly confidential. If interested and requested, you can receive a copy of the analyzed data at a later time”. The participants were also instructed to read the cover letter to understand the purpose of the study. The participants were assured that their performance on the reading test would not affect their scores in the course. Special care was taken to remind the participants that there are no right and wrong answers on the ILS, whose purpose is to elicit their learning style preferences. They were asked to give answer to questions honestly based on their intuition. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study to demonstrate that the study would be of value to the participants as well as to the entire field of EFL instruction and learning in general and ESP in particular.

The regulated administration time was 30 minutes. At first, participants read the two passages and answered twenty multiple-choice comprehension questions for twenty minutes. Use of dictionaries was not permitted. Next, they were asked to fill in the ILS questionnaire. Ten minutes were given for the students to complete the questionnaire. The researcher stayed in the classroom to answer any questions from the participants. After all participants had completed the tasks, the reading comprehension test and the questionnaire were collected and returned to the researchers. The whole process of collecting data was smooth.

3.4. Data analysis

The data obtained from the returned questionnaire and reading comprehension test were interpreted and reported through descriptive statistics and statistical analyses including means, standard deviations, t-test, and Pearson product-moment correlation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 16.0) was employed to analyze the data obtained for this study.

In order to answer the research questions, the following statistical analyses were used. First, the descriptive statistics were used by computing the means and standard deviations of the items in each category of ILS questionnaire in order to assess the participants' learning style preferences. Then, the t-test was used to explore the difference of specific types of learning styles between learners of different English reading proficiency. Finally, Pearson product-moment correlation analyses were carried out to find out the relationships among the individual types of learning style preferences and reading comprehension.

4. Results

4.1. Learners' learning style preferences

Research question one "what are high- and low- English proficiency Iranian medical students' preferred learning styles while they are reading English?" was to identify Iranian medical students' learning style preferences. First, the participants' response to the learning style questionnaire was analyzed by computing the mean scores and standard deviation. In order to examine the learning style preferences of Iranian medical students with different English proficiency, all the participants were divided into high and low English proficiency based on the mean score (M= 10.39) of their reading comprehension test as illustrated in Table 1. Table 2 presents a summary of the mean scores for the six style preferences between high and low English proficiency students, as well as the results of t-test in order to explore whether there was any significant difference in the learning style preferences between high and low English proficiency students.

Table 1. The Mean Scores of Reading Comprehension Test for Participants.

English Proficiency	N	M	SD
High	41	14.0489	1.9615
Low	54	7.611	1.5347
Total	95	10.39	3.6387

Table 2. T-test of Each Style Preference for High and Low English Proficiency Students

Style	Proficiency level	N	M	SD.	t	Sig.
Visual	High	41	3.337	.4939	-1.237	.219

Verbal	Low	54	3.193	.5729	-.247	.806
	High	41	2.917	.4583		
Active	Low	54	3.056	.5412	-1.685	.095
	High	41	2.951	.5437		
Reflective	Low	54	3.170	.6846	1.155	.251
	High	41	3.4	.6488		
Sensing	Low	54	3.426	.5644	-.25	.803
	High	41	3.098	.6873		
Intuitive	Low	54	3.13	.5605	-2.35	.021*
	High	41	2.781	.551		
	Low	54	3.067	.6144		

P<0.05*

As can be seen in Table 2, the high proficiency students mostly preferred reflective style with mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of .6488, followed by visual style (M=3.337, SD=.4939), sensing style (M=3.098, SD=.6873), active style (M=2.951, SD=.5437), verbal style (M=2.917, SD=.4853), and intuitive style (M=2.781, SD=.551). It revealed that the high English proficiency Iranian medical students preferred reflective style most, then visual style, sensing style, active style to intuitive style when read English texts.

The most preferred learning style for the low English proficiency students was reflective style (M=3.426, SD=.5644), followed by visual style (M=3.193, SD=.5729), active style (M=3.170, SD=.6846), sensing style (M=3.13, SD=.5605), verbal style (M=3.056, SD=.5412), and intuitive style (M=3.067, SD=.6144). This showed that low English proficiency medical students preferred reflective style most, then visual style, active style, sensing style, verbal style to intuitive style when they read texts written in English. Given the both groups, the results showed that the most preferred learning style was reflective, while intuitive learning style was their least preferred learning style when they read English texts.

Next, an independent samples t-test was conducted in order to find out whether there was a significant difference in the language learning style preferences between high and low English proficiency students. The data of this t-test reported in Table 2 reveal that there was no statistically significant difference on the visual style preference (t= -1.237 p> 0.05), verbal style preference (t= -.247 p> 0.05), active style preference (t= -1.658 p> 0.05), reflective style preference (t= 1.155 p> 0.05), sensing style preference (t= -.25 p> 0.05) between high and low English proficiency medical students. But, there was a significant difference on intuitive style preference (t= -2.35 p< 0.05) between high and low English proficiency students.

4.2. The relationships between learning style preferences and reading comprehension

To ascertain the relationship between medical students' learning styles and their reading comprehension, the Pearson correlation was computed. Table 3 illustrates the correlation between learning style and reading comprehension.

Table 3.Correlation between Learning Styles and Reading Comprehension

Learning Styles	Reading Comprehension	
	r	p
Visual Preference	.29	.04*
Verbal Preference	.361	.033*
Active Preference	.523	.017*
Reflective Preference	.4	.029*
Sensing Preference	.21	.042*
Intuitive Preference	.481	.023*

As displayed in Table 3, significant relationships were found to exist between reading comprehension and the visual learning style ($r = .29$ $p < .05$), verbal style ($r = .361$ $p < .05$), active style ($r = .523$ $p < .05$), reflective style ($r = .4$ $p < .05$), sensing style ($r = .21$ $p < .05$), and intuitive style ($r = .481$ $p < .05$). This indicated that the use of learning styles positively correlated with the students' reading comprehension abilities. Therefore, the learning style a student has seems to strongly affect the learning outcomes, in this case reading comprehension outcomes.

5. Discussion

5.1. Iranian medical students' learning style preferences

As shown in the results section, high English proficiency students preferred reflective learning style first, followed by visual style, sensing style, active style, verbal style, and intuitive style. With respect to low English proficiency students, they also preferred reflective style first, followed by visual style, active style, sensing style, verbal style, and intuitive style. The results of high and low medical students' learning styles revealed that the most preferred and the least preferred learning styles for learning English language are reflective and intuitive styles, respectively. The result implies that Iranian medical students are interested in reading the materials and in doing the reading activities that include reflective work. In contrast, they are less interested in reading materials that are theoretical and abstract.

The findings of the present study differ from Khodaparast's (2009) study. In that study, 210 Iranian high schools students were selected from five public schools in Tehran in order to investigate the impact of learning styles on their academic achievement. This study used Kolb learning Style Inventory (1999). Based on the findings, diverging learning (i.e., preferring to work in group) was their major learning style, while converging learning (i.e., preferring to work individually) was the least preferred learning style. The discrepancy between the results of this study

and Khodaparast's (2009) study might originate from differences between the age and personality traits (Harmer, 2002; Sadeghi et al., 2012; Tai, 2000; Tuan, 2011). Furthermore, there might be a connection between learning styles and educational demands. As for the educational demands at high schools, the teaching of English in schools in Iran starts from the first grade of junior high school with four hours of instruction per week. English instruction continues through the four grades of secondary education with the time allocation of three hours a week. By the end of the English language program in the country's educational system, students are expected to comprehend written and oral texts, transfer their thoughts and meanings in different subjects through speaking or writing, participate in conversations and expressing their feelings and emotions to others. According to the objectives articulated in the Iranian national curriculum for teaching and learning English, teachers are required to provide communicative activities for students, especially through group and peer working, in order to make them active learners (Anani-Sarab et al., 2006). Such activities will lead to the use of group learning style. On the other side of the coin, i.e., at the university level, reading is the most emphasized skill (Noora, 2008) and most L2 research studies in the Iranian context have tried to offer pedagogical solutions in order to improve this skill among Iranian university students. For example, it has now become evident to L2 researchers that "the levels of critical thinking have significant effects on reading ability. Therefore, it is absolutely critical for EFL teachers to encourage students to use their thinking abilities and provide them with challenging opportunities to reflect, grow, and learn" (Kamali & Fahim, 2011, p. 110). Given the importance of this factor in promoting reading ability, syllabus designers and material developers at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences have made an effort to create lessons that enhance critical thinking which has led to the encouragement of students to control their own learning process without collaborating with their classmates frequently.

Intuitive style was the least preferred learning style in this study. This result was inconsistent with previous studies conducted by Kafipour, Yazdi and Shokrpour (2011), Moenikia and Zahed-Babelan (2010), Bidabadi and Yamat (2010), Salehi and Bagheri (2011), and Jowkar (2012). One of the reasons that medical students were displeased with intuitive style might be the fact that Iranian students at schools are never exposed to authentic expository texts in English before entering university (Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012). In contrast, when they enter university, they have to deal with medical courses such as Biochemistry, Physics, etc. that give prominence to abstract-based concepts and theories. Therefore, understanding such materials would be too strenuous for them.

Furthermore, regarding the six learning styles and their relationships with different English proficiency levels, there was a significant difference only with respect to intuitive style preference between high and low English proficiency students. This finding was in line with Daley, Onwuegbuzie & Bailey's (2000) study, which indicated that there was a weak relationship between foreign language achievement and learning styles. According to the findings of this study, it could be inferred that

learning style preferences do not play an important part in foreign language achievement, since learning style preferences are not directly related to students' English proficiency level.

Finally, the results of the study revealed that the variables of learning style preferences had a significant correlation with reading comprehension performance. In other words, it indicated that students with higher learning styles scored higher on the reading comprehension test than a student with lower learning styles. This finding was inconsistent with some of the previous studies such as (Akdamir & Koszalka, 2008, Tsai, 2012; Yang, 2010). However, the findings of this research agreed with the findings of other studies (Hsu, 2007; Lee, 2004; Miller, 2005; Thomas & Mackay, 2010), which indicated that students' learning styles had a positive correlation with their reading English proficiency. For example, Thomas and Mackay's (2010) study indicated that students who preferred verbal style showed better performance in comprehension. When each of the three cognitive styles was matched to the receptive presentation condition, the predicted comprehension was better than when the cognitive style was not matched.

Base on the findings above, the following explanation can be offered. It seems that the instructional design was matched to students' language learning styles at in the English curriculum prepared at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. As such, accommodating teaching materials to students' learning styles provided successful learning outcomes.

6. Conclusion

The present study intended to investigate high and low English proficiency Iranian medical students' cognitive learning style preferences as well as the relationship between cognitive learning styles and reading comprehension. As such, in the conclusion section of the study, the main research questions presented in the study will be answered one by one.

1. What are high- and low- English proficiency Iranian medical students' preferred learning styles while they are reading English?

The results of the study showed that both high and low achievers preferred reflective style, while they used intuitive style the least when they read English texts.

2. What is the relationship between Iranian medical students' learning style preferences and reading comprehension?

The correlation analysis revealed that there was a strong correlation between learning styles and reading performance.

According to the conclusions, the researchers provided some implications for English instructors, English learners and other stake holders. First, in general, it is suggested

that educational pre-service and in-service training on the cognitive learning style concept should be provided so that EFL instructors will have knowledge and skills to integrate the concept and practice of cognitive learning style in their regular instruction. Especially, teachers who teach reading comprehension should pay attention to students' individual differences and uniqueness, i.e. from learning styles perspective.

Second, the finding has shown that high and low achievers both preferred reflective style to read English texts over the other five learning style preferences. Thus, it is suggested that ESP instructors should incorporate reading activities based on transactional theory when designing the syllabus for the course in order to develop students' critical thinking abilities. Previous research studies have shown that the implement of the transactional theory in reading could improve students' critical thinking skills (Khuankaew, 2010). For example, teachers give students a topic and students are required to understand the meaning of a text. First, teachers must not inform students about the meaning of the text; students must deal with the text freely. Students should have a chance to develop confidence in their own discovery of meaning. Thus, teachers should begin by asking students what they see, feel, think, and remember as they read and teachers should encourage them to use their own experience to get the meaning of the text. The students should be provided with enough time and opportunity to think before acting. This will lead to their being critical readers. As very few students preferred intuitive style, it is suggested that instructors should employ fewer materials in the curriculum based on abstract concepts and theories and in turn add activities that provoke critical thinking abilities among students in order to increase their motivation for learning.

Thirdly, the finding of inferential statistics revealed that there was a significant correlation between cognitive learning styles and reading performance. It is suggested that ESP instructors should try to explore their students' cognitive learning styles through different tools such as interviews, observation, questionnaires, etc. Thus, they will be able understand what kind of specific learning styles high English proficiency students employ to develop their reading comprehension skills. In this way, they can also identify low English proficiency students' learning styles and assist them to strengthen their weaker styles through involving them in appropriate reading tasks and drills. It would be also beneficial to low English proficiency students themselves, since if they become fully conversant with their own unique learning styles, they will be "more capable of choosing appropriate learning materials or resources that match with their learning styles easily and effectively" (Chung, 2009, p. 76).

Last but not least, material developers also need to take into consideration the 'learners' peculiarities', i.e. learning styles, when designing the materials. Accommodating teaching materials to students' learning style preferences improves students' overall learning outcomes, enhances both motivation and capability and creates a positive point of view towards the language being learned.

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IMPLEMENTING THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN AN EFL WRITING CLASS

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Abstract

This article details a descriptive research on the implementation of the principles of critical pedagogy in an EFL university essay writing classroom which led to change in the quality of students' writing. In order to fulfill the purposes of the study, three sets of data were collected. Classroom observations were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively to determine clues to the power relations between the teacher and students, and among the students in classroom interactions. Students' journal writings were also examined both qualitatively and quantitatively in search of 1) traces of empowerment and 2) changes in the quality of writing as students continued writing. Students' essays were investigated quantitatively to explore the changes in students' perception of themselves as writers. Findings identified the success of the classroom practices and revealed substantial benefits for the students.

Key words: Critical Writing Class, Critical Pedagogy, EFL, Quality of Writing, Writing.

1. Introduction

The notion of critical pedagogy has been around for some time, perhaps with the publication of Freire's (1970) "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed". However, there has not been so much research in ELT conducted on implementing the basic tenets of critical pedagogy into the classrooms through one of the skills. Akbari (2008) explains some very basic principles of critical pedagogy that should and can best be integrated into the writing classrooms. These are centrality of "students' local culture," importance of "learners' L1 as a resource," "historicity and problem posing," or students' real life concerns.

As far as writing is concerned, Momenian and Shirazizadeh (2008) cite Connor (2003), Kubota, (1999), Ramanathan and Atkinson, (1999), and Kubota and Lehner, (2004) who have argued against the claim that students should write in order to meet native speaker norms, the monolingualism and monoculturalism dimensions, instead of expressing their own cultural identities. This sense of resistance against the native speakerism can be brought about in the classroom through having students write

about their own home culture or bringing it into the classroom through a variety of writing tasks.

This study aimed to inform teachers interested in implementing critical pedagogy in their own classes but who are apprehensive at the same time due to their lack of knowledge about the process of implementation itself and their lack of confidence about the unknown outcomes. Also, this study encourages students to broaden their understanding of themselves and to develop a sense of confidence and efficacy.

2. Background

In Freire's critical pedagogy, instead of transferring facts and skills from teacher to students, students are invited to think critically about the subject matter, doctrines, and learning processes. According to Canagarajah (2005), critical pedagogy is not a set of ideas, but a way of performing learning and teaching. Critical students and teachers need to situate learning in the relevant social contexts, exercise power relations equally in pedagogical activities, and hold the accountability of learning to construct equitable, and ethical educational environment.

Empowerment and critical thinking are the two basic principles of critical pedagogy that informed the practices of the present study. It was assumed that through collaboration, the students would perceive themselves not as passive receivers of knowledge but as active participants in creating knowledge. Cummins (2000) identifies coercive and collaborative powers as two types of exercise of power in classroom interaction between a teacher and students. He describes that while coercive power relations will lead students to "the subordination of their identities to the perspective of the dominant group" (p. 44), collaborative power relations will serve to affirm and extend their sense of identity, which he defines as disempowerment and empowerment, respectively.

Freire (1970) presents dialogue as a pedagogical process in which teachers and students actively pursue learning through discussion and debate. Drawing on the importance of the principle of dialogic engagement as a premise for student empowerment, Gutierrez (1993) discusses the features of dialogic classroom interaction. Building upon Gutierrez dialogic features, Nystrand and Gamron (1997) document that when teachers ask authentic questions; they are more likely to foster students' engagement in exchanging and thus creating knowledge. In this regard, asking authentic questions is likely to serve the goal of dialogic practice which is to have students experience becoming a part of knowledge construction.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of uptake was documented by Nystrand and Gamron (1997) in their study when they observed that students' participation in the negotiation of meaning and the knowledge building was more facilitated in a classroom where uptake was more frequently used by the teacher than it was in a classroom where uptake rarely took place. Uptake, as Collins (1982) defines, refers to

a responsive utterance in which the speaker expands interaction by asking about something declared by another speaker in the previous turn.

On the other hand, Gore (1998) defines eight techniques of power in her analytical framework. These techniques were used in her study to locate the incidences in which power was exercised for a disciplinary and controlling purpose. Gore points out that although this exercise of power might be considered as repressive, since it is for educational purposes, it is beneficial. Gore adds that what is crucial for a critical classroom is not to attempt to eliminate power or to give out power to students who are assumed to be powerless, but the important issue to explore how teachers can use different types of power effectively and purposefully. Respectively, Thelin (2005) argues that "democracy must have rules, and consequences must follow when rules are broken" (p. 137).

For the empowerment side of the coin, some very basic notions that the present study was built upon were concisely presented, and now it is time to have some word about critical thinking and writing.

Because critical thinking skills involve logic and problem solving, and because research on writing examines how authors create and organize texts, it is found natural to combine the two areas. Writing becomes the means by which critical thinking could both develop and be measured. Stoecker et al. (1993) point out that as we write, we can reconsider our thoughts and our experience, reflect, and rewrite. Writing allows students to systematically integrate thought with experience, making class material relevant to their experience through their own language.

The kind of writing classroom that is informed by critical pedagogy starts right from the students' experiences and their daily problems (Morrel, 2003). It is right through writing that teachers can engage into dialogue with their students on their experiences and problems. McDonough and Shaw (1993) think of free composition as one of the tools for writing about personal experiences and problems. Ghahremani and Mirhosseini (2005) argue for the importance of journals for doing so. They discuss Dialogue Journal Writing as a tool for students' empowerment and critical self reflective EFL writing ability.

Clark (1992) argues that in a critical approach, when students are encouraged to position themselves as critical evaluators of published books and articles they are exposed to, they become actively engaged in academic writing tasks and active participants in building the body of knowledge. Clark identifies this process as empowerment process. Based on the categorization of writer's self positioning with respect to the roles the writer plays in a text and the authorial relation to the audience, Tang and John (1999) propose an analysis of textual identities in which the use of first person pronouns "I" and "we" illustrates the writer's degree of authority. In light of these studies, this article examines the ways students and teachers negotiate, exercise, or challenge their power during the process of implementing the

principles of critical pedagogy, as well as the change in the quality of students' writing as the result of classroom practices. In doing so, the following questions were addressed:

- 1- How is power relation employed by the teacher in an EFL writing class?
- 2- How do students respond to the teacher's attempts to implement critical pedagogy?
- 3- Does the implementation of the critical pedagogical approach in the class affect the quality of students' writings?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Sixty undergraduate students, including nine males and fifty one females, twenty five majoring in English Literature and thirty five majoring in English Translation at Rafsanjan Valiasr University attended in this study as the participants. Having passed Paragraph Writing and Advanced Writing as prerequisite courses, the participants were taking Essay Writing course. Students' ages varied ranging from 20-28.

3.2 Materials and procedures

According to Davis (1995), establishment of research credibility is an essential aspect of a non quantitative study and is enhanced through prolonged engagement and persistent observations and triangulations by using multiple sources. In this regard, in this study, classroom observation, students' journal writing, and students' essays, were used to collect data.

Since the researcher was in the position of a teacher assistant and an observer, all class sessions throughout the semester were observed and recorded. An observation checklist, consisting of three interrelated parts with the total of 24 statements of the principles of a critical classroom was developed. A three-point Likert scale in which the scores ranged from "3" corresponding to "fully applied" and "1" to "not applied" was used to display the value of the statements. In the first part, the main focus was on Freire's ten values of critical pedagogy identified by Shor (1993). In the second part, Gutierrez' (1993) features of dialogic classroom interaction were used to examine students' empowerment practices.

Gore's (1998) eight techniques of power were drawn in the third part as the bases for locating and analyzing the incidences in which the teacher used power, positioning himself as the authority of the class for a controlling purpose. In order not to miss any incident of power relations, all class interactions were recorded. The notes made after the class helped the researcher in interpreting the incidences (see Appendix A for a copy of the observation checklist).

Students' dialogue journal writings (DJW) were also used as one of the most important instruments. Throughout the semester, the participants were encouraged

to express personal issues and their concerns about any issues regarding teaching and learning practices via email on a weekly basis.

Besides, students' essays were used as a central pedagogical tool. Specifically, the data were used to discover how classroom practices worked or did not work, and whether the quality of students' writings moved towards criticality and creativity as the result of implementing the principles of critical pedagogy.

In line with the curricular objectives of this writing course, the primary purpose of the course for the current study was stipulated as helping students become familiar with the complex demands of essay writing, moving towards criticality and creativity as the result of practicing equal power relations within the classroom. In doing so, Freirian pedagogy model, identified by Shor (1993), provided directions in determining classroom practices and interactions. This model included 10 values namely, 1) Participatory, 2) Situated, 3) Critical, 4) Democratic, 5) Dialogic, 6) Desocialization, 7) Multicultural, 8) Research Oriented, 9) Activist, and 10) Affective. Through the process of synthesizing the ten values, the researcher came up with two major principles that informed the practices of critical pedagogy in the study. The two principles were as follows:

1. Creating equitable and productive power relations: Students' participation in their learning process, students' initiating negotiations of their requirements, teacher encouraging students to express their opposing points of view to other students and to the teacher, and teacher helping students to practice and exercise critical thinking.
2. Helping students to become critical thinkers: This principle was carried out by encouraging the students to develop their critical sense in the process of taking their own positions in reference to what they write. It was assumed that by encouraging students to discuss social and personal problems in journal writing and also to construct their identities as critical and independent thinkers and writers, the teacher would effectively pursue the goal of helping students to move towards critical thinking.

In order to implement the practice of dialogic engagement as one of the core pedagogical practices in class, the teacher stipulated classroom participation and verbal engagement as requirements students needed to fulfill. Through this practice, the traditional one-way teaching of knowledge was to be deconstructed. In doing so, each session, the teacher determined one or two units of the book, and required the students to study them and to do the corresponding exercises at home. Then the next session, the lesson and the exercises were negotiated and discussed as a whole class activity. In this way, the students discovered the unknown points rather than receiving them.

Here, an excerpt of a recorded and transcribed incident of negotiation on an exercise in which the students were required to determine the transition, the reminder, and the main idea of each paragraph of a five paragraph essay is exhibited. The incident occurred in the seventh week of the semester:

S1: *I think the main idea of this paragraph is technical advantages of...*

T: *What do you think technical advantages mean?*

S1: *The techniques that they are using for weather forecasting.*

T: *Ok. Don't you think satellite photography, historical records on computers, etc. are the technical advantages?*

S2: *Yes, you are right. But if it is so, what about the previous exercise in which measuring the room, cutting the carpet, etc. are all the required skills which play the same role as the technical advantages in this exercise?*

T: *Do you all agree on the answer of this exercise?*

Ss: *Yes.*

T: *Now, let's turn back to the previous exercise and find out the answer to her question.*

S3: *Please let me clarify the vague part. I agree with the teacher, because....*

In this excerpt, the attempt to create a comfortable atmosphere for the students to feel free to speak is evident. They were not worried about making mistakes or expressing their objection to what the teacher considered as the correct answer. The attempt to deconstruct the view that students are passive followers of what is said by the teacher is also evidently shown.

Negotiating the students' writings was another way to encourage a dialogic atmosphere and to reinforce students' empowerment. In doing so, each session, the students were assigned a topic to write about. Besides, each session, one student volunteered to get her/his writing copied for all other students of the class. One part of the class time was assigned to assess that particular writing. This task was done in groups of three or four, and after that, as a whole class activity. First, one group voluntarily started analyzing the organization of the essay. Other groups added their opinions and justified their answers. Then the writer was given time to defend her/his work. The same procedure was done on the analysis of language use, content, and mechanics of the essay. The following excerpt is an example of a recorded and transcribed incident of such a negotiation:

G1: *The topic sentence starts from ... to ... and the first sub topic sentence continues to the third line.*

G2: *No, we think she has mentioned both the first and the second sub topic sentences immediately after the topic sentence.*

T: *Any other ideas?*

G3: *She has mentioned the direct and the indirect consequences of abusing chemical insecticides as the two sub topic sentences.*

G4: *The two sub topic sentences are in paradox.*

T: *Let's first talk about the boundary of the two sub topic sentences and then we will talk about their content.*

T: *(to the writer) What did you intend to do through the first three lines?*

In this excerpt, in addition to the way the students expressed their opinions as knowledgeable decision makers and judges in collaborative relations, the teacher's role as a guide to direct the discussion in a right way is clear.

Teacher's use of authentic questions was another way to foster students' engagement in exchanging and thus creating knowledge. In the following excerpt, an example of the way how an authentic question led to discussion is exhibited:

T: *What is your idea about her paragraph?*

S1: *She has not supported the topic sentence well.*

T: *What could she do to solve the problem?*

S1: (to the writer) *You could use some statistics, narratives, quick examples, or an authority's statement to support it.*

S2: *If I were you, I would mention my own position towards the topic.*

The Writer: *Is it necessary to express my own opinion about the topic?*

S2: *You cannot be neutral to the topic. You could have determined whether you agree or disagree with being greedy.*

S3: *Yes, and you were not so critical.*

T: *What do you mean by not being critical?*

S3: *She could have mentioned the advantages and the disadvantages of being greedy.*

S1: *Yes, she has just defined the topic and has described what "greed" is.*

Given that uptake is a characteristic element of dialogic interaction, the teacher also encouraged students' idea to be elaborated. The following extract shows a case in which a student's response was recognized by the teacher.

S1: *She was not so critical in her writing.*

T: *How do you define being critical in writing?*

S1: *I mean the content of her writing is not rich enough. Most of us as readers have enough information about the topic and she has not added anything new.*

S2: *I think, she should have determined her position to the topic and explained her own idea too.*

S3: *Yes, from her writing we didn't get whether she agrees or disagrees with the topic.*

In terms of journal writing, the first session of the semester, the students were briefed on how to write journals on reflected topics. They were told that their writings would not be corrected grammatically. They were also allowed to use Persian words when needed. The researcher read and responded to the journal entries every week and put comments on the points students made, answered their questions, and asked questions that guided them to a more critical view.

Adopting writing as a process orientation, the teacher enforced a policy that required a revision process as a vital aspect of learning writing. To encourage students to construct their identities as critical and independent thinkers and writers, three particular essays were inserted among those routine writing assignments. Since it is believed that the analysis of various aspects of a textual rhetoric would enable students to exercise critical thinking skills, the students were required to write three pieces of analysis paper. Reflecting on Auerbach's (1999) claim that learning language needs to be accompanied with critical analysis of social facts, for the first essay, the students were required to analyze a social issue through writing. The topic was "*Life is in danger*," and the students were asked to write about the most

controversial issue that they thought has jeopardized life in general and needs to be addressed. The reason why this topic was chosen was to make students reflect on the society they live and project their identities not as students of a classroom but as members of a large society outside the classroom (one of the basic goals of critical pedagogy). To help the students examine the topic critically, the researcher provided them with guidelines that are as follows:

- 1- What's the unjust practice you have observed as the sub-issue of the topic that deserves public attention and discussion?
- 2- Why is it worth discussing this issue? Why do we need to pay attention to the issue?
- 3- What's your personal stance on the issue?
- 4- What's the message or point you want your readers contemplate on after reading your essay?

For the second essay, the students were asked to examine one of the visual images that were provided by the researcher (See Appendix B for a copy of the images). By guiding the students to understand the hidden meaning a particular visual image conveys, it was intended to make the students realize the importance of critical reflection. The students were guided in exercising critical thinking by posing the following questions in analyzing the visual images:

- 1- What is the message that is being delivered?
- 2- What are the elements that seem effective in conveying the message? How do they help us read the image?
- 3- Why did you pick this picture to analyze?
- 4- How do you feel when you look at this image? Why?
- 5- What is your position towards the message?
- 6- What is your position towards the way the message has been conveyed?
- 7- What are the implications you can suggest to your reader after analyzing the image?

As the third and the last essay, the students were required to choose an article on their own and analyze it by focusing on the author's reasoning, assumption and the developmental process of the argument. By assigning this essay, along with the goal of having students incorporate critical thinking skills in writing, in the process of producing an analytical responsive paper to an author's article, it was aimed to have students position themselves on an equal ground to the published authors. Swale (1990) argues that an individual's membership of a community is oftentimes identified by his/her engagement in discursal practices using a particular type of language used in the community. By having students engaged in discursal interactions with other writers, it was attempted to encourage students' view of themselves not as mere recipients of established knowledge, but as active participants in building the body of knowledge, which is identified as the empowerment process (Freire, 1973). The guidelines that were prepared to help the students analyze the article were as follows:

- 1- What is the title of the article?
- 2- What is the article mainly about?

- 3- Who is the article written for? Experts? The general public? How do you know it?
- 4- What is the author's point of view? Provide evidence.
- 5- Where the author went with the paper? (conclusion)
- 6- Who might find the article useful?
- 7- What is your personal reaction to the paper? Did the author persuade you that the argument she/he was making was true or convincing?
- 8- What difference has the article made for you? Would you change the way you work or approach an issue after reading this article?

3.3 Data analysis

The process of data analysis included:

3.3.1 The analysis of classroom interaction

To examine the importance of the principle of dialogic engagement as a premise for student empowerment, verbal exchanges between students and the teacher were analyzed. Among the class sessions that were observed for a period of a semester, five class sessions for the weeks of 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were selected and analyzed.

The features of dialogic classroom interaction by Gutierrez (1993), listed in the observation checklist, were used as guiding principles in analyzing the data of verbal interactions between the teacher and the students. These features, as well as Gore's (1998) eight techniques of power were used as the analytical guideline for the qualitative analysis of teacher-student interaction. This qualitative analysis was complemented by quantitative analysis at three different levels as follows:

3.3.1.1 The amount of talk

In order to examine the extent to which a given course of verbal interaction was equally shared by the teacher and the students throughout the semester, the average number of words produced by the teacher and the students in the five selected class sessions were added up separately, divided by five, and then compared. The mean length of talk in each session was measured by counting the total number of words produced by the teacher divided by the total number of turns taken by him. The same procedure was used for estimating the amount of students' talk.

3.3.1.2 Types of questions

In this study, to infer the quality of classroom interaction, the types of questions discussed by Nystrand and Gamoran were adopted as the analytical framework for categorizing questions produced by the teacher. The questions are as follows:

- 1) Managerial: Used to keep classroom operation moving.
- 2) Rhetorical: Used to emphasize a point or to reinforce an idea.
- 3) Authentic: Used to promote discussion or student interaction.
- 4) Non-authentic: Used to check the level of students' comprehension of task.

Since the two first types played no role in the data needed for the study, the cases in which these two types of questions were used were ignored.

In measuring the authenticity and the effect of teacher questions as tools to facilitate students engagement in class interaction, both qualitative and quantitative analysis were conducted. First, the extent to which the teacher used authentic questions was measured by dividing the total number of authentic questions by the total number of questions produced by the teacher. To examine whether the authentic questions guaranteed the dialogic quality of the interaction, a qualitative analysis was conducted by examining the turns that immediately followed.

3.3.1.3 Uptake

To measure the frequency of the use of uptake by the teacher, the total number of uptakes used by the teacher was divided by the total number of turns taken by the teacher in which he responded to a student's previous utterance. Through a qualitative analysis, the effectiveness of a particular uptake was also analyzed by examining the extent to which the use of uptake fostered interaction.

3.3.1.4 Teacher's exercise of power

In this study, in addition to examining the equitable power relation between the students and the teacher, an analysis of the incidences of a hierarchical power in which the teacher practiced power for disciplinary purposes was analyzed. In doing so, Gore's (1998) eight techniques of power were adopted. These techniques were listed in the observation checklist and were examined qualitatively. The eight techniques are namely, 1) Surveillance, 2) Normalization, 3) Exclusion, 4) Classification, 5) Distribution, 6) Individualization, 7) Totalization, and 8) Regulation. Through class observations, it was found that the eight ways of exercising disciplinary power do not possess clear boundaries but rather overlap in many cases. Since the class was designed to run on analyzing student's writing, as well as on the exercises of the textbook, each session, the teacher controlled and monitored the students' preparedness watchfully. In other words, surveillance was one of the most frequently used techniques of power in the class.

In the first session of the semester, the teacher used the distribution technique by asking the students to make groups of three or four based on their preferences so that each group contained at least one competent and confident member. These groups were to be permanent up to the end of the semester unless one member had a problem with the group. Since the teacher knew most of the students, he interfered in their choice of group members.

In the second class of the semester, observing that many students neither did buy the textbook nor did the assigned writing, the teacher used the individualization technique and expressed his dissatisfaction by explicitly asking the individuals whether they had purchased the book. By directing questions at individual students, the teacher made the fact that the students were not prepared for class evident and explicit. Although this exercise of power for a monitoring purpose is repressive, it should not be interpreted as only destructive because it serves an educational purpose.

The teacher employed the normalization technique by appreciating those who were ready and had bought the book and called them as responsible students. Besides, he warned the unprepared students of losing their class participation mark. By separating the prepared and unprepared students, the teacher practiced the technique of classification. He added that in case of three absent sessions, the student should omit the course. This threat was interpreted by the researcher as practicing the exclusion technique. As a whole, the condition pushed the teacher to employ a regulating technique. He used his authority to regulate the students' behaviors. However, in the talk the teacher and the researcher had after the class, the teacher made the point that he should be wary of some possible negative consequences like solidifying the hierarchical relation between him and the students in exercising this kind of disciplinary power.

As the students were getting familiar with their responsibilities overtime, the frequency of the teacher's uses of the disciplinary techniques became lower, and particularly, uses of techniques such as individualization and regulation disappeared. As the opposite technique of individualization, the teacher occasionally used the totalization technique in an act of giving collective character. By employing the inclusive pronouns "we" and "you," the teacher totalized himself and the students as parts of an interlinked system that followed a shared purpose. In the analysis of the incidences of totalization technique, it was noticed that mostly the purpose of employing this technique was to make the students think of themselves as being equal to teacher and to remind them of their responsibilities to their own and their classmates' learning. The following extract uttered by the teacher proves the claim. In spite of teacher's friendly tone, the teacher stressed the word "must" to imply and to increase the gravity of his authority.

To build up our knowledge and understanding, we come to this class with ideas and thoughts to express. You must listen to your classmates' comments and take them into consideration. We are here to help one another to convey the messages we wish to.

3.3.2 The analysis of students' journal writing

The contribution of dialogue journal writing to empowerment as a major concept in critical pedagogy (Shor, 1992), and how it contributes to critical literacy were the two important issues focused in the present study. Students' journal writings were examined based on the four modes in Ada's (1998) model, cited in Cummines (2000), to investigate the extent to which the four thinking modes namely, 1) descriptive, 2) personal interpretive, 3) critical, and 4) creative were present in them, and to look for evidence of increased critical thinking over the period of the study. The four modes proceeded by one example of students' journals are presented as follows:

- Descriptive mode involves a factual view in which the surface level description of facts is the main consideration.

I am very glad to have this class. I mean essay writing with Dr. ...and you. At first, I should admit I'm not good at writing and this was my problem even at Ensha in high school but, I hope I could improve it with your help. So I want you to assess my writing every session and

tell me my mistakes if it is possible. I was supposed to write a journal. Ok. in the last session, at first you called one of the students to read her writing and then Dr. ... asked other students to give their ideas about that writing and finally we did some exercises in the book.

- Personal interpretive mode involves students relating facts and surface level information to their experiences. Use of "I," "me," and "my" are obviously frequent in this mode to express individual attitudes.

This class is so useful for us to improve writing but I am shy and I cannot ask my questions. I think this is really a perfect idea to tell what we think of this class and I really appreciate and thankful of you to give us a chance.

- Critical mode involves students reasoning and analysis of the topic or situation.

This semester I was absent the first session because of having stress but fortunately teaching methods are really great in class and persuade me to learn writing and I'm really happy because there isn't any destructive effect of anxiety in class. Teachers don't discriminate and weak students can easily speak and learn lessons. Another positive point is that we have two teachers in class, so they can pay attention to students and they also answer all questions of students and correct errors. Teaching methods are really excellent and I hope that I can use the class in the best way and improve my writing essay.

- Creative mode includes other three modes but goes beyond them and moves towards suggestions for change.

In my opinion one of the big problems many students may face when they want to write, is they do not have enough information about any subjects. when I was a child, my brother encouraged me to read book. And any book he read, I read it too. Those books were about countries, cars, famous people, etc. Sometimes I am proud of myself because I have some information that my friends do not have. I think families should read books and encourage their children to read books because children usually follow their parents' habits.

All journal entries produced throughout the semester were marked with one of the four labels D, P, Ct, and Cv. Then the journal entries were divided into three groups based on their chronological order. Finally, they were put next to each other and compared to gain a general picture of dialogue journals written in each chronologically ordered group. The proportion of the four modes indicated the qualities of students' writing in each temporal sequence and also illustrated the changes in their quality.

3.3.3 The analysis of students' essays

To examine students' empowerment, the process through which students constructed their identities as critical and independent thinkers and writers was traced. The ways in which students positioned themselves in relation to readers of their texts was examined by adopting Tang and John's (1999) categories of textual identities. The categories are described and preceded by examples taken from students' essays as follows:

- Writer as a representative: Writer has a very minimum level of involvement with the readers, revealing no personal opinions or views.
We all know that...
We always complain about our problems...
We usually forget about environment
- Writer as a guide: Writer plays a role of leading readers to follow the structure of the writing, using phrases such as *I will discuss*. His authorial presence is stronger than a representative writer.
In this essay, I would first find the main logical reasons...
As I mentioned before...
At the end of my essay...
- Writer as an opinion holder: By using verbs, such as *think, believe, understand*, the writer shares an opinion or view on information and facts.
I believe that it could be possible...
In my opinion, the article is written...
But what I consider as the most important is the emotional aspect.
- Writer as an originator: He presents his ideas and argues his stand point.
I strongly disagree because...
Since I have had such an experience, I confirm every word of this article...
My objection refers back to the ethics I was brought up with...

For this analysis, first, in each individual essay, every sentence that students used to refer to themselves as authors and contained first person pronouns ("I" or "we") was located and marked. Second, the first person pronouns were identified and labeled as "representative," "guide," "opinion holder," or "originator". Then, the frequencies of authorial roles employed by the students were counted. Based on this notion, the analysis of students' writings showed how powerful positions students employed in particular texts. Finally, the frequencies of authorial roles in three particular essays produced with the interval of two weeks were compared to identify the changes as the result of classroom practices.

4. Results

4.1 Findings

Three sets of data that demonstrate the results of the study include: classroom interaction and power relations, students' journal writings, and students' essays.

4.1.1 Classroom interaction and power relations

Three features of Gutierrez dialogic classroom interaction including 1) the amount of talk, 2) types of questions and 3) use of uptake were used as the analytical guidelines for the quantitative analysis of teacher-student interaction.

4.1.1.1 The distribution of the amount of talk

Given that in Gutierrez' (1993) dialogic classroom, one of the main features is that teacher's utterances should be minimized to a degree at which the teacher and students participate equally in the construction of meaning, the average amount of talk produced by the teacher and by the students were measured and compared.

Figure 1 shows the amount of talk produced by the teacher and the students in each one of the five weeks. The high level of discrepancy between the teacher's and the students' amount of talk from the second to the tenth week shows the increased dominance of students in discussions.

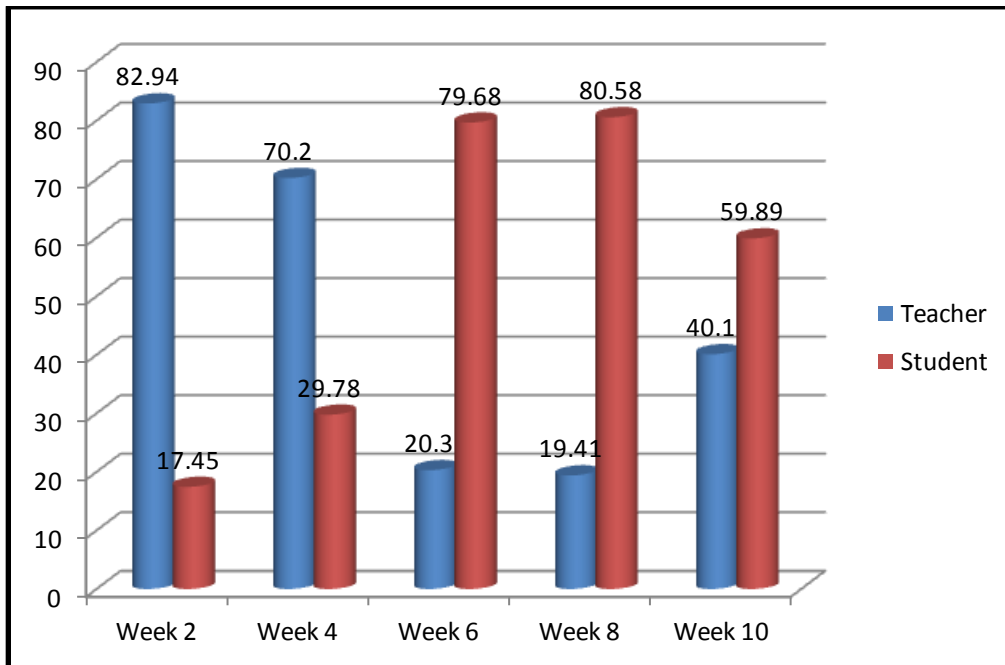


Figure 1 Distribution of the Amount of Talk.

4.1.1.2 Frequencies of different types of questions

According to Nystrand and Gamoron (1997), authentic questions asked by teacher foster students' engagement. Table 1 shows the result of the frequencies of each type of question the teacher produced in all five sessions. The results shows that authentic questions were the most frequently asked questions throughout the semester.

Table 1 Mean Frequency of Different Types of Questions Used.

Types of questions	Authentic questions	Non authentic questions
Mean frequencies	%67.24	%32.78

4.1.1.3 The frequency of the use of uptake

In a turn of uptake, the teacher encourages students' idea to be elaborated or articulated by a question as a departing point from which students' participation is facilitated. The mean frequency of the use of uptake in the five sessions was %59.37. Figure 2 shows the proportion of the use of uptake by the teacher in all five weeks.

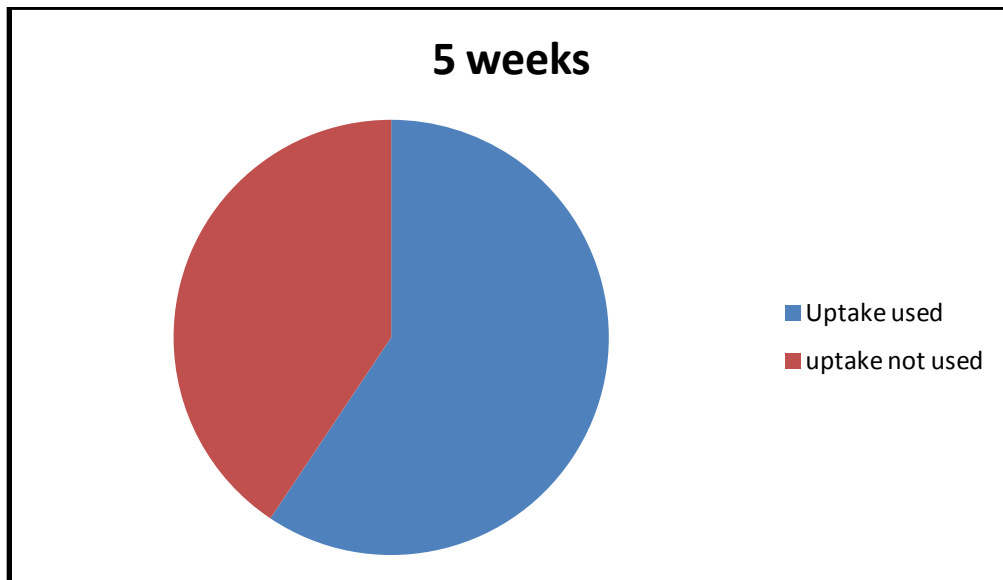


Figure 2 The Proportion of Uptake Used by the Teacher.

4.1.2 Students' journal writings

To explore instances of students' speaking out, the journals were read in search of any instance of expressions of self from an independent stand point. Repeatedly, the students had shown their likes and dislikes, as well as expressions of ideas and reasoning. For analyzing students' journal writings quantitatively, Ada's (1988) four thinking modes were detected to examine the degree of change in the traces of critical thinking over the period of the study. Figure 3 shows the distribution of writing modes in the three temporal sequences. The decrease in the number of descriptive and personal interpretive entries and the increase in the number of critical and creative ones as the students continued writing is clear in Figure 3. In the first temporal sequence %52.12 of the whole entries were either descriptive or personal interpretive. In the second sequence only %22.64 of entries were descriptive or personal interpretive. This decrease continued so that in the third sequence only %9.87 of the entries were descriptive or personal interpretive, and the rest were critical or creative journals.

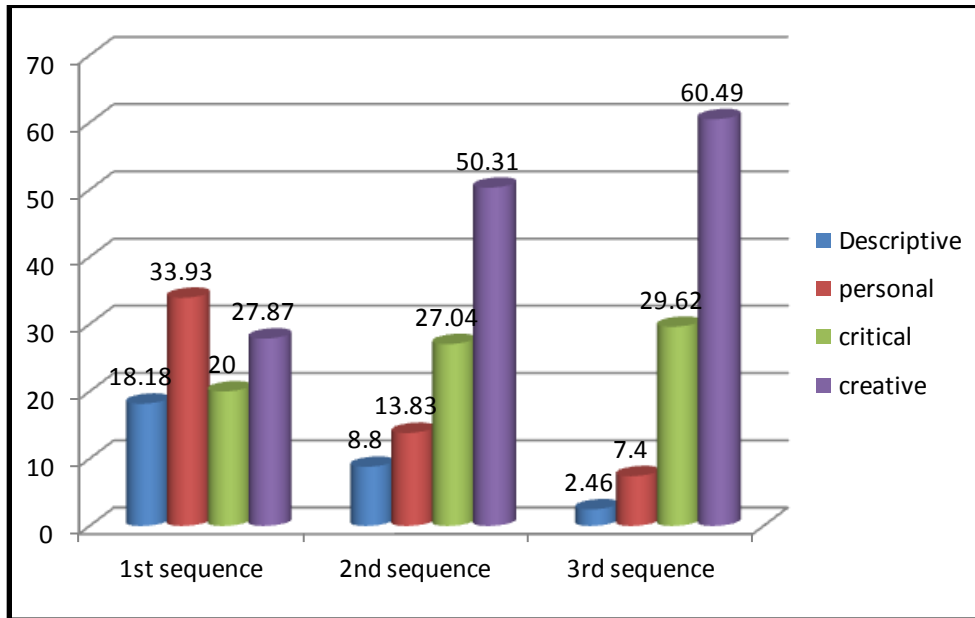


Figure 3 The Distribution of Writing Modes in 3 Temporal Sequences.

Considering the change in writing modes, it is desirable to conclude that dialogue journal writing as one of the requirements practiced in a critical pedagogical approach does provide learners with a potentially valuable opportunity to move beyond uncritical descriptive writing and towards critical and creative mode of writing.

4.13. Students' essays

In order to trace the ways the students constructed their identities and positioned themselves in relation to readers of their essays, following Tang & John's categories of textual identities, in each essay, every sentence that the students used to refer to themselves as authors was counted. Table 2 shows the relative increase in the proportion of adopting the roles of opinion holder and originator, identified as the most powerful roles, from %57.88 in the first essay to %76 in the third essay. The result proved the change in students' perception of themselves as powerful writers.

Table 2 Frequencies of Authorial Roles Employed in Students' Essays.

Roles	Representative	Architect	Opinion holder	Originator
Essay#1	%35.48	%6.62	%52.77	%5.11
Essay#2	%25.11	%5.93	%37.89	%31.05

Essay#3	%19	%5	%39	%37
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The findings of this study have implications for teacher education, teachers, and curriculum designers. Teacher education should not focus on training a set of rules of implementation but on training teachers to be able to investigate their teaching context, and to learn what kinds of modifications need to be made in order to draw the most appropriate teaching tools. Teachers in language classrooms should listen and respond to their students in ways that encourage dialogue. Curriculum designers should set aside the infusion of prescribed materials into students' minds. They should also consider the social and cultural aspects of language use and validate and explore the culture, knowledge, and experiences that students bring to classes.

4.2 Discussion

In response to the first and the second research questions, classroom interactions and the practices of power relations between the teacher and the students were analyzed. The findings were in line with Smith's (1983) statement that a participatory pedagogy designed on the basis of cooperative and critical activities, student experience, and negotiated authority can help students feel efficient enough to perform at their peak. Sharing students in making decisions about course syllabus, basing the major part of course requirements, and grading policy on students' requests, and providing students with ample opportunities in their learning process, the teacher challenged the normalized role of a teacher as the only decision maker and a knowledge transmitter and students' role as passive receivers.

The findings also supported the importance of Gutierrez' (1993) principles of dialogic engagement as a premise for student empowerment. The students learned to think, cooperate and contribute to their own learning and the learning of others. They could criticize, evaluate, and present the issues freely based on their own ethnic and regional cultures, increase their knowledge and thus be empowered as a student and a member of educational context. In this study, the frequency of the use of uptake by the teacher was 2.5 times higher than %23.7 which was measured in a study in an ESL critical classroom conducted by Kim (2006). Besides, the increase in the proportion of use of critical and creative modes in journal entries, as students continued writing, was in line with that obtained from Ghahremani & Mirhosseini's study in which the participants' use of critical and creative modes moved from %30 in the first temporal sequence to %82 in the fourth sequence.

Following Thelin's (2005, p.137) argument that "democracy must have rules, and consequences must follow when rules are broken", and adopting Gore's (1998) techniques of power, in addition to those moments of creating collaborative power relations, the teacher occasionally exercised power for the purpose of controlling and regulating the students. Although this exercise of power might be considered as repressive, the results proved that due to cultural issues, this kind of exercise was beneficial and made the students take responsibility for the expectations they held

for themselves and those that the academic community and the teacher held for them.

In response to the third research question, students writing practices, including journal writings and essays were examined. In line with Ghahremani & Mirhosseini's (2005, p. 286) argument that "dialogue journal writing leads to gains in critical self reflective EFL writing ability", the findings revealed that the students consistently took the opportunity to speak out. In their journals, students expressed their dissatisfactions, offered suggestions for change and reasoned their ideas. Also it was explored that as students continued writing journals, they moved beyond descriptive writing and towards critical and creative modes, so that in the third temporal sequence of the semester more than %90 of entries was written either in critical or in creative modes.

Clark (1992) argues that in a critical approach, when students are encouraged to position themselves as critical evaluators of published books and articles they are exposed to, they become actively engaged in academic texts and learn to identify themselves as equal to published authors. Likewise, in this study, students made progress throughout the semester in terms of employing powerful authorial identities when presenting their critical stances in essay writing.

To get a general idea of the whole picture, the incidents which reflected and matched the principles of Freire's 10 values of critical pedagogy throughout the course were spotted and briefly presented here:

Principles	Class activities
participatory	The design of the class was on the basis of negotiations and discussions in the process of knowledge building. The students were required to position themselves equal to teacher.
Situated	Students chose what they were interested in to write about in their journals. The topics of most of their writings were negotiated as well.
Critical	In journal entries, students were critical about themselves and issues related to their immediate living. Also, in the process of assessing and analyzing their classmates' writings, they freely criticized their peers' performance. Critique was encouraged through assigning the three particular essays as well.
Democratic	Students had a right to present problematic issues freely both in journal entries and in person. Moreover, they were allowed to express their objection against the teacher's view.
Dialogic	Student- teacher free dialogue was observed in the negotiating of course policies, rules and requirements, as well as in the process of knowledge building. Also, students found journal entries a safe place for having a friendly dialogue with their teacher.

Desocialized	Through interactive writing text analysis, students took a positive position in their writings. The teacher was no longer viewed as the only source of knowledge and the only decision maker.
Multi cultural	Both through journal writing and in the process of negotiating the content of classmates' writings, the students presented the issues freely based on their own ethnic and regional cultures.
Research-oriented	The students researched into their own daily experiences, society, etc. and presented it in their journals. Besides, in the self oriented process of searching an article to analyze, the students activated a sense of ownership to their work. The teacher also had to constantly explore and research into classroom activities and the students' development to make a more creative and critical classroom. Process evaluation made the classroom research oriented as well which helped students to be better learners and the teacher to develop as a professional.
Active	In addition to being actively engaged in classroom activities, students presented journal entries on their own. Besides, in analyzing an article, the students viewed themselves not as mere recipients of established knowledge, but as active participants in building the body of knowledge.
Affective	Through journal writing, students developed a close friendly relationship with the teacher. Teacher-student interactive classroom activities fostered the built relation.

4.3 Conclusion

This study revealed that there are instructional practices that can promote student voice and can serve as recommendations for educators. Writing and discussions are springboards for hearing student voices. Specifying further, journal writing may help teachers plan their instruction. Educators can use writing as a doorway to get to know their students and authenticate their experiences. While writing is a good instructional strategy, it will not promote students' voices if no one ever reads their writing.

All in all, to make teachers confident of practicing a critical pedagogical approach in classes, the reflective attitudes that make a teacher become critical of their own classroom practices need to be encouraged and to be systematically taught in teacher education programs. Teacher's ongoing reflective practices of examining their own and other colleagues' teaching are recommended and recognized as crucial component of practicing a critical approach.

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Appendix A
Observation Checklist

3 = Fully Applied 2= Applied 1 = Not Applied

1. Principles of critical pedagogy

1. Teaching and learning take place through interactive and cooperative practice.
3 2 1
2. The topics and activities used in the classroom are located in students' interest, culture and condition.
3 2 1

3. Students' critical analysis of themselves and /or society is encouraged.
3 2 1
4. The participants in the class negotiate and claim their rights.
3 2 1
5. The class consists of dialogue centered on problems and concerns posed by students and teacher.
3 2 1
6. Students are encouraged to participate in class as members of a group.
3 2 1
7. The teacher and students get to understand the complexity of multiple cultures in society.
3 2 1
8. The teacher and students see themselves as researchers who are committed to transforming their surroundings for learning and life using and reflecting on their learning and teaching experiences.
3 2 1
9. Students and the teacher empower themselves to take advantage of the possibilities. (E.g. students present journal entries on their own).
3 2 1
10. Students have the chance to develop a close friendly relationship with their teacher.
3 2 1

2. Student empowerment practices

1. Instead of following a strict IRE (Teacher inquiry-Student response-Teacher evaluation) pattern, more student responses are built on previous responses.
3 2 1
2. Teacher's utterances are kept to a minimum.
3 2 1
3. Students self-select or select other students when taking turns.
3 2 1
4. Teacher and students negotiate agendas of discussion.
3 2 1
5. Teacher and students initiate questions which don't require correct answers.
3 2 1
6. Activity and discourse boundaries are less determined by teacher. Students expand discussion.
3 2 1

3. Teacher empowerment practices

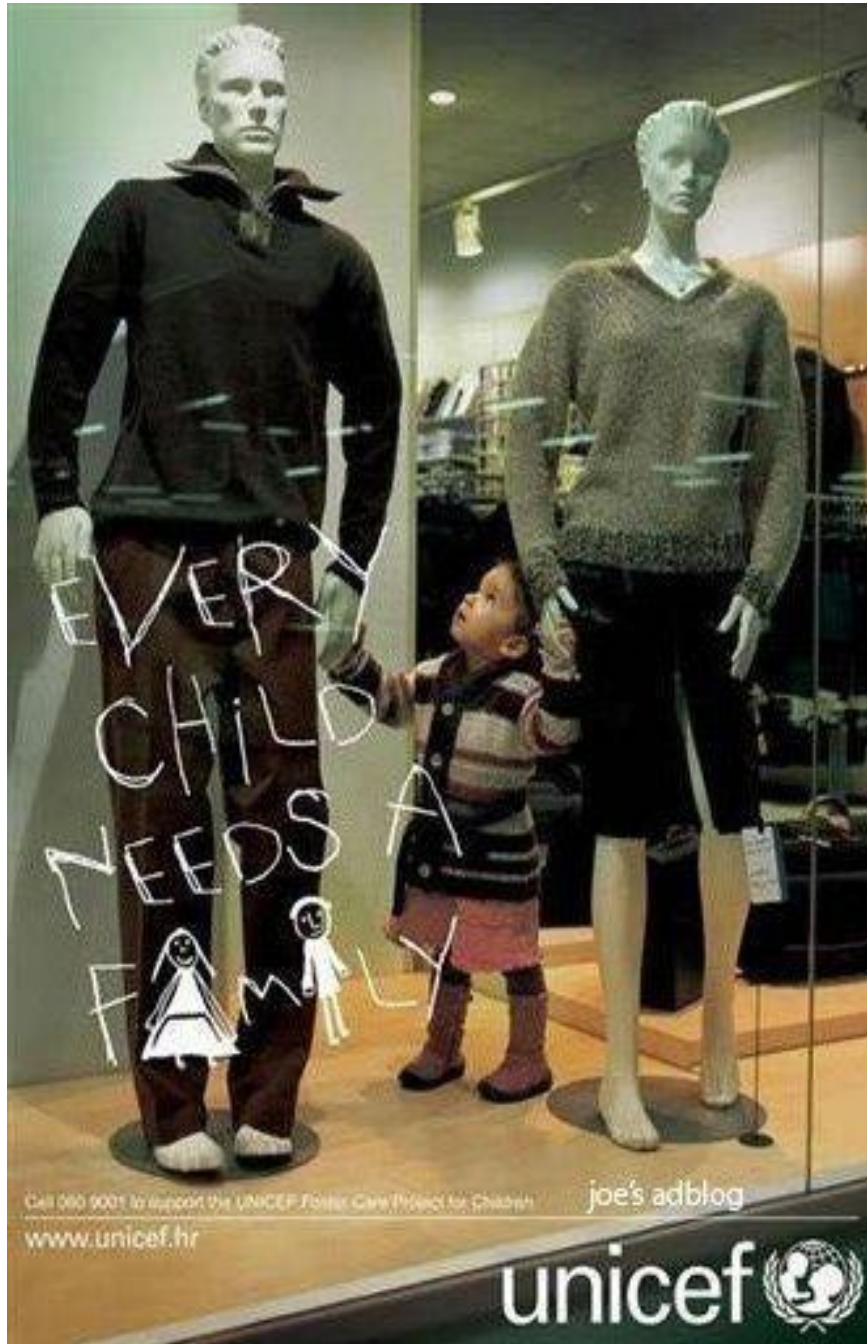
1. Surveillance occurrence (monitoring)
3 2 1

2. Nominalization occurrence (teacher expresses her appreciation to justify what she does to students).
3 2 1
3. Exclusion occurrence (excluding unprepared or reluctant students from others and from teacher's attention).
3 2 1
4. Classification occurrence (classifying students to two groups: prepared and unprepared).
3 2 1
5. Distribution occurrence (arranging classroom in a particular form or to particular groups).
3 2 1
6. Individualization occurrence (separating an individual from the rest of the class).
3 2 1
7. Totalization occurrence (giving collective character: using pronouns "we," "you").
3 2 1
8. Regularization occurrence (controlling by rule, including sanction, reward, punishment).
3 2 1

Appendix B







EFFECT OF WALKING STRESS ON WORD STRESS ERRORS AND RETENTION OF EFL LEARNERS, A COMPARISON OF TURKISH AND FARSI NATIVE SPEAKERS

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Abstract

This paper proposes an effective teaching English word stress method based on walking stress for learning word stress sufficiently. Homogenous males and females have been selected randomly for Turkish and Farsi groups. A production-test was designed from 40 syllabic words to make the participants read the syllabic words clearly and their sounds were recorded for evaluating. It has been applied as pre-, post-, and delay pot-test. It was piloted on a small group of subjects to estimate its reliability in advance. The purpose of the second delayed test was to see which method of instruction had more impact on the students' word stress retentions and could sustain their word stress learning for longer period of time. The results and findings of the present study confirm the supports of walking stress for the word stress learning and retention of Turkish group better than the Farsi group.

1.1. Introduction

Having good pronunciation for EFL learner is critical because English is not the native language. If you desire to teach pronunciation to Iranian EFL learner effectively, you must aware that "Iran, a multicultural society, is home to a number of language communities speaking Farsi, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and so on." (khadivi, A. & Kalantari, R. 2011). English teachers have great difficulties in teaching pronunciation to their multilingual and bilingual Iranian EFL learners. Thus, teachers may need to design a sufficient teaching method to master their students in pronunciation. This paper seeks and probes an effective technique in

teaching pronunciation especially word stress based on a sufficient treatment that can be done in classrooms.

1.2. Pronunciation error

According to Babylon Dictionary, the ability of using the correct stress, rhythm and intonation of a word in a spoken language is called pronunciation. The learners' native languages effect the pronunciation of the target language. This matter causes pronunciation error in EFL learner. The compression of native language structures and the target language structures is vital to prevent the error. CA claims that the similarities and the difference of two languages will facilitate or complicate learning. (Yiing, I. K. C., 2011). The differences in syllable structures of the two languages cause phonological errors. For instance: Iranian EFL learners add a vowel before or in between the consonants automatically such as school /esku:l/, and street / esterit/. The spelling pronunciation of words or silent letters is the next criteria for causing phonological errors. For instance, walk / wɔk /, wild / wɔld/, and bomb /bam/. (Kesavarz, M. H. 1993).

The lacks of exact or certain target language phonemes cause phonological errors. (Kesavarz, M. H. 1993). As an illustration:

"Chinese students may encounter difficulties with English sounds due to the interference from their native language. It is difficult for them to produce certain English sounds which do not exist in Mandarin Chinese. For instance, some English consonants do not exist in Mandarin Chinese such as /v/, /θ/, /ð/, etc. Therefore, they may substitute these sounds with similar ones in their mother tongue as they cannot find the counterparts in Mandarin Chinese. There are vowels in both Mandarin Chinese and English, but the two kinds of vowels have many differences in phoneme and articulation. Due to the differences between English and Chinese vowels, students are not aware of the lack of long and short vowels in Mandarin Chinese which might have a negative effect on English vowels." (Yiing, I. K. C 2011).

1.3. Word stress errors

English speakers categorize vocabulary items base on their stress patterns (Brown 1990; Levelt 1989). Brown said:

"The stress pattern of a polysyllabic word is a very important identifying feature of the word . . . We store words under stress patterns . . . and we find it difficult to interpret an utterance in which a word is pronounced with the wrong stress pattern - we begin to "look up" possible words under this wrong stress pattern." (1990, 51)

In addition, the failures in hearing and production stress patterns cause vague words such as: dessert/desert, foreign/ for rain, his story/history. (Gilbert, J. B., 2008)

Thus, stress patterns are ignored by learners unfortunately, when learner study vocabulary. This matter causes problem in making a correct communication. Learners also have failed to understand the stress patterns of new vocabularies. Brown claimed:

*“From the point of view of the comprehension of spoken English, the ability to identify stressed syllables and make intelligent guesses about the content of the message from this information is absolutely essential.”
(1977, 52)*

1.4. Significant of pronunciation

People hardly ever care about having good pronunciation because they just focus on their interactions and communications, but they don't care about their quality of their communications. For satisfactory communications, teachers need to teach their learners how they can pronounce words perfectly. There are some difficulties for reaching this goal such as multilingual and bilingual of EFL learners. “Given the multilingualism, and bilingualism problems, both the educational system and the individual teachers have been challenged to come up with some sort of solution.” (Khadivi,A. &Kalantari,R. 2011). Thus, teachers may need to design a sufficient teaching method to master their students in pronunciation.

1.5. Teaching pronunciation

There are different challenges against the teaching .Little time limit often causes insufficient proper attention to teaching pronunciation. Amount of presentation and practice are other challenges that teacher should remove them. (Gilbert, J. B. , 2008) Brown explains the problem this way:

From the point of view of understanding ordinary spoken English, the failure to move beyond the basic elementary pronunciation of spoken English must be regarded as disastrous for any student who wants to be able to cope with native English situation. If the student is only exposed to carefully articulated English, he will have learnt to rely on acoustic signals which will be denied him when he encounters the normal English of native speakers. (1977, 159)

In addition, teachers should aware of teaching pronunciation effectively, According to Judy B. Gilbert:

“The focus of English pronunciation instruction, therefore, should be to give learners the prosodic framework within which the sounds are organized. Instruction should concentrate on the way English speakers depend on rhythm and melody to organize thoughts, Highlight important words, and otherwise guide their listener.” (Gilbert, J. B. , 2008)

2. Review of related literature

The quality of communication is a vital criterion for everyone, but people hardly ever care about having good pronunciation because they just focus on their interactions and communications .Kat Bradley-Bennett said, “Communication can be a tricky business, especially when the listener and speaker are from different linguistic

backgrounds.” According to Kat Bradley-Bennett, significant students have difficulties in pronouncing the target language and maybe the unfocused pronunciation instruction is the reason. She suggested several scenarios for covering the matter. Perhaps learners cannot hear the sounds so that they cannot pronounce the sounds perfectly. A student in Seoul, South Korea was examined. They had to record their sounds. The examiner observed that false listening skills or physical linguistic difference caused problems in incorrect pronouncing. Kat Bradley-Bennett said that the difference between the movement of orthography of two languages, Korean and English, could cause errors.

According to CA, learners might encounter difficulties when they learn a new language. The similarities and the differences between languages will help or complicate the learning process. (Tseng, 2008). In addition, learners have difficulties in producing the sounds. (Bohn & Flege, 1992; Trofimovich et al., 2007).

Moreover, Khadivi and Kalantari (2008) claimed:

In Aoyama et al.'s (2004) study of Japanese differentiation between /r/ and /l/, English /r/ was perceptually more distinct from Japanese /r/ than English /l/. It was therefore suggested that the degree of perceived differences influences learners' competence in acquiring second language phonetic segments (as cited in Tseng, 2008).

Besides, bilingualism is a worldwide phenomenon in many countries such as Singapore, Canada, Switzerland, and so on. This phenomenon has been handled through standard system of education for bilingual and multilingual learners (Lambert, Genesee, Holobow, and Chartrand, 1993).

2.1. Bilingualism in Iran

Iran with 77 million people has different languages and customs. Some children speak their first language in their homes, but they are instructed in school with second language. For these children, the second language is Farsi. According to Asadollah Khadivi and Reza Kalantari,

“It was commonly assumed that bilingual students who were learning in their second language must inevitably have been at a disadvantage. This notion began to be challenged in the 1970s and 1980s. A closer examination of the results of bilingual students across various subject areas, including mathematics, showed inconsistent results. Although it seemed to be true at times that bilingual students as a whole did not perform as well as their monolingual peers, there were also some results that showed bilinguals excelled. There are a number of notions that need to be considered: whether the students are balanced bilinguals, the level of proficiency that the bilinguals have in each of their languages, and the environment in which they learn. Balanced bilinguals are bilinguals who have equal proficiency in their languages.”

These children have difficulties in learning and pronouncing sounds of second language. Therefore, authorities suggested solutions for solving this issue (Khadivi, A. & Kalantari, R. 2011).

2.2. Teaching stress in pronunciation instruction

According to Eltrug (1984), pronunciation errors are made by first language interference. Eltrug presented an example of Arab learners that cannot pronounce /p/. (As cited in Chang, 1996).

Psychological factors affect the learning pronunciation. The speaking skill is a personal factor. The personal sense or feeling affects the speech-rhythm. This rhythm is learned automatically in first language. Thus, it is normal that learners feel unsecure and uneasy when they listen and speak the rhythm of another language. This barrier is unconscious and it is dangerous for learners when they want to communicate well (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

For solving this psychological barrier and other issues, a teacher should think of the goal of pronunciation learning. Students should know the core elements of spoken English for comprehending the language. Students do not need to sound like a native speaker. By developing pronunciation as an instruction course; teachers and students may delete their frustration, anxiety, and so forth. Teachers can make a friendly condition for learners to communicate without frustration, anxiety, and so forth (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

Musical signals built the communication in English. They are rhythm and melody and their combination is called prosody. Prosody sometimes is called rhythm and the intonation is called melody or pitch patterns in English. For developing communications and pronunciations, teachers and learners should know this term (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

“In English, rhythmic and melodic signals serve as “road signs” to help the listener follow the intentions of the speaker. These signals communicate emphasis and make clear the relationship between ideas so that listeners can readily identify these relationships and understand the speaker’s meaning. Unfortunately, when English learners speak in class, they are typically not thinking about how to help their listeners follow their meaning. Instead, they are often thinking about avoiding mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and so on. Native speakers also commonly make this error when delivering a presentation or when reading aloud in a classroom, a business meeting, or in some other setting. They become preoccupied with making “mistakes” and may ignore their listeners altogether. But it is particularly important for English learners to think about their listeners and master the rhythmic and melodic signals essential to “listener friendly” pronunciation.” (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

In the same way, syllable is the fundamental unit of English rhythm. Something with a vowel sound at its center is called a syllable. Native speakers of English aware the number of syllables in a word clearly, and react and apply a true rhythm for pronouncing words automatically. Learners have difficulties in phonological rules and may not distinguish the word syllable and stress automatically and in the same way.

Gilbert, J. B., 2008 Said,

“Since this seriously affects both intelligibility and listening comprehension, time must be spent training students’ ears to notice the number of syllables in the words they learn. For instance, students should be taught to count syllables and thereby notice the rhythmic difference between words in pairs, such as ease and easy, or wait and waited.

Notice in the picture of a school bus in Malaysia below that the English word school has been re-syllabified to fit the Bahasa Malaysia language (sekolah), which does not allow a final /l/ sound. That is to say, the word has been transformed into 3 syllables, rather than the English version, which is one syllable. Another common source of added syllables is that consonant clusters are not allowed in many languages and yet occur very often in English. This can cause systematic errors in pronunciation based on the student’s L1 rules (e.g., eschool or estudent, or even Espanish for Spanish) and can also cause confusion (e.g., parade instead of prayed, and forest instead of first).” (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

Gilbert said, when learners comprehend “the rhythmic effect of number syllables, including small word such as articles, auxiliaries and affixes (e.g., the; do; -er; etc.)”, listening intelligibility is intensified. She said,

“In easily confused words like this is/this and late/later the number of syllables is different, so the rhythm is different. These small words and affixes are typically difficult to hear in spoken English because of the systematic use of contrastive highlighting/obscuring, which is essential to the English stress and emphasis system. For this reason, these small words are often missing from students’ speech (and writing), and this indicates that they are not hearing them well.” (Gilbert, J. B., 2008).

Children learn rhythm of their native language unconsciously and automatically without any frustrations and anxieties very early in life, and the rhythm of first language become very familiar. Children can apply this unconscious action to any L2 in childhood (Aoyama et al. 2007).

For this reason, a child learns their mother tongue unconsciously with a set of sounds. When a child learns another language; the new language will be comprehend through the filter of that mother tongue language. This is called interference from the L1 sounds. Thus, the problem is the next language because a child adds new sounds to the first set and disturbs the exact set. We should consider their relationships between speaking and reading a new language. In this

relationship, learners need to know how to pronounce words in English, so they practice and practice to pronounce an L2.

There is another interference which is called interference from the L1 Rhythm. Interference from rhythm of first language makes errors, when learners who first learn reading L2 and listening new sounds of second language in a sequence. (Aoyama et al. 2007), Gilbert, J. B., 2008 Said

“From my own observations at the Communicative Disorders Department of West Chester University, I have learned a few things about how speech language pathologists operate with children presenting speech-sound disorders. One memorable case was a five-year-old child who presented with phonological difficulties, particularly with developing fricatives. In place of fricatives, he would produce stops. For example, when asked to produce the word fish, he would instead say pish. This substitution occurred consistently in other words such as four (pour) and five (pive). The child also had difficulty producing [s] in onset position, replacing words like sip with tip, which looks like the stopping of fricatives we saw earlier. The speech-language pathologist (SLP) would spend the therapy session trying to get the child to pronounce these words correctly. One way in which he did this was by over articulating the correct form of the word, and asking the child to repeat back what he said. At first, the child would reproduce pish if asked to say fish, but with continued therapy and correction, the incidence rate of correct target speech went up.”

Suzanne N. Landi in 2008 found out that the majority of learners with phonological disorder improve their language in childhood. According to The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), 70% of learners with the disorders improve their comprehensibility and communication operating. Thus learners can solve the interferences and disorders of learning a language in childhood (ASHA 2003).

2.3. Walking stress

According to Gilbert, J. B., 2008, every syllabic word has a main stress syllable. “This is [a] part of each word’s signature, so to speak”. When you focus on the word, the stressed syllable displayed the top of the information that it can transfer to listeners and readers. Listeners and readers understand that the word is important for interaction so that the sound in the top syllable is clear.

“English learners tend to ignore stress when they learn vocabulary. And failure to learn the stress pattern of new words often leads to an inability to recognize those words in spoken form. Earlier, we considered this and other reasons why learning stress patterns is important. But the present discussion of peak syllables, and the role they play in thought groups, leads us to a more crucial reason why learners should develop a

familiarity with English word stress: When students learn a new word, they need to know which syllable in that word will be the peak syllable when the word is chosen as the focus of a thought group. In other words, learners need to know the stress pattern of a word if they are going to use it as a focus word." (Gilbert, J. B., 2008)

Brown expresses the importance of recognizing English word stress patterns this way:

It is essential in English to learn to pay attention to the stressed syllable of a word, since this is the best and most stable feature of the word's profile, and to those words in the stream of speech which are [emphasized], since these mark the richest information-bearing units. Listeners who fail to distinguish these are likely to flounder. They are likely to lose even more information if they do not know how to identify information peaks and how to use the information encoded in this distribution. (1990, 151)

Therefore, teachers may need to design a sufficient teaching method to master their students in pronunciation, and for satisfactory communications, teachers need to teach their learner how they can pronounce words perfectly.

According to Jack C. Richards, teachers play the audio program; students focus on the words stress. Teachers explain the task. Students stand up and move to a place where they can move freely. Then students step forward on the true stressed syllable of each word and step backward on unstressed syllable. Gradually participants will be able to practice the syllabic words without supports. This technique is called walking stress.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 55 Iranian Turkish and Farsi native speakers learning English as a foreign language in one institute's semester in Quchan, north-east of Iran. Twenty nine participants were Turkish native speakers and twenty six participants were Farsi native speakers. The twenty nine Turkish participants were a group. The twenty six Farsi participants were a group. They were selected in their groups randomly. All of the participants were homogenous. Their levels were intermediate. They were selected male and female randomly. They were teenagers. Participants were not informed about the research study, serial tests, the treatment and so forth. They supposed; they participated in a natural institute's semester.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1. The Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delay Post- Test of a Production-Test

100 syllabic words were taught to the two groups, and 40 words were selected randomly for making a production-test. The production-test was designed in order to make the participants read the syllabic words clearly and their sounds were recorded for evaluating. The numbers of items were 40 syllabic words that involve two

syllable words stress on the first syllable, two syllable words stress on the second syllable, three syllable words stress on the first syllable, three syllable words stress on the second syllable. They were selected randomly. The tests were validated by the SPSS 16 Software. Also the reliability of the test was trusted by the SPSS 16 software. The duration of each exam was 40 minutes. The test was performed as same pre-tests, post-tests and delay post-tests for each group. Delay post-tests were required for evaluating the participant's retentions. The participants were not allowed to use dictionaries or cheat during the each exam. The sample of the test is presented in appendix A. However, before using the test for the purpose of data collection, it was piloted on a small group of subjects to estimate its reliability. The result of the reliability analysis is given below:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.726	40

3.2.2. Sample TOFEL Test

The study examined the homogeneity of the participants with a sample TOFEL test in order to have the participants who have a same knowledge and proficiency level before the pre-test.

3.2.3. SPSS 16 software

The study used the software for analyzing data and the results of the pre-test, post-test, delay post-test and the sample TOFEL test. It was used for thrusting the validity and reliability of the tests.

3.3 Procedure

This study was conducted within four months. The participants became homogenous with a sample TOFEL test. The participants in this study were 55 Iranian Turkish and Farsi native speakers learning English as a foreign language in one institute's semester in Quchan, Iran. Twenty nine participants were Turkish native speakers and twenty six participants were Farsi native speakers. They were selected in their groups randomly. Sex was controlled randomly for assigning participants in their groups. Participants were not informed about the research study, serial tests, the treatment and so forth. Each group studied a same 100 syllabic words. After teaching the 100 syllabic words to the two groups, participants in both groups receive the production-test as a pre-test. Then two groups received the treatment one week later. The treatment is walking stress which the author played the audio program; students focused on the words stress. The author explained the task. Students stood up and moved to a place where they could move freely. Then students stepped forward on the true stressed syllable of each word and stepped backward on unstressed syllable. Gradually participants were able to practice the syllabic words without supports. The participants in Farsi group and Turkish groups received the same production-test as a post-test one week after the treatment. After one month, the participants received

the same production-test as a delay post-test for evaluating their retentions. The production-test was same for the pre-test, post-test and delay post- test

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The results for the descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest are shown in tables I and II.

Table I. Mean score and Standard deviation for pretest

Group Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Turkish Group	29	11.265	0.546
Farsi Group	26	11.459	0.615

Table II. Mean score and Standard deviation for posttest

Group Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Turkish Group	29	15.351	0.736	0.145
Farsi Group	26	12.101	0.928	0.190

The group means for the study are compared by an independent t-test analysis that it was employed for post-test phase (see table III). As shown in this table, the difference is considered to be statistically significant between the two Turkish and Farsi groups. That is the candidates in Turkish group have outperformed the ones in Farsi group in syllable stress learning.

Table III. Independent Sample T-Test

		F	.Sig	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Differ ence	Std. Error Differ ence	Lo we r	Up per
Writ ing Test	Equa l	1. 85	0. 38	2. 94	44	0.0 139	0.736	0.656	0.1 36	0.1 34
	varia nce assu med	3	7	3	42	.2 139	0.736	0.656	0.1 45	0.1 37

	Equal variances not assumed			3						
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This confirms that use of walking stress improved word stress learning because the EFL learners learn effectively.

Three weeks after the Turkish and Farsi learners of both groups were asked to participate in a delayed posttest again. The purpose of this test was to see which method of instruction had more impact on the learners' word stress retentions and could improve their word stress learning for longer period of time. Interestingly enough, here again the participants of the Turkish group could performed better than the Farsi group (See table 4).

Table IV. Mean and standard deviation for both groups after three weeks

Group Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Turkish Group	29	17.453	0.812
Farsi Group	26	15.987	0.692

5. Results and Discussions

CA claims that the similarities and the difference of two languages will facilitate or complicate learning. (Yiing, I. K. C. 2011). The differences in syllable structure of the two languages cause phonological errors. The failures in hearing and production stress patterns cause vague words such as: dessert/desert, foreign/ for rain, his story/history. (Gilbert, J. B. , 2008)

On the other hand, stress patterns are ignored by learners unfortunately, when learners study vocabulary. This matter causes problem in making a correct communication. For satisfactory communications, teachers need to teach their learner how they can pronounce words perfectly because those words constitute a major part of a language (Bogaards, 2001). Bilingualism is a worldwide phenomenon in many countries such as Singapore, Canada, Switzerland, and so on. This phenomenon has been handled through standard system of education for bilingual and multilingual learners (Lambert, Genesee, Holobow, and Chartrand, 1993). Iran with 77 million people has different language and customs. Some children speak their first language in their homes, but they are instructed in school with second language. These children have difficulties in learning and pronouncing sounds of second language

.Therefore, authorities suggested solutions for solving this issue (Khadivi, A. & Kalantari, R. 2011). The treatment is walking stress, as a method of teaching words stress; the author played the audio program, then students focused on the words stress. The author explained the task. Students stood up and moved to a place where they could move freely. Then students stepped forward on the true stressed syllable of each word and stepped backward on unstressed syllable. Gradually participants were able to practice the syllabic words without supports. The author tries to find an effective instruction method to improve and helps the bilingual and multilingual EFL learners to learn word stress. Then, the author tries to compare the instruction levels of Turkish and Farsi learners after giving treatment.

As discussed earlier, the candidates in Turkish group have outperformed the ones in Farsi group in word stress learning. This confirms that use of waking stress enhanced word stress learning of Iranian bilingual EFL learners to a great extent. The purpose of the second delayed test was to see which method of instruction had more impact on the students' word stress retentions and could sustain their word stress learning for longer period of time. Again the participants of the Turkish group could perform better than the Farsi group.

6. Conclusion

People hardly ever care about having good pronunciation because they just focus on their interactions and communications, but they don't care about the quality of their communications. In addition, teachers should aware of teaching pronunciation effectively, According to Judy B. Gilbert:

"The focus of English pronunciation instruction, therefore, should be to give learners the prosodic framework within which the sounds are organized. Instruction should concentrate on the way English speakers depend on rhythm and melody to organize thoughts, highlight important words, and otherwise guide their listener." (Gilbert, J. B. , 2008)

Brown (1990, 151) mentioned the importance of recognizing English word stress; Brown expressed that the necessity of knowing stress syllable of a word is very critical because listeners cannot distinguish the word stress. This causes failures and listeners lose the speakers' information.

Generally speaking, a child learns their mother tongue unconsciously with a set of sounds. When a child learns another language; the new language will be comprehend through the filter of that mother tongue language. This is called interference from the L1 sounds. Thus, the problem is the next language because a child adds new sounds to the first set and disturbs the exact set. Therefore, English teachers have great difficulties in teaching pronunciation to their multilingual and bilingual Iranian EFL learners .Thus; teachers may need to design a sufficient teaching method to master their students in pronunciation.

The results and findings of the present study confirm the significance of instructional method of English word stress teaching and foremost it supports the use of walking stress in the English word stress learning and retentions of EFL learners, especially the Turkish participants.

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Appendix A:

The production-test

Two syllable words stress on the first	Two syllable words stress on the second	Three syllable word stress on the first	Three syllable word stress on the second
Airway	Expense	Battery	Corruption
beefcake	Batik	Cornea	Cosmetics
bath tub	Control	Trafficking	Translation
Failure	Convene	Sunglasses	Destruction
Refund	Coquette	Charity	Courageous
batter	Receipt	Amperage	Commuter
Bedroom	People	Programmer	Creation
Bathroom	Hotel	Servitude	Explosion
bebop	Supply	Applicant	Credenza
Button	Guitar	Punishment	Employment

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILL OF VERNACULAR MEDIUM ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract

Communication skill is not only the technical jargon of our world, but also the language for employable criteria. Communicating in English plays a wider role in jobs. Communication skill is given importance in all the fields. Philipson (2000) describes English from various perspectives such as the influence of globalization, finance and the economy connected to world trade organization and so on. The students from Tamil medium finds too difficult to communicate with their urban peers and their thirteen years of English language education could not provide them confidence to communicate in English. For this reason a group of interested Tamil medium learners have been selected from an Engineering department. The instructor conducted an activity in the class to develop their communication ability and confidence in themselves. A pre-test has been conducted to introduction themselves. After the completion of the pre-test the learners were asked to do activity in pairs and finally a pretest has been conducted to develop their communication skill through selected pictures. The result shows that the learners have improved their confidence and enhanced their communication skill.

Introduction

Speaking is considered to be the second skill (lsrw) in the language learning. Speaking requires not only practice in the language, but also environment has some influence in developing the speaking skill. For non native speakers of English, the choice of choosing the environment or persons speaking in English is difficult, though they have good knowledge in writing skill .It encourages learning. It stimulates language learning, compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas and cultivates their ability to develop other language skills. The speaking skill demands linguistics and cognitive skill in which they are uncertain. The students participated in this training program asserted that they have practical difficulty in speaking. All the students are mostly influenced by product based teaching approach. Tsui states that a language learning process is stressful and tends to generate much anxiety in the learners (1996).

Theoretical Framework

The study is built on the emerging interest and needs in Engineering and Technology. As a student of Engineering, he or she has to develop the English skill for the practical purpose. Philip son (2001) describes 'English ' from various perspectives, such as the influence of globalization, finance and the economy connected to Americanization, World Trade Organization, NGOs, and so on. In this 21st century speaking requires, in the fields of Engineering to share their opinions with their colleagues, superiors and give a presentation in the seminars and conferences. The learners activity performance in the classroom settings and in non-classroom settings is the reflection of successful learning outcomes of the learning. The students knowledge in English could not be used for the practical purpose because, they are not using the language .Brumfit (1993) and Barker (in Kinnell, 1990) argue that a serious mismatch between the competence, intelligence and status they have in their home countries and their low status in this country, may prove a major cause of stress .

Brief Review of Literature

In the recent years researchers and teachers are showing much importance to learning strategies in teaching communications skills in India. Many research has been conducted to investigates the effects of strategy training on improving reading skills to name a few (for example, Albert P'Rayan & Ramakrishna T. Shetty, (2008) Arun S. Patil Marc J. Riemer (2004). Richards argue that it is essential to teach students how to interact with each other in order to activate their thinking and create ideas which are crucial to second language learning. The studies show about their experience of training the students.

The study

Aims

The present study fits into the context of developing speaking skill for the students' profession. The primary purpose is to help the students more from a product based approach to a process focused approach in developing speaking skill. Specifically the study addresses two research questions:

1. Does the speaking strategies helps to develop the students speaking skills?
2. What are the subjects' perceptions about the training given to them?

Subjects

The subjects were a small group of ... Tamil medium learners in an Engineering Institution. They had their education in Tamil medium and their mother tongue is Tamil. The students are pursuing second year of their B.E education in the department of ... Their age group is between 18-19 years old. All of them had sixteen years of English education which focuses on providing practice in producing kinds

of texts or products. The texts are not able to help the students to develop communication skills.

The students who had their school education in Tamil medium find themselves hard to speak in English, because the environment and the cultural matters stay them away from practicing in English. All the selected students were from rural background, they did not know the urban culture. All the students are first graduates in their families and some of them are first engineering graduates in their village. All the students have greater passion for learning English and use it in the practical walks of life and in their profession. The students have a positive approach in learning English.

Method

The training was a short one, which ran for only two hours. In this training three activities are given, the first is a pre-test, the second is an activity is given to develop their speech and finally a post test is given.

The first is the pre-test in which all the students introduce about themselves. All the students introduced themselves only their names. The students are not aware of the introducing themselves with a teacher in a class. All of them had no difference in introducing themselves. After they had completed their self-introduction, the teacher taught the nuances of self-introduction.

After completing the self-introduction the students are asked to do role play. The selected nine students played the role play. Three pairs of students played the role in pairs and due to lack of forming a pair, the remaining three students are asked to do role play.

The first pair of the students talked about the importance of Cricket. The students spoke in lower voice and there is no content is very less. The students showed unnecessary gestures, waving his hands. They lack in starting and ending communication skill. In some situations of their talk was not clear.

The second pair of students spoke about Anna University. They did not use starting and ending communication levels. They voice is low and the content was not fully clear because of their pauses and low voice. First student spoke well and no choice was given to the other student. And second student has only a little chance to speak.

The third pair of students did not use starting communication level. One student spoke as rote learning. The student was clear and the content was clear but the second student lacks in clear speaking and content.

The remaining three girl students could not joined as pairs, so they were asked to for a group of three. All the three students participated enthusiastically. The topic chosen by them is getting ready for the class. All the three girls lack in using starting

level of communication and ended their ending communication level. All these students differ from the other pair was very clear in their content. The talk was short but they gave other students to share equally.

After completing the activity, the students were given instructions about speaking and their errors in communication have been informed to them.

The post-test was conducted by showing a picture. There are three pictures in sheet of paper has been selected to use in the class. The first picture is about a person asking something from a shop owner, the second picture is pointing out the gun towards the customer. Only these two pictures were shown and third picture is about the customer is leaving the shop. The pictures portrays that a person goes to a shop and he asks for water for that he was shown a gun, the person leaves the place by saying thank you. The students were asked to speak creatively. All the students participated so enthusiastically. It is interesting to note that all the students came with their own ideas.

The first student asserted that in the picture a man was asking something from the owner of a shop. The student was clear in his talk. He is able to manage to use proper word to the sentence in a meaningful way. The second student asserted that the person was a thief so the barman showed his gun towards him. The student conveyed the idea in a single word. The identification may be natural because it usually human being things like that. The third student asserted that the person asked something. Though the student spoke clearly. The answer is a copied one. Because it has been already said by someone. The idea is not new. The fourth student spoke clearly. He asserted that the person wanted something. The fifth student spoke with some practically. He asserted that the person showed the gun to the person who came to the shop because, he found him as a thief. The response to the picture is given by the fifth person did not have any creativity and interesting. The sixth student asserted that the person who goes to the shop asked the products from the barman without money. The barman got angry and showed the gun to get off the person from the shop. The seventh student asserted that the person who came to the shop was not a customer but a thief. The idea is already given by a second student, so it is not a new idea. There is no creativity in the answer. The eighth student asserted that the person who went to the shop asked the barman to offer wine bottles without money. The answer given by the student is simple and there is no higher creative thought. The last and the ninth student spoke with creative idea. The student asserted that the person went to shop and asked to write the shop for him. The student had some more creative idea than the others. so it made the answer interesting.

Results and Discussion

The Students Performance in the Pre-Test

The students were eager to present themselves in the class to develop their communication skills. All the students are from rural areas and chosen the medium of instruction in Tamil at their school education. The students made no difference in

their self-introduction. All the students just introduced their names and no other reference provided about them. They did not add their place of study, nativity and other details. This shows that they do not know to introduce themselves.

The Students' Role in Pair and as a Group Activity

The students participated in the pair activity are six in number and a group of three students formed as a group. The students participated actively in the pair and group activity. The first pair of students spoke about cricket. Both the students spoke less in content but participated actively. The students showed unnecessary gestures and in some situations they are not clear about the talk. The second pair of students spoke about Anna University. They had no starting and ending levels of communication. They did not use voice louder. The talk was an interesting one but the content was not clear in some places. The first student spoke well and the second finds it very challenging to overtake him. Because the first student spoke a lot and the second student had limited chance of speaking. But the student managed to speak in a better way. The third pair of student of student had no starting communication. One of the students in the third pair spoke not naturally. He repeated many sentences so it did not attracted the audience. The remaining three students could not be formed as a pair so they formed as a group. All the three performed as a group, they had chosen a topic on getting ready to class. There did not use starting and ending communication level. The matter and content was clear and the students made it so lively. The group activity was interesting because of their dramatic performance.

The Students Role in the Post -Test.

The post-test was conducted to help them to think practically. For helping them to speak naturally three pictures were chosen to enhance their speaking skill. In the first picture a man goes to a wine shop, in the second picture the bar man shows the gun and finally the man who went to shop leaves the place. The students were given first two kinds of pictures in a sheet of paper and one picture was not shown to them, because it was the concluding part of the picture. The students showed greater interest in speaking because the pictures helped them to speak and find the consequence of the two pictures. All the students spoke clearly and chosen different reasons for the concluding part of the picture. The concluding picture was not shown to the students. The three students directly said that concluded that the person came to the shop was a thief so the bar man showed the gun, the two students concluded that the person may ask something which is not available in the shop. The two students concluded that the person may asked the wine bottle without money so the bar man showed the gun. One student concluded that the person wanted to write the shop for him so the bar man showed the gun. One student concluded that the person asked unwanted things so the bar man showed the gun.

Conclusion

The study helped more to develop the communication skill of the students. The pre-test showed learners are lacking in basic form of communication for example they do

not how to introduce themselves. They were given information about how to introduce themselves then they were told about to do pair activity which helped them to remove their shyness and speak freely with their classmates. The post-test made the learners to be interested in speaking English. The strategies used in the class helped the learners to speak in English

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TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: INSIGHTS FROM MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

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Abstract

Though the theory of differentiated instruction has made its way into the teaching/learning enterprise long ago, its applicability and practicality in pedagogy is still approached with partial doubt on the part of several teachers, practitioners and researchers. In an attempt to bring about a renewed critical reappraisal of this groundbreaking theory and further prove its effectiveness in catering for varying learner needs and preferences, the current study sought to investigate the possible effects on vocabulary learning of the implementation of differentiated instruction (in the light of learners' multiple intelligences and learning styles). The research was carried out in the Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Urmia, with 80 Iranian intermediate female learners. Successive to homogenizing the groups, a total of 60 learners were found to enjoy the conditions for the rest of the research, and hence two 30-member groups were formed. These learners, then, sat the pretest (a vocabulary achievement test), and based on the results of multiple intelligences and learning styles questionnaires, which were administered later, the learners were divided into five separate categories termed visual-spatial (V), linguistic-auditory (L), kinesthetic-bodily (K), interpersonal (Inter), and intrapersonal (Intra). Next the learners in the experimental group were instructed based on their unique intelligence and learning styles types, whereas the other class was taught in the traditional way with no differentiation. Subsequent to the administration of posttest the results were analyzed through the use of independent samples T-test and ANOVA. In line with the findings of the research, a significant amount of difference was found between the performances of two groups and in favor of the experimental group. Further, the performance of different learners with various intelligences and learning style was shown to vary significantly.

Key words: differentiated instruction, learning styles, mixed ability classes, multiple intelligences, vocabulary learning

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Though the belief that learners learn differently has now turned to a commonsensical view, notions such as one-size-fits-all instruction based on age-grade groupings, whole-class lecture teaching, and lockstep progress continue to be regarded as the norm even in today's revolutionized pedagogical world (Hess, 1999; Sizer, 1999). Nonetheless, as a glance through a typical classroom setting reveals, invisible diversities of learning characteristics and preferences dominate the ELT practices all over the globe. Some students come to school with little support and encouragements from home, while others commence the learning process, with skills and knowledge years beyond grade level expectations (Tomlinson, 1999). As Caine and Caine (1990) note, "There can be up to a five-year difference in maturation between any two 'average' children" (p. 2).

Teachers and educators all over the globe have long reached consensus over the fact that learners in any given class are characterized by a wide variety of individual differences. Yet, the mere belief in these differences is not adequate and what the teachers need to do is to adjust their instructional and evaluative endeavors to these different learner needs and preferences. As Tomlinson (2000b, p.1) contends, "Students who are the same age differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, their styles of learning, their experiences, and their life circumstances." Learner differences can be separated into two broad categories: demographic differences and individual learning differences. As a brief glance through the literature helps reveal, throughout the last two decades, many educational researchers have explored individual differences in learning, creating theories of thinking, learning, and teaching (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Caine & Caine, 1990; Duckworth, 1996; Dunn, 2001; Guild, 1994; McCombs, 2001; Powell, 2000; Silver, Strong, & Perini, 1997; Sylwester, 1994).

Out of the manifold researchers' endeavors aimed at gauging the concept of learner differences, emerged the now-prevalent theory of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001, 2009a/b, 2010a/b), which intends to set forth a methodology for dealing with the so called learning differences (Hess, 1999). Thus, differentiated instruction was primarily given birth through the attempts by various researchers to address the diverse needs of learners in heterogeneous classroom settings (Westberg & Archambault, 1997). As Willis and Mann (2000, p.1) put it, "Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences.... teachers should modify their instruction to meet students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests." Also, as Stradling and Saunders (1993) maintain, differentiated instruction is "the process of matching learning targets, tasks, activities, resources, and learning support to individual learners' needs, styles, and rates of learning" (p. 129). Finally, to adopt Valiande, Kyriakides, and Koutselini's (2011) words,

Differentiation constitutes an innovating, constant reflective procedure of effective teaching and learning that cannot be met by readymade lesson plans. The planning

and the instructional choices of a lesson plan based on differentiation can only be used effectively when chosen by the teacher, according to students' needs and other personal characteristics (p. 3).

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Teaching vocabulary as one of the major categories of language learning is a broad area in which the learners' different learning characteristics play an important role. It goes without saying that learners learn the vocabulary differently by resorting to the differential, personalized styles and strategies they possess; thus, to be able to implement a practical method of teaching vocabulary, teachers need to be aware of their learners' current skill levels, strengths and challenges, interests and preferences, and needs and goals. The challenge is for teachers to ensure that the needs of all learners are equally valued and attended to.

The purpose of this study is to see if using differentiated instruction would have a positive effect on students' vocabulary learning in mixed ability classes. When first starting to design differentiated instruction, it is important that all teachers and support staff be willing to devote the time, energy, and resources to design and implement a successful program. Roles need to be clearly defined, schedules need to be made in advance and adhered to as much as possible, and collaboration/cooperation needs to replace competition at all levels. In the beginning, redesigning curriculum and teacher roles for differentiated instruction is very intensive labor. However, using technology, future planning can be streamlined, teachers can use what was successful in the past and adjust activities that may need more clarity, and spend more time on the instruction of each student according to her/his needs.

1.3 Significance of and Justifications for the Study

Being involved with the teaching career as colleagues since long, the researchers had been pondering over the idea of different learning styles for years, especially as facing those learners whose learning styles are so clear that can be readily recognized by the instructor. Perhaps the first trigger for the current study came from their sensitivity toward the age-old premise that a typical class is really made up of learners who enjoy a range of varied proficiency levels, and come from different backgrounds.

Today's classrooms are becoming more academically diverse. Many, if not most, classrooms contain students representing both gender and multiple cultures and generally contain students with a range of exceptionalities and markedly different experiential backgrounds. These students almost certainly work at differing readiness levels, have varying interests, and learn in a variety of ways. In order to create a kind of educational space which is beneficial for all students with different intelligences and styles, the teaching methods are to be changed to fit all the students.

Though the domains of learning styles and multiple intelligences have long made their ways into the field of applied linguistics and an assortment of varied research projects have been targeted toward these partially novel areas of investigation, it seems that scant attention has been paid to the possible effect of differentiated instruction via paying due heed to these two variables on learning vocabulary. Thus, the current study intends to investigate this partly untouched area in a brand new context, i.e. for Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

1.4 Research Questions

In tandem with the principal axioms of the current investigation, the following questions were set forth:

1. Does differentiated instruction have any impact on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?
2. Is there any significant difference between the performance of learners with different learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) on the vocabulary posttest?
3. Is there any significant difference between the performance of learners with different multiple intelligences (spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) on the vocabulary posttest?

2. Literature review

2.1 Why Differentiated Instruction?

Diversification and metamorphosis in today's revolutionized educational system is an inevitable verity, which has partly emanated from the avant-garde socio-cultural requirements of ultramodern societies. In the current state of affairs, we are no more faced with the conventional sameness (in terms of learners' abilities, preferences, needs, traits, and the like), which once used to dominate the mainstream educational arenas. Indeed, our present-day didactic endeavors are characterized by intricacies germane to intra-group diversities, in the sense that individuals with whom we are currently dealing are no more the uni-dimensional beings of, say, 1800s, as Tomlinson (1999) contends; rather than resemblances which constituted the commonsensical norm in primordial pedagogical enterprise, it is the notion of disparities that has been and is to be given more heed in the modern practice of teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, the main challenge for current pedagogy is not the mere confession to the prevalence of differences in the learning context. Awareness of such variations and endorsement of learner differences can just feature as the springboard for a more critical stage, which is the implementation of sound approaches and methods aimed at addressing the complicated needs of modern pedagogy. Though a plethora of attempts have, thus far, been set in place by a multitude of educationalists, practitioners, and theoreticians, a great deal still remains to be done toward the

diversification of instructional/evaluative materials and techniques, in keeping with the demands of today's diversified learning environments.

In the campaign targeted toward the reappraisal of teaching/learning practices with the aim of meeting individual learning differences, later on being referred to by the neologism differentiated instruction, perhaps it was Gardner (1983, 1991, 1993) who initially brought the notion of instructional diversification to the foreground of attention via the establishment of his ground-breaking theory of multiple intelligences. Another line of theories concerning the notion of differentiation in instruction seems to have been configured out of the attempt by several prominent researchers in the field of learning styles (e.g. Chislett & Chapman, 2005; Dunn, 2000, 2001; Dunn & Dunn, 1992a/b; Honey & Mumford, 2006; Kolb, 1985).

2.2 Empirical Research on Differentiated Instruction

Literature is replete with the research projects reporting on the positive outcomes resulting from the use of differentiated instruction. Yet, owing to the partial novelty of the concept of differentiation in instruction, more time might be required on the part of (novice) teachers and learners to come into terms with the underlying tenets of this groundbreaking theory. An early case study of one middle school's experience with differentiated instruction by Tomlinson (1995), for instance, came up with the conclusion that there was a need to investigate teacher resistance to new models catering for academic diversity, as well as considering teachers' perception of classroom management in the light of these changes.

It is, therefore, mostly the case that teachers who experience early successes with differentiation are more prone to adaptation in this respect. In a study investigating the impact of differentiated instruction on student scores on standardized tests, Hodge (1997) found that students who were prepared for tests using differentiated techniques showed a gain in their mathematics scores, but there were no comparable gains in reading scores. However, teachers' perceptions of being able to meet the needs of diverse learners, as reported in this investigation, did not appear to be affected by the use of either traditional or differentiated instructional techniques.

In another study, Tomlinson, Moon and Callahan (1998) investigated the nature of instructional practice among middle school populations, considering the degree to which teachers respond appropriately to academic diversity, using differentiation. This study indicated that very few teachers take students' interests, learning profile or cultural differences into account when they plan lessons. As the findings of this study revealed, though some of the teachers who used varied instructional strategies partly succeeded in creating more flexible classroom settings, most teachers expressed frustration about attempting to deal with learner variance.

A word of warning is to be made, at this juncture, regarding some teachers' misconception regarding the real practice of differentiated instruction, as it is sometimes the case that, on the face of it, the teacher claims to be dealing with

differentiation, whereas in actuality s(he) does nothing more than tracking the traditional approach. This is evident in a study by Blozowich (2001) who found that teachers used a variety of techniques but continued to prepare lessons as they would for a tracked classroom. This researcher, then, came to the conclusion that teachers implementing differentiated instruction are in dire need of incessant and consistent professional development, along with intensive discussion about how these techniques are to be put to use in the classroom.

Among the other supportive claims in favor of the privileges of differentiated instruction, reference can be made to McAdamis' (2001) work, which pointed to significant performance enhancement among the students in the Rockwood School District (Missouri), successive to the implementation of differentiated instruction. Planning, mentoring, professional development, doing action research and holding workshops are highlighted in this study as the principal measures to be taken with the aim of lessening teachers' initial resistance toward differentiation in education.

In another study concerning the repercussions of adopting differentiated syllabi for teachers, Affholder (2003) found that teachers who made an intensive use of these strategies developed a better individual perception and assumed greater responsibility for student growth. Furthermore, in line with the results of this study, teachers who were characterized by a more frequent utilization of differentiated techniques in their classes came up with higher levels of self-efficacy as well as willingness to try new instructional approaches. Yet, as the results revealed, those enjoying seniority and higher experience were found to be at a more privileged position in this respect. Working with the unique community of undergraduate teachers, Johnsen (2003) concluded that the use of differentiated techniques proved to be a beneficial tool in keeping the individuals' interested and, consequently, the implemented techniques were said to have provided the undergraduate teachers with a highly gratifying experience.

Despite the great body of work carried out on varied gains resulting from the implementation of differentiated instruction, Robison (2004) calls for further research into the utilization of differentiated instruction techniques, mainly owing to the fact that teachers are still reluctant to pursue the axioms of differentiation, due to an assortment of reasons like the problem with setting time constraints for the productive use of such techniques in classes.

Nevertheless, evidence for mounting (renewed) interest in and attention toward the importance of differentiated instruction might be gathered via a fleeting glimpse through the recent probes allotted to this area of research, among which mention can be made of McQuarrie, and McRae's (2010) project which reports on the outcomes of a Western Canadian research review regarding the effective practices supporting differentiated instruction. Based on the findings of the study, these researchers claim that "addressing student diversity and providing the best learning opportunities for all children across Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools requires recognition that

differentiation requires time, training, intentional planning and long-term commitment on the part of educators, government and wider school communities" (McQuarrie, and McRae's, 2010, p. 1)

Finally, in a more recent investigation aimed at the practical implementation of differentiated instruction, Valiande, Kyriakides, and Koutselini (2011) organized a probe into "a) the effects of differentiated instruction on students achievement in mixed ability classrooms and b) the dimensions of quality and equity effectiveness of differentiated instruction, implemented by Cypriot teachers in order to improve their effectiveness" (p. 6). As they continue to aver, in line with the gained upshots, they were successful in providing strong "evidence to support the theory of differentiation, its basic principles and presuppositions, and confirm its effectiveness in mixed ability classrooms" (Valiande, Kyriakides, and Koutselini, 2011, p. 13).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Sixty Iranian female learners studying at the ILI (Iran Language Institute) in Urmia, participated in this study. They were all intermediate students and their age ranged between 15 and 20. Actually these sixty participants were in two separate classes, with each class including thirty participants. In order to group them according to their type of intelligences and learning styles, a multiple intelligences test and a learning styles test were initially undertaken.

Though, based on the institute's placement procedures, all the participants were supposed to enjoy roughly the same level of proficiency, to ascertain the homogeneity of the group, a standardized test entitled Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to ascertain the homogeneity of participants at the outset of the study. The participants were selected out of a pool of 80 learners according to their performance on the PET. Through considering the normal distribution of the participants' scores on proficiency test, merely those whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean ($M = 40.56$) of the normal distribution curve were chosen for the study. Consequently, 60 of them were found to be homogenous and were chosen for the purpose of the current study.

3.2 Instruments

To commence the study, the Preliminary English Test (PET), a second level Cambridge ESOL exam for intermediate level learners, was administered to ensure the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of language proficiency. The test included four sections of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Those whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean (i.e., between 44.40 and 36.72 out of 50) participated in the study.

Furthermore, to obtain the objectives of this study, the participants (in both experimental and control groups) were given an intermediate vocabulary test (used both as pre-test and post-test), which was adopted from the test book designed

particularly for this level at the institute where they studied. The test consisted of 50 multiple choice questions and was utilized to test whether differentiated instruction had any impact on the participants' vocabulary learning or not.

Moreover, to determine the participants' types of intelligences, a multiple intelligences test (based on Howard Gardner's MI Model) was given to them. The test consisted of 34 questions which were scored on the scale of 1 to 4.

VAK Learning Styles self-assessment questionnaire was the other test given to the participants in order to determine their learning styles. The questionnaire consisted of 30 multiple choice questions indicating visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles.

3.3 Design and Procedure

As the present research involved selecting one group upon which a variable was tested without any random pre-selection processes and included a treatment on the experimental group, the design was quasi-experimental and included pretest/posttest to evaluate whether there were significant differences in the vocabulary achievement of the participants.

As stated previously, at the outset of the study, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to learners to ascertain the homogeneity of participants in terms of language proficiency. Then, the selected participants were given the pretest before the application of any differentiated instruction and the obtained scores in both classes were collected for later analysis. In order to apply differentiation, the determination of the participants' intelligences and learning styles types was required. Therefore, the multiple intelligences test and the learning styles questionnaire were given to the participants. In both classes the participants were grouped based on their type of intelligences and learning styles.

Next, one of the classes was randomly selected to undertake differentiated instruction in which different groups of participants enjoying the same kind of intelligences and learning styles were instructed according to their special type of intelligences and learning styles for about seventeen sessions. As a consequence of this kind of grouping applied for the experimental group participants, five distinct groups were formed (with each group encompassing 6 participants. These subgroups were termed visual-spatial, linguistic (auditory), bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal and interpersonal, in accordance with the intelligences and learning styles they possessed.

Thus, each group was instructed based on the mentioned types of intelligence and learning style for a matter of about 17 sessions. Each session lasted for about 90 minutes. The other class was just instructed in the traditional way without any differentiation. At the end of the course a post test encompassing 50 multiple-choice vocabulary items was given to the participants to test whether the use of the

differentiated instructions had a positive impact on the participants' learning or not. The obtained scores from the two tests (pre-test and post-test) were collected for the data analysis section in the study. The researcher assigned the learners' scores into 5 different groups (as mentioned above) based on their type of intelligence and learning style.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The current study set out with the aim of gauging the possible impact of the application of differentiated instruction on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning, with a focus on learners' multiple intelligences as well as their learning styles. To this end, four types of data were collected: 1) the data showing the results of the Pet Test to homogenize the participants, 2) the data indicating the participants' unique intelligences and learning styles, 3) the participants' scores on the two tests (pretest and posttest), and 4) the data showing the performance of each group of learning styles and multiple intelligences on the tests.

As stated earlier, the same 50-item test was utilized as both pretest and post-test. Each question carried 2 points, and hence the total score of the test was 100. The control participants' scores on the pretest ranged between 60 and 90, and on the posttest, their scores were between 70 and 90. Yet, the experimental participants' scores on the pretest were between 60 and 95, and on the posttest, their scores ranged between 80 and 100. The data obtained were mainly processed and analyzed through the use of t-test and ANOVA.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics for PET

The main purpose of utilizing PET as a standard test was to homogenize the participants and select intermediate learners. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics concerning the learners' performance on this test. Regarding the results, the mean of the scores for 80 participants came out to be 40.56 and the standard deviation turned out to be 3.84. So, to homogenize the participants, those whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean (i.e., between 44.40 and 36.72 out of 50) participated in the study.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Pet Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pet test	80	3200	50.00	40.56	3.84
Valid listwise	N 80				

4.2 Results Gained for Research Question One

1. Does differentiated instruction have any impact on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?

Table 2 represents the information relevant to the performance of control group. As the table reveals, the mean score of the participants who took the pretest in the control group (PRT1) equaled 79.5, and their mean score on the posttest (POT1) was 82.5.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest in the Control Group

GROUP	N	Mean	Mean difference
PRT1	30	79.5	-3.0
POT1	30	82.5	

Table 3 shows the findings obtained regarding the performance of experimental group. As is seen, the mean score of the participants who took the pretest in the experimental group (PRT2) was 81.5, and their mean score on the posttest (POT2) equaled 89.3.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest in the Experimental Class

GROUP	N	Mean	Mean difference
PRT2	30	81.5	-7.8
POT2	30	89.3	

Table 4 Independent Samples T-test for experimental group in PRT2 and POT2

	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 % confidence interval of Difference	
					Lower	Upper

Control	54.65	29	0.00	81.55	73.541	83.64
Experimental	40.51	29	0.00	85.50	74.231	99.12

The comparison between the two mean scores of each class can be utilized as an insight toward the rejection of the first null hypothesis claiming no difference between the performances of two groups as a result of the treatment applied. The slight difference between the mean scores of the PRT1 and POT1 in comparison with the noticeable difference between the mean scores of the PRT2 and POT2 can be taken as evidence in favor of the claim that the application of the differentiated instruction in the second class (the experimental group) has been effective. Yet, to make a stronger claim, more robust evidence is called for; as the data presented in Table 4 help reveal ($df = 29, p = 0.00$), a significant amount of difference is witnessed with regard to the performance of two groups. Thus, it can be concluded that differentiated instruction has had a positive effect on the students' vocabulary learning and the first hypothesis is, therefore, prone to rejection. Moreover, Figure 1 helps shed further light on the claim that the difference between the mean scores of POT1 and POT2 is indicative of the noticeable change in the participants' performance in the experimental class.

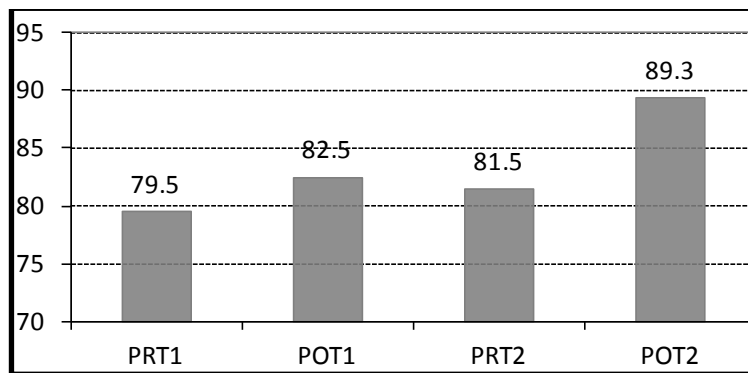


Figure 1. Investigation of the mean scores in two classes

4.3 Results Gained for Research Question Two

2. Is there any significant difference between the performance of learners with different learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) on the vocabulary posttest?

As stated earlier, to come up with a firm basis for performing the groupings within the experimental group, use was made of the results gained through the implementation of both learning styles inventory and multiple intelligences test. Altogether, five categories of learners were constituted drawing on the test results,

and were alternatively termed: visual-spatial (V), linguistic-auditory (L), kinesthetic-bodily (K), interpersonal (Inter), and intrapersonal (Intra). Yet, the more convenient type of grouping for the sake of data analysis was thought to be the one which assigned learners to different categories, based on their learning styles or multiple intelligences separately.

Table 5 depicts the descriptive statistics gained for the performance of learners with different learning styles. As can be inferred from the table, the mean of visual learning style scores on the posttest of vocabulary achievement test is the highest among the three types of learning styles; yet its Std. deviation is the lowest in comparison with the other two groups.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics Relevant to the Performance of Three learning styles

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
A	6	86.2500	14.12002	5.76447
V	6	89.1667	5.84523	2.38630
K	6	82.9167	7.14435	2.91667

Table 6 ANOVA Results for Different Learning Styles

Group	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 % confidence interval of Difference	
					Lower	Upper
A	14.962	5	.000	86.2500	71.4319	101.0681
K	37.366	5	.000	89.1667	83.0325	95.3009
V	28.429	5	.000	82.9167	75.4191	90.4142

Also, drawing on the findings presented in Table 6 ($df = 5, p = 0.00$), it can be concluded that there is a significant amount of difference among the performance of learners possessing different learning styles (auditory, kinesthetic and visual), and hence the second hypothesis claiming no difference between the three groups of learning styles can be disconfirmed.

4.4 Results Gained for Research Question Three

3. Is there any significant difference between the performance of learners with different multiple intelligences (spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) on the vocabulary posttest?

To analyze the third research question of the study, the main grouping of the study with five subcategories was employed, but with a number of different labels. Hence, the five categories on which the analysis was carried out were spatial (S), linguistic (L), bodily-kinesthetic (K), interpersonal (inter), and intrapersonal (intra). As the data in Table 7 help reveal, among the five groups of intelligences, the highest and lowest posttest means belonged to spatial (M = 89.1667) and interpersonal (M = 80.421) intelligences, respectively; yet, the greatest and lowest amounts of standard deviation were gained for linguistic (SD = 14.12002) and spatial (SD = 5.84523) types of intelligence, respectively.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics Relevant to the Performance of Five Intelligence Types

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
L	6	86.2500	14.12002	5.76447
S	6	89.1667	5.84523	2.38630
K	6	82.9167	7.14435	2.91667
Intra	6	88.801	6.102327	2.51092
Inter	6	80.421	10.80123	6.79021

Table 8 ANOVA Results for Different Intelligence Types

Group	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 % confidence interval of Difference	
					Lower	Upper
L	14.962	5	.000	86.2500	71.4319	101.0681
S	37.366	5	.000	89.1667	83.0325	95.3009
K	28.429	5	.000	82.9167	75.4191	90.4142
Intra	34.574	5	.000	88.801	76.0520	92.4582
Inter	26.601	5	.000	80.421	73.812	90.1270

As it is shown in Table 8, (df = 5, p = .000), the difference among the performance of five different groups of multiple intelligences is statistically significant, and, therefore, the third null hypothesis postulating the non-existence of difference among the performance of various intelligence types on the vocabulary posttest can be nullified. Figure 2 gives out a more lucid view of this significant difference, showing

that spatial intelligence group had the best performance in terms of vocabulary achievement test.

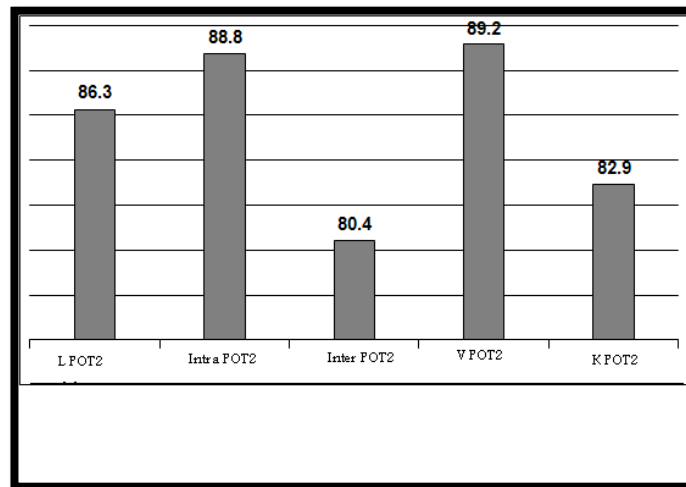


Figure 2. Investigation of the mean scores of the five different groups of multiple intelligences

5. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of Differentiated Instruction on the students' vocabulary learning. According to the results of the study relevant to the first research question, the researchers concluded that the application of differentiation had a positive impact on the learners' performance, and these findings were in line with some previous research done by Affholder (2003), Gartin, Murdick, Imbeau, and Perner, (2002), Hodge (1997), Johnsen (2003), and McAdamis (2001).

Gartin et al. (2002) conducted a study in which differentiated instruction was a method for developing curriculum for successful learning and instruction and supported the application of the differentiated instruction. Johnsen (2003) carried out an investigation using differentiated instruction with undergraduate teachers to suit different ability levels. Student teachers in this context were encouraged to differentiate content and process, using learning centers, different reading materials and different strategies. Based on the gained upshots, the implemented techniques were found to have provided the undergraduate teachers with a highly gratifying experience

McAdamis (2001), on the other hand, reported significant improvement in the test scores of low-scoring students in the Rockwood School District (Missouri), following the use of differentiated instruction. Hodge's (1997) study revealed that students who were prepared for tests using differentiated techniques showed a gain in their mathematics scores. Finally, Affholder (2003) found that teachers who used

differentiated instruction strategies more intensively showed improved individual perception and adopted greater responsibility for student growth.

As to the second and third research questions, which sought to investigate the possible differences among the performance of different groups of learning styles and multiple intelligences, and substantiated the significant difference in this respect, no support or counterevidence was encountered within the previous body of literature, mainly owing to the fact that the researchers were not able to find any relevant research addressing the issue of learner differences compliant with the perspective taken in the current study.

6. Pedagogical implications of the Study

The findings of this study are thought to be of great importance for the teachers who are interested in the kind of instruction which caters for the varying needs of different learners. With its insights concerning the significance of taking note of learner differences, the current study can act as a source of great encouragement for the teachers to come into terms with the basic tenets of differentiated instruction. The obtained findings of the study further help teachers, researchers, and educationalists gain a better grasp of the paramount of differentiation in pedagogy and its varied positive impacts on the process of learning. Thus, the present study is thought to add to the body of available literature regarding the philosophy behind the creation and implementation of a differentiated classroom. Although there are many challenges that exist in this approach to teaching, it is absolutely a worthwhile endeavor. Finally, the result of the current research can be used in different academic/educational arenas such as private sector English language Institutes, ministry of education and higher education.

7. Concluding Remarks

The current study applied Differentiated Instruction to teaching vocabulary in mixed ability classes with a focus on the learners' learning styles and multiple intelligences, and, by way of doing so, investigated the effect of differentiated instruction on learners' vocabulary learning. As far as the difference between the two kinds of instruction, i.e. differentiated and traditional, are concerned, the results indicated that the class in which differentiated instruction was conducted, had a significantly better performance on the post-test and consequently it was concluded that the application of differentiated instruction had a positive effect on the process of learning. Furthermore, with regard to the second and third research questions, which probed the viable differences among different groups of learners possessing different learning styles and multiple intelligences, significant differences were found to be at work. Finally, another intriguing piece of finding gained in the current study was the observation that participants in the experimental group felt more comfortable and confident with regard to their capability for achievement; in other words, differentiated instruction and having students work in small groups really helped them become more empowered learners.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MULTILINGUALISM AND IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

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Abstract

The current study aimed at describing the possible effect of multilingualism on multiple intelligences (mi) of English as foreign language (EFL) learners. Originally, a total of 162 EFL learners, including both males and females, from Urmia, Kerman, and Tabriz universities participated in this study. However, since the participants' age, socio-economic status, linguistic background and English language proficiency were to be held constant, this number was reduced to 76 intermediate EFL learners. The participants, who were within the age range of 18-26, consisted of 18 monolinguals, 43 bilinguals and 15 trilinguals. Data was collected through: (a) a two-part questionnaire composed of background information and multiple intelligence profile, and (b) an adapted version of the first certificate in English test used for homogeneity purposes. Results of a set of two-way ANOVAs statistical test revealed a significant effect of linguistic background on the mi profile of the participants. This effect, as the results of post-hoc tukey's hsd multiple comparisons demonstrated, was in favor of multilinguals especially trilinguals who reported higher level of mi. In addition, findings indicated no significant interaction between linguistic background and gender of the participants in terms of their mi. The findings are discussed in relation to effective EFL instruction especially to multilinguals in multilingual contexts.

Key words: multilingualism, monolinguals, bilinguals, trilinguals, multiple intelligences, Iranian EFL learners

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

As the world becomes more interconnected, it is increasingly apparent that multilingualism is the rule and not exception (Bialystok, Craik, Green & Gollan, 2009). But what is multilingualism? Cenoz (2009, p.2) maintains, "Multilingualism refers to the acquisition, knowledge or use of several languages by individuals or by language communities in a specific geographical area".

Moreover, there are different reasons for which an individual becomes bilingual or multilingual. They include: education, job opportunities, socioeconomic progress, immigration, temporary residence, territorial expansion, imperialist, and political unions, or because he has to keep up to date with advances in the areas of science and technology. Therefore, as Bialystok et al., (2009) pointed out there are different set of social, cognitive, and personal factors playing a role in these circumstances and there is no doubt that these factors determine any potential effect of multilingualism.

Multilingualism can be studied from different perspectives in linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and education. This diversity of fields brings about a problem; that is, when we come to provide a fixed and unanimous definition of multi/bilingualism, we find it as a difficult undertaking. But, since the main concern of this study was the individual him/herself rather than language, psychology has more to say. Within a cognitive perspective, there are two main positions on who is a real multilingual. In one hand, Bloomfield (1933) sees the native-like control of languages available to the speaker as the criteria for calling someone a multilingual speaker. On the other hand, McNamara (1967) proposes that anyone who possess a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in a language other than his mother tongue is a candidate to be called multilingual speaker. However, for the purpose of this study bi/multilingualism is defined as: a sociolinguistic and psychological phenomenon which can happen both in individual and societal level in which an additional language other than mother tongue is added to one's linguistic repertoire. And, a bi/multilingual individual is someone who has passed threshold level in all languages in his linguistic repertoire and has the ability to use them for his or her every day needs.

In the process of becoming multilingual, various factors of age, gender, intelligence, aptitude, and social contexts contribute a lot, but according to Edwards (2003, p.67), "of all of the connections made between bilingualism and other features of individual life, none is more central or contentious than the presumed link between bilingualism and intelligence" which was the main focus in the present investigation.

On the other hand, one of the abundantly reported variables in the literature is intelligence. Indeed, since long ago, scholars have been interested to identify the kind of relation existing between multilingualism and intelligence. Nonetheless, the concept of intelligence has received various and sometimes contradictory interpretations in different times and has been one of the most difficult concepts to define (even now there is no unanimous definition of it).

The theory of multiple intelligences was put forwarded by Howard Gardner in 1983 in his very famous book entitled "The Frames of Mind" as a reaction to intelligence tests which claimed that an individual's IQ (Intelligence Quotient) can be measured numerically. Gardner (1983) says that IQ tests focus only on linguistic, mathematical-logical, and somehow on spatial intelligences, but there are more than these limited

types of intelligence available for each individual. Gardner counts at least 8 separate types of such intelligences. They are: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist intelligences.

Individuals are born with a set of genetically predisposed skills, which can develop as the result of social and educational influences. On the other hand, intelligence does not evolve on its own and is learned depending on social, cultural, educational, and familial experiences (Stanciu, Orban & Bocoş, 2011). Thus, it can be argued that learning an additional language may affect one's intelligences profile because as Bialystok and Craik (2010, p.3) state, "it is an obvious fact that human cognitive processes heavily depend on linguistic abilities". In other words, one's intelligence may vary depending on the number of languages in his linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, learning additional language provides more novel experiences for the speaker because to use Bialystok's (as cited in Sağın-Şimşek & Cedden, 2011) terms, experience has a powerful effect on cognitive performance and brain organization and structure. More confirming evidences to this claim come from a number of studies like Bialystok, Craik, Klein, and Viswanathan (2004) and Bialystok and Martin (2004) in which they propose that learning, speaking, and using two languages may affect fundamental aspects of cognitive development.

With a quest for finding the possible relationship between intelligence and multilingualism, numerous studies have been conducted in various contexts among different groups of multilinguals. In short, however, almost no general statements are warranted by research on the effect of bilingualism on the intelligence, and almost in every case the findings of research are either contracted by other research or can be questioned on methodological grounds (Edwards, 2003).

1.2 Statement of the problem

With the rapidly developing globalization, no one can underestimate the importance of being equipped with one or more world languages other than our mother tongue. Because now multilingualism is so prevalent that it no more can be given peripheral attention. Furthermore, the issue of multilingualism becomes more salient when it is discussed with relation to multilingual societies where people need more languages for their daily purposes. Iran is an obvious example of such societies in which several languages like Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Lori, etc. coexist-with a lingua franca, that is, Persian, used in education, mass media, and formal correspondences.

To sum up, Iran is a multilingual country with different groups of monolingual, bilingual, trilingual, and even quadrilinguals. Thus, this variety in population needs careful studies to examine various aspects of their sociological, psychological, and cognitive issues. The current study shoulders the responsibility of providing new insights on cognitive aspects of these multilinguals.

1.3 Significance of the study

Iran as a multilingual country enjoys wide diversity in terms of languages spoken in its different regions. And, a noticeable part of the multilingual population of Iran is composed of language learners who acquire at least one foreign language (in most cases, English) through formal instructions at schools, institutes and universities. Thus, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners are the important part of the issue of multilingualism in Iran that are required to be studied in their own particular place in the process of learning language. Since postmodernism era onward, learners themselves have become the focus of attention in the acquisition of language and individual values and differences were recognized and respected. In this respect, determining factors like age, proficiency, attitude, anxiety, etc. of the learners in acquisition have attracted researches. Generally speaking, individual differences now have an important position in every teaching/learning context. Furthermore, one of the individual differences that are believed to moderate language acquisition process is intelligence. According to Bialystok and Craik (2010, p.3) "it is an obvious fact that human cognitive processes are heavily dependent on linguistic ability." Intelligence issues have always received a lot of attention in teaching and learning matters and have always been one of the most controversial issues.

Findings of the current study may present new insights about the nature of multilingualism in this area of study. Researchers might expand their knowledge on both domains of multilingualism and multiple intelligences and this may, in turn, trigger novel ideas for further research in this area and other similar areas.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may provide instructors and teachers with insights about multilingual learners and remind them that all the learners will not have a similar starting point for learning English. Therefore, the teachers should take into considerations those differences in planning their teaching methods and materials. Quipping with the insights that teaching-learning process can influence the development of learners intelligences, the teachers can provide the learners with better situations for learning a new language.

The results also can be helpful for learners themselves. It can familiarize learners more with their talents and intelligences. And, this familiarity with strengths and weaknesses, in turn, might give learners confidence to start taking chances and risks in all area of their lives including language learning.

1.4 Empirical issues on the relationship between multilingualism and intelligence:

In general, the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence can best be described in three distinct periods: 1) the period of detrimental effects; 2) the period of neutral effects; and 3) the period of positive effects.

The literature on negative consequences of bilingualism on mental development can be traced back to social concerns of the increase in the number of immigrants from Europe to North America in the late 19th century (Bialystok, 2010). The social

scientists and educators reflected the concern of the public that these newcomers were not adapting well into mainstream. Consequently, these anxieties created very negative and harsh attitudes towards bilingualism. For example, Baker (2001) quoted from Isaac (1976) that when children happened to speak in two languages, they were immediately asked to wash their mouths with soap and water.

Prior to the 1960s researchers were primarily concerned with cognitive and academic performance of bilingual subjects as judged against their monolingual peers and the findings generally portrayed bilingualism as a handicap (see Darcy, 1953 and Saer, 1923 for more details). Saer (1923), for example, comparing performances of four groups of rural monolingual, rural bilingual, urban monolingual and urban bilingual on Stanford-Binet tests, rhythm, vocabulary, and composition tests, strongly drew conclusion that bilingualism caused a lower intelligence. In the same vein, Diaz (1983) pointed out that English speaking monolinguals were at definite advantage in all achievement and IQ variables when compared to usually-foreign-speaking bilinguals.

However, as Baker (2001) points out those studies had a number of serious defects: definition of intelligence, language of testing, analysis, classification, generalization, context, and matched groups all were more or less faulty.

Following or sometimes simultaneously with this general trend of finding negative effect of multilingualism there were studies that reported a neutral effect of multilingualism on intelligence. For instance, in a research in the United States, Pinter and Arsenian (1937) found a zero correlation between Yiddish-English bilinguals and monolinguals in terms of their performances in both verbal and non-verbal IQ tests. Or, in 1959 in Wales, Jones selected 2500 children controlled on their socioeconomic status within the age range of 10 to 11 and found that monolinguals and bilinguals did not differ significantly in non-verbal IQ so long as parental occupation was taken into account (Baker, 2001). Furthermore, in a more recent research, Bialystok, Craik, and Luk (2008) found no significant difference between young adult bilinguals and monolinguals' performances on the Corsi task, a kind of working memory task. In line with their findings, Hutchinson (2010) compared the performance of English monolingual children and German-English children aged 3 to 6 years old, on short-term memory, working memory, inhibition, cognitive flexibility, and verbal ability tasks. Having analyzed the results, Hutchinson observed no significant difference among them, even when level of language proficiency was taken into account.

However, what most think as the turning point in the history of the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence came through a Canadian research by Peal and Lambert (1962). They concluded that bilingualism provided greater mental flexibility; the ability to think more abstractly, more independently of words; and concept formation. They theorized that the ability to code-switch provides bilinguals with an additional mental flexibility when solving cognitive tasks. The experience of

having two ways to describe the world gave bilinguals the basis for understanding that many things could be seen in two ways, leading to more flexible approach to perception and interaction. Peal and Lambert (1962) attributed the negative findings of early studies to the failure of researchers to differentiate 'pseudo-bilinguals' from truly (balanced) bilinguals. Later on, Lambert (1975) attributed the positive influences of bilingualism to additive context and the negative influences to subtractive bilingualism. Thus as can be seen here, context in which bilingualism occurs (whether bilinguals are from majority group or minority) is a determining factor in cognitive outcomes

Following the footsteps of Peal and Lambert (1962), the number of studies that reported advantages for bilinguals compared to monolinguals, increased a lot (for example, Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Ben-Zeev, 1977).

Despite the consistent positive findings reported after 1962, the results are sometimes looked at suspiciously because of some methodological problems inherited. For example, bilingual and monolingual were not randomly selected; socioeconomic, cultural, educational, and ethnic variables were not controlled strictly.

With an attempt to mitigate the problems with earlier studies, more studies were launched recently to investigate the relationship between intelligence and learning additional languages. They also continued to support the positive effect of bilingualism on the cognitive development. For instance, it has been reported that bilingual children demonstrated a large advantage over comparable monolinguals on the number of executive tasks including Dimensional-Change-Card Sort tasks and in solving problems that require controlling attention (Bialystok & Martin, 2004); seeing alternative images in ambiguous figures (Bialystok & Shapero, 2005); doing conflict tasks such as Simon and Flanker tasks faster (Bialystok, Craik, Klein & Viswanathen, 2004; Bialystok, 2006). Bilingualism was also found that has led to exhibition of better performance in nonverbal control tasks (Bialystok & Shapero, 2005); better demonstration in role switching tasks (Bialystok & Martin, 2004); faster development of executive control (Bialystok, 2003; Carlson and Meltzoff, 2008); superiority on creativity tasks (Khurkharin , 2010); and delaying onset of symptom of dementia (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007).

Having reviewed multiple studies on the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive development it seems that speaking two or more languages to be like a double-edged sword. In one hand, bilinguals suffer a lower proficiency in their languages and this leads to low performance on verbal tasks. On the other hand, bilinguals exhibit better performance on nonverbal cognitive tasks involving executive control and inhibition of irrelevant information. Thus, there are both advantages and disadvantages for learning an additional language in terms of intellectual growth. To justify this claim, if we relate linguistic knowledge to linguistic intelligence of Gardner's MI theory, it would be concluded that bilinguals' linguistic intelligence is less developed than that of monolinguals and this is a

disadvantage for bilingual in terms of intellectual growth. On the other hand, since most nonverbal cognitive tasks require reasoning and spatial ability it might be tempting to match them to logical-mathematical and spatial intelligences of Gardner's MI theory. In this case, it can be argued that bilinguals profile on these two types of intelligence should exhibit superiority over monolinguals. All these claims, however, require further empirical findings from different contexts and various groups of bilinguals.

The first thorough review of studies investigating effect of bilingualism on mathematical ability (a sub-ability of logical-mathematical intelligence) was assembled and reported by Macnamara (as cited in Bialystok, 2003). Macnamara surveyed different research studies and came to this conclusion that there was no evidence that bilingualism handicapped children's computational ability for mechanical arithmetic. On the other hand, Clarkson (1992) found that bilingual students competent in both of their languages scored significantly higher on two different types of mathematical tests compared to their counterparts who had low competence in their languages.

Regarding spatial ability, McLeay (2003) compared 11 balanced bilingual Welsh/English speakers with 30 monolingual English speakers on a series of spatial test items and reported that bilinguals performed the tasks more quickly than monolinguals. Therefore, it makes sense if we draw conclusion that bilinguals might show advantages on spatial intelligence over monolinguals.

Based on reviewed studies in this part, it can be hypothesized that bilingual's advantages in cognitive abilities are also present for trilinguals. It might be the case if we assume that trilinguals have even more cognitive superiority compared to bilinguals and monolinguals; but this claim requires sufficient advocating documents. Unfortunately such documents are rare. In one such documents, Bialystok et al., (2009) reported a study in which Kavé, Eyal, Shorek, and Cohen-Mansfield (2008) compared general cognitive level in a large sample of older adults living in Israel as a function of how many languages they spoke (there were no monolingual in the group). They reported significantly higher maintenance of cognitive status in older age in trilinguals than in bilinguals, and even greater maintenance by multilinguals who spoke four or more languages than by trilinguals

Additionally, in a recent study, Biedroń (2011) investigated the role of verbal IQ, performance IQ and working memory in 44 accomplished multilingual foreign language learners in Poland. From these 44 participants, 14 participants were highly advanced in one foreign language, 19 in two languages, 8 in three, 2 in four, and 1 in five languages. In order to test IQ and working memory, two instruments were used in the study: the Wechsler Intelligence Scale and the Polish Reading Span (as a working memory test). Intelligence was reported to be in favor of the accomplished multilinguals over the normal Polish population.

Review of the related literature clearly depicted that various studies so far have been devoted to investigating the relationship between bilingualism, intelligence and cognitive functioning. And, the patterns of findings in different periods have been different and sometimes contradictory. Regardless of failure in providing certain findings without methodological problems, one important task that earlier studies have failed to do is the selection of samples that are true representative of multilingual population. Because, in most of the earlier studies only two groups of multilinguals (monolingual and bilingual) have been selected as the target of the studies; therefore, issues related to trilinguals and other multilinguals (those with more than two languages) have been addressed very little. Actually, only in recent years, we witness a growing tendency among scholars to do so. Unfortunately, the performances of these neglected groups (multilinguals with more than two languages) have been predicted based on the research on monolingual and bilingual groups. Thus, the results cannot be reliable as now we know that, in spite of some similarities between these groups there are considerable differences. Another point worth mentioning regarding earlier studies is that even in their selected samples they suffer serious problems. Mostly, only balanced bilinguals have been selected as the representative of bilingual population to be compared with monolinguals and then obtained results have been generalized to whole bilinguals. Therefore, one rightly can cast a doubtful look on this generalization; because, we, by no means can claim that all the bilinguals are balanced ones. Indeed, the review of the literature clearly shows that even those who have minimal competence in a language other than their mother tongues can be called bilingual. Furthermore, large percentage of earlier studies have been conducted in additive context in which second language is developed without putting the first language in danger of extinction. Thus, not more is known about subtractive contexts, this study expands research into this rarely-touched category. Moreover, speakers of European languages have formed the samples in most cases; hence, one might wonder whether the results for such languages will be replicated with non-European languages such as Persian and Kurdish or not. Another identified gap in the literature puts forward the idea that one's intelligence is not composed only of linguistic, arithmetic, and spatial abilities. In the earlier studies, tasks devised to measure a person's cognitive ability and intellectual growth only assessed these three abilities and nothing more. In other words, since through the proposal of Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, we accepted that there are at least eight types of intelligences within every individual; thus, what is assessed via those tasks administered in the earlier studies reveals only a small fraction of one's intelligence profile. As a consequence, if one group outperforms the other group in those tasks, we cannot and should not claim that members of that group are more intelligent than those of other group; because, there are different ways to be intelligence and mere superiority on two or three sub-categories of intelligence should not tempt us to give one group the label of intelligent and not for the other group. In general, these, to the best knowledge of the author, were gaps identified in the related literature.

But how did the current study try to fill these gaps? First of all, it should be clarified that through conducting only one study one cannot fill such a gap. However, in this study a lot of attempts exerted to mitigate the existing problems for the earlier studies. Particularly, the current study tried to demonstrate these advancements in this area: first, in addition to two always present groups (monolingual, & bilingual) in these kinds of studies, it added trilinguals to its sample; second, the selected multilinguals were not necessarily balanced ones; third, the selected sample were using non-European languages (such as Azeri, Persian, Kurdish); forth, it was tried to develop control over influencing factors of age, SES, and proficiency level; fifth, learners' whole intelligence profiles were preferred to be compared to obtain more generalizable results; and finally, the selected context for the purpose of this study was a rarely touched one.

In short, this study pursued the goal of investigating whether with an increase in the number of languages an individual knows, his or her MI profile alters significantly, correspondingly, or not.

Therefore, this study was initiated with the following objectives: 1) alleviating the shortcomings of the previously-conducted studies; 2) compensating for the lack of studies in the realm of multilingualism and intelligence in EFL context of Iran; and 3) broadening the existing literature by adding multiple intelligences to this realm.

1.5 Research questions and hypotheses

To meet the objectives stated above, the following research questions were proposed for this study:

1. Is there any significant difference among Iranian EFL learners with different linguistic backgrounds (monolinguals, bilinguals, trilinguals) in terms of their MI profiles?
2. Does gender moderate the relationship between multilingualism and multiple intelligence profile significantly?

Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant difference among Iranian EFL learners with different linguistic backgrounds (i.e. monolinguals, bilingual, and trilinguals) in terms of their MI profiles.
2. Gender does not moderate the relationship between multilingualism and multiple intelligence types significantly.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

Originally, the participants were 162 Iranian EFL learners including both males and females, doing their degrees in state universities of Urmia and Kerman and Azad university of Tabriz. Bearing this point in mind that age can contribute to the relationship between intelligence and multilingualism, we, a priori, set the age range of 18-26 for this study; as a result, 34 of the learners were put aside due to the fact that they did not fit this pre-specified range. On the other hand, since it had been decided that the participants were to be selected among monolinguals, bilinguals and trilinguals, 2 more participants were deleted from the list because they reported the knowledge of more than three languages (they reported to be quadrilingual). Furthermore, to homogenize the participants in terms of English proficiency, we consulted the results of the FCE test as well as data emerging from the last section of the background information questionnaire. Consequently, 16 learners were deleted from our sample. In attempt to control the SES, only participants who demonstrated their parents' educational attainment higher (or at least equal to) than junior high school were left to form the final sample. Thirty four more participants were, accordingly, filtered out of the final sample. Of the final sample that had been reduced to 76 EFL learners, as Table 3.1 demonstrates, 18 were monolinguals (7 males and 11 females), 43 bilinguals (14males and 29 females), and 15 trilinguals (5 males and 10 females).

2.2 Instruments

In order to examine the research questions and hypotheses, three major kinds of information were needed: participants' demographic and linguistic background information along with their MI profiles scores. To this purpose, a two-part questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed. Moreover, to have homogenous groups of EFL learners in terms of their general English proficiency, we applied an adapted version of the FCE test (Appendix B).

The questionnaire had two major parts. The first part included 17 questions that aimed at eliciting information on participants' age, gender, parents' educational attainment, their L1, L2 and L3, their age at the time of acquiring each language, the specific ways of acquiring the languages, their abilities in using the languages known to them, their English language experience, and finally their self-marked English proficiency.

Since in every study variables, those apart from the main ones, must be controlled in order for the researcher be able to attribute the effect or the difference found to the variables under investigation, in this study age, gender, SES, the number of languages known to the participants, and their English language proficiency were attempted to be controlled via the questionnaire.

Following the first part of the questionnaire, the second part aimed at exploring participants' MI profiles. Forty Likert-type items targeting eight intelligence types of Gardner's MI theory -for each type there were five items- were provided for the participants to be answered on this 5-point scale, that is, the participants should read

each sentence and then decide which number, ranging from strongly disagree (number 1) to strongly agree (number 5), can best describe them. For the purpose of this study, the theoretical range of MI profiles was from 40 to 200. Predictably, these two extreme scores were reported by no one.

Apart from including a question (i.e., the question number 17) for checking English proficiency, a more valid proficiency test was felt necessary in order to have homogenous groups of participants. In this regard, the third paper of the FCE test, namely, Use of English, was selected. FCE is an intermediate/upper intermediate-level test developed by Cambridge University Examination Center. It encompasses five papers: reading, writing, use of English, listening, and speaking. Each paper, in turn, consists of some sub-parts. In this study, only Use of English paper was decided to be used because, firstly it was agreed upon that this paper includes sections that can yield a dependable estimation of one's proficiency level. Secondly, for administering other papers (i.e., listening, speaking & writing), there were a lot of practicality problems. For example, administering listening and speaking papers of the test for a group of 160 participants required enough facilities, space and time that were beyond the capability of the researcher. Furthermore, it was decided that including the writing paper in the test would make it too long to be answered by the participants; therefore, the writing paper of the original test was also deleted. Therefore, the final data collection tool included only one paper (Use of English) with four sub-parts. The whole test encompassed 42 items each weighting equally while being scored.

2.3 Procedure

Employing questionnaires as data collection tools, researchers need to pilot them to make sure about their reliability and validity. In the case of present investigation, there was no need to pilot the questionnaire since both sections of the questionnaire had been piloted by other researchers earlier. Modirkhamene (2011) piloted the first part of the questionnaire (background information) with a similar sample; and Bagherian-Azhiri's (2012) did the same thing for the second part (multiple intelligence profile) and reported that the Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.73. For the purpose of this study the Persian translation of MI inventory, developed and validated by Bagherian-Azhiri (2012) was utilized by the researcher to avoid any complication which might arise from language proficiency deficiency of some of the participants. On the other hand, FCE test is a valid and reliable general English test developed by Cambridge University that is use world widely for work and study purposes. Students having an intermediate (B1) or upper-intermediate (B2) level of English are appropriate candidates to this test.

Having adapted the questionnaire and the FCE paper and making sure about their reliability and validity, the researcher distributed the questionnaire and proficiency tests among male and female learners of English in Urmia state university and Azad university of Tabriz. As regards the sampling procedures, the convenient sampling

method was used in this study. A brief account of the administration procedure is presented below.

First, the participants were orally informed about the aim of the study and were assured that their information would be used just for research purposes. Participants were asked to read each part carefully and give honest answers to what was needed. In cases of misunderstanding more instructions were provided by the researcher. Since the time required for answering both questionnaire and the FCE test was maximum 70 minutes, it was decided to administer both of them simultaneously. For keeping the participants lively during answering the questionnaire and the following FCE paper, some refreshments were distributed among them lest tiredness might have a negative impact on their performances.

Further, since there were not enough number of Persian monolingual EFL learners in the universities of Tabriz and Urmia, the researcher decided that to conduct part of the study in a Persian-speaking area of Iran. Therefore, the instruments were sent to a research-assistant in Kerman via e-mail to conduct part of the study at universities there. The assistant researcher himself, an MA student, was familiar with data collection process. However, he was provided with some guidelines and information about the study and its specific aims in order to administer the study properly.

When all data was gathered through the questionnaire and the test, in order to reduce the possibility of the errors in scoring process of the FCE test and calculating participants' MI scores, the researcher marked each questionnaire and test two times although both the FCE test and the questionnaire yielded objective data on which the subjectivity of the rater could not exert any influence.

To obtain more homogenous data, four types of screening were carried out. In the first place, all the participants whose ages were out of the predetermined age range were put aside. Then, the participants who had identified themselves as the speakers of more than three languages were deleted. In order to have homogenous groups of participants in terms of English proficiency, the mean and standard deviation of the participants' scores on the FCE paper were calculated. Consequently, those participants with scores standing between the mean and one standard deviation above (+1SD) or below (-1SD) the mean were selected as the final sample. Specifically stated, those participants whose scores were within the range of 14.68 to 25.54 were chosen as the final sample, and those whose scores were either below 14.68 or above 25.54 were put aside from the main analysis. Finally, the resulted sample was screened once more for SES (only participants who reported their parents' educational attainment as junior high school or higher were left). At last, 76 participants were identified as the final sample of the study.

2.4 Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 16) was employed to analyze the data. Assigning the significance level of 0.05, two-way Analysis of

Variance (2-way ANOVA) was used to examine the effect of linguistic background at three levels (monolingualism, bilingualism, and trilingualism) on MI profiles of the participants. Additionally, the effect of gender as a moderator variable was tested in relation to the effect of language learning experience on participants' multiple intelligence profiles ($p < .05$)

3. Results:

3.1 Testing research hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, each questionnaire was analyzed carefully by the researchers and the MI score was obtained for each participants.

Table 4.1 illustrates descriptive statistics of participants' responses to MI questionnaire.

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics: MI Scores of All Groups

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Monolinguals	Male	118.14	25.314	7
	Female	124.09	18.212	11
	Total	121.78	20.741	18
Bilinguals	Male	135.93	14.563	14
	Female	138.34	12.990	29
	Total	137.56	13.396	43
Trilingual	Male	142.20	23.531	5
	Female	139.10	15.466	10
	Total	140.13	17.728	15
Total	Male	132.35	20.875	26
	Female	135.36	15.642	50
	Total	134.33	17.527	76

Note. Dependent variable = MI scores

A glance through Table 4.1 reveals that trilinguals reported higher MI ($M = 140.13$) compared with bilinguals ($M = 137.56$) and monolinguals ($M = 121.78$). Furthermore, the total comparison of means across gender demonstrated that female participants ($M = 135.36$) scored higher MI profile compared to their male counterparts ($M = 132.35$). Although these statistics show that there are differences among males and females monolinguals, bilinguals and trilinguals in terms of their reported MI scores, the conclusions cannot be drawn for certain that whether the differences are significant or not; therefore, the administration of further statistical tests are felt necessary.

Considering gender and linguistic background with three levels (monolinguals, bilinguals & trilinguals) as two categorical independent variables and MI as one continuous dependent variable, we employed two-way ANOVA for analyzing the significance of the differences. In fact, two-way ANOVA simultaneously tests effect of each of independent variables (here, linguistic background & gender) on the dependent variable (here, MI scores) and also identifies any interaction effect. This is what the current study aimed to find. The administration of this statistical analysis yielded the following results that are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

The Results of Two-way ANOVA

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4027.830 ^a	5	805.566	2.966	.017
Intercept	995026.727	1	995026.727		.000
				3663.777	
Linguistic background	3798.636	2	1899.318	6.993	.002
Gender	43.323	1	43.323	.160	.691
Linguistic background*	154.159	2	77.079	.284	.754
Gender					
Error	19010.947	70	271.585		
Total	1394403.000	76			
Corrected Total	23038.776	75			

Note. Dependent variable = MI

Linguistic background: monolinguals, bilinguals, and trilinguals

^aR Squared = .175 (Adjusted R Squared = .116)

The interaction effect between gender and linguistic background was not statistically significant, $F(2, 70) = .28, p = .75$. This indicates that there was no significant difference in the effect of linguistic background on MI scores for males and females. But, there was a statistically significant main effect for linguistic background, $F(2, 70) = 6.99, p = .002$. It means that monolingual, bilingual and trilinguals' MI scores differed significantly and since the mean of trilinguals was the highest ($M = 140.13$) among all the groups, it can be concluded that this difference is in favor of trilinguals. Now, one can safely reject the first null hypothesis that predicted no significant difference among Iranian EFL learners with different linguistic backgrounds (i.e., monolinguals, bilingual, and trilinguals) in terms of their MI profiles.

As it is evident from above table, among the independent variables, only linguistic background has reached the significance level while no significant difference was reported for gender, the second independent variable, $F(1, 70) = .160, p = .691$. It means that males and females do not differ significantly in terms of MI scores. Similarly, as it was argued earlier the interaction between linguistic background and gender failed to reach significant level. This interaction can be best described through Figure 4.1.

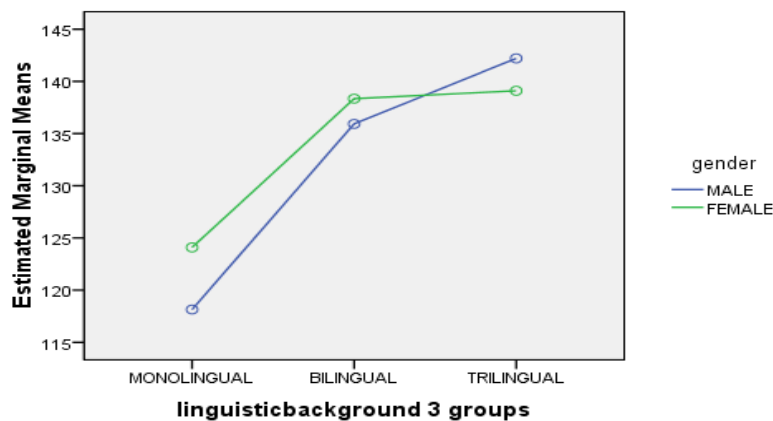


Figure 4.1 Estimated Marginal Means of MI

Although it was found that monolinguals, bilinguals, and trilinguals differed significantly in terms of their MI scores, it was not known where those differences occur: were monolinguals different from bilinguals; were bilinguals different from trilinguals, and were monolinguals different from trilinguals? To investigate these

questions, post-hoc tests were needed to be conducted. Therefore, Tukey HSD as the post-hoc test was run. The results of this test are illustrated through Table 4.3.

As it is evident from Table 4.1, Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the monolinguals ($M = 121.78$, $SD = 20.74$) was significantly different from both bilinguals ($M = 137.56$, $SD = 13.40$) and trilinguals ($M = 140.13$, $SD = 17.73$). However, the mean score for bilinguals was found not to be significantly different from trilinguals'. Therefore, it can be interpreted that monolinguals reported significantly lower MI profile compared to both bilinguals and trilinguals, but, no significant difference was observed between the MI scores of bilinguals and that of trilinguals.

Table 4.3

Multiple Comparisons

Linguistic background		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Monolinguals	Bilinguals	-15.78*	4.626	.003	-26.86	-4.70
	Trilinguals	-18.36*	5.761	.006	-32.15	-4.56
Bilinguals	Monolinguals	15.78*	4.626	.003	4.70	26.86
	Trilinguals	-2.58	4.942	.861	-14.41	9.26
Trilinguals	Monolinguals	18.36*	5.761	.006	4.56	32.15
	Bilinguals	2.58	4.942	.861	-9.26	14.41

Note. The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 271.585

* $p < .05$

4. Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are discussed. Each research question is addressed individually followed by a general discussion on the findings.

Research Question One

In research question one; differences in MI profile scores obtained by Iranian EFL learners from different linguistic backgrounds (i.e., monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual) were explored. Taking into account the MI profiles mean scores obtained by the participants, significant differences favoring trilinguals were noted. The higher mean scores obtained by the multilinguals (both bilinguals and trilinguals) compared to monolinguals support the proposal that multilinguals, in total, demonstrate higher scores in intelligences proposed through the MI theory. Although this study was somehow unique in comparing multilinguals in terms of their MI profiles as a whole, its results are in line with previous findings in which better performances in categories of intelligence like mathematical and spatial

abilities were reported for bilinguals compared to monolinguals (Clarkson, 1992 and McLeay, 2003).

In the current study, although trilinguals obtained higher MI score ($M = 140.13$) when compared to that of bilinguals' ($M = 37.56$), this difference was not found to be significant at $p < .05$. Simultaneously, significant differences were reported between trilinguals' MI scores and monolinguals'. This is in line with Kavé, Eyal, Shorek, and Cohen-Mansfield (as cited in Bialystok et. al., 2009) reported significantly higher maintenance of cognitive status in older age in trilinguals than in bilinguals, and even greater maintenance by multilinguals who spoke four or more languages than by trilinguals.

But, why multilinguals exhibit superiority over monolinguals in cognitive tasks, as reported in previous findings, and even have better perception of them in terms of multiple intelligences, as shown through this study? There are certain hypotheses that can justify this superiority. Peal and Lambert (1962), for instance, claimed that the ability to code-switch provides bilinguals with an additional mental flexibility when solving cognitive tasks. The experience of having two or more ways to describe the world give bi/multilinguals the basis for understanding that many things could be seen in two or more ways, leading to more flexible approach to perception. In other words, bi/multilinguals have two or more linguistic systems and two or more names for things. This capability, in turn, helps them to see things from different perspectives. Therefore, while thinking in one language to solve a problem when blocked they switch to another language. This habit may develop their cognitive abilities. Similarly, Ben-Zeev (1977) hypothesized that mutual interference between languages forces bilinguals to adopt strategies that accelerate cognitive development. Ben-Zeev (1977) found that bilinguals showed higher cognitive flexibility in symbol substitution and verbal transformation tasks. She argues that in order to avoid linguistic interference bilinguals must develop a greater awareness and sensitivity to linguistic cues. And, this metalinguistic awareness leads to greater cognitive development in general and intellectual growth in particular; because "intelligences development is positively impacted by metalinguistic awareness" (Crosby & Prescod, 2009, p.5). Moreover, Cummins (1976) maintains that this superiority can take ground on the fact that bilinguals may have a wider and more varied range of experiences than monolinguals because they operate within two languages or probably in two cultures as well. Bilingualism gives individuals the ability to communicate with people they would otherwise not have the chance to know. It opens the door to other cultures. Since two languages are both active for bilinguals, Bialystok (2007) has shown that experience of controlling attention to two languages enhances the development of executive control processes in bilinguals. In other words, bilinguals enjoy an ability to control the use of their knowledge while performing tasks in which distracting information should be inhibited. Thus, it can be concluded that bilingualism accelerates the development of a general cognitive function concerned with attention and inhibition.

Research Question Two

The second question was used to examine whether gender moderates the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' linguistic background and their obtained MI scores based on the self-marked MI profile or not. Although females estimated their total MI profiles ($M = 135.36$) higher than their males counterparts ($M = 132.35$), no significant differences were found between males and females and their influence on the interaction between linguistic background and MI scores, as hypothesized. But, these findings are not in complete agreement with earlier studies' outcomes. For example, in 2005, Furnham and Chamorro-Permuzic did an investigation on 217 participants from Argentina to find out how they estimated their own MI. The data showed that, men's overall MI estimates were higher than women. Men also reported to have higher estimates on mathematical and spatial intelligence.

More contradictory outcomes are reported by Tirri and Nokelainen (2008) who presented latest version of the Multiple Intelligences Profiling Questionnaire (MIPQ III), a questionnaire based on Gardner's MI theory, to 183 Finnish preadolescent and 227 adults. After analyzing data, they came to this conclusion that males ($N = 279$) had higher self-rated logical-mathematical intelligence than females ($N = 128$, 3 missing); on the contrary, females estimated their linguistic abilities higher than the males.

One justification for these discrepancies is that the difference found between this study and earlier studies might be interpreted in the difference of the contexts for these studies. Put it simply, it seems that the context in which participants live has important role in one's intellectual growth and even in one's self-image of his or her intelligences. For instance, Beloff (as cited in Furnham & Chamorro-Permuzic, 2005) interprets her findings in favor of female Scottish students in this way that females are brought up with much emphasis on humility and this can result in poor self perception of intelligence compared to males.

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Appendix A: The two-part questionnaire

Dear respondent,

The present study is about the relationship between multilingualism and multiple intelligence profiles of Iranian EFL learners. The following questionnaire proceeds in two major parts: 1) multilingualism questionnaire, 2) multiple intelligences questionnaire. Please read all the questions carefully and answer them truthfully. The researcher assures you that all the information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes. The researcher wishes to sincerely thank you in advance for your kind co-operation. The time and effort you spend in this regard are very much appreciated.

Part 1

Instructions: Please check and indicate the relevant responses to the items below; elaborate on your responses, where required.

1. Student number (optional):
2. Age:
3. Gender: male female
4. Parental educational attainment:
Father: a. illiterate b. elementary c. Junior high school
 d. high school e. university degrees (specify) f. other (specify)
Mother: a. illiterate b. elementary c. Junior high school
 d. high school e. university degrees (specify) f. other (specify)
5. What is your first language?
a. Turkish b. Kurdish c. Persian d. Others (specify)
.....
6. What is your second language and in what age did you learn it?
.....
7. How did you learn your second language?
a. in the family b. in the community c. at school d. other ways (specify)
.....
8. Can you produce complete, meaningful utterances in your second language?
a. Yes b. No
9. What is your third language and in what age did you learn it?
.....
10. How did you learn your third language?
a. in the family b. in the community c. at school d. other ways (specify)
.....
11. Can you produce complete, meaningful utterances in your third language?
a. Yes b. No
12. What language do you consider to be your dominant language?
.....
13. Have you always used the languages you know in parallel as means of communication?(explain)
.....

14. Please indicate below, in order of mastery, all the languages you are capable of using (these may include Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, English, French, or any other language). Also check (✓) the relevant skills you possess in each of the languages indicated.

	Language(s)	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

15. Indicate the relevant responses to the items below, using a tick (✓). There may be more than one choice.

	Turkish	Kurdish	Persian	English	French	Others
1. Which language(s) do you speak at home?						
2. Which language(s) do you speak in the community?						
3. Which language(s) do you speak with your peers?						
4. Which language(s) are the newspapers you usually read in?						
5. Which language(s) are the radio programs you usually listen to?						
6. Which language(s) are						

the TV programs you usually watch in?						
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

16. Your English language experience:

16.1. Have you ever taken any English classes/lessons before coming to the university? a. Yes b. No

16.2. Where?

a. at home b. at school c. in a private institution d. other ways (specify)

16.3. For how long?

16.4. Have you ever been to English speaking countries? a. Yes b. No

16.5. Where did you go and for how long?

17. How would you assess your current competence in the English language?

- a. Beginner b. Elementary c. Pre- intermediate
d. Intermediate e. Post-intermediate d. Advance

Part 2: MI Profile

Please complete the following questionnaire by assigning a numerical value to each of the statements which you consider represents you. If you agree that the statement very strongly represents you assign a 5. If the statement does not represent you assign a 1. Use the numbers 1-5 to grade each statement.

1: Not at all like me	2: A little like me	3: Somewhat like me	4: A lot like me	5: Definitely me
Intrapersonal				TOTAL
I have a deep sense of awareness of inner feelings, strengths, and weaknesses.				
I have a strong sense of independence, strong will, and am self-directed.				
I prefer my own private world time to large group functions.				
I like to be alone to pursue personal hobbies, interests, or projects.				
I have a deep sense of self confidence.				
Interpersonal				TOTAL
I like being with people more than being alone.				
I have many friends.				
I enjoy socializing in a variety of different situations and places.				
I learn best through group activities.				
I am good at communicating, organizing and sometimes even manipulating people.				
Bodily/Kinesthetic				TOTAL
I learn best by moving, touching, and/or acting out information.				

I process most of my knowledge through my senses.	
I have well defined ability in fine and gross motor skills.	
I enjoy taking things apart and putting them back together.	
I can mimic other people's mannerism well.	
Verbal/Linguistic	TOTAL
I enjoy reading, writing, and listening.	
I enjoy jokes, tell tales, and stories.	
I easily remember names, places, dates, and other trivia.	
I can spell accurately and have a highly developed vocabulary.	
I like crossword puzzles or playing word games	
Logical/Mathematical	TOTAL
I like to explore patterns, categories, and relationships of information.	
I can compute math problems easily and quickly.	
I can group, order, analyze, interpret, and predict data.	
I enjoy strategy games (e.g. chess) and like to win.	
I ask a lot of questions about things at work	
Visual/Spatial	TOTAL
I think in pictures and images.	
I like to draw, paint, sculpt and engage in other art activities.	
I use clear visual images when thinking about concepts and explaining information.	
I can draw accurate representations of people or things.	
I tend to daydream when learning new information.	
Musical	TOTAL
I am highly aware of sounds within the environment.	
I typically play music when working for relaxing.	
I can easily remember melodies of songs.	
I generally know when music or a note is off key.	
I tend to sing, hum and keep rhythm.	
Naturalist	TOTAL
I enjoy categorizing things by common traits.	
Putting things in hierarchies makes sense to me.	
I believe recycling is important.	
I enjoy learning about plants and animals.	
I spend a great deal of time outdoors.	

Appendix B: The FCE test
Examinations in English as a Foreign Language
First Certificate

Contents:

Paper 1: Use of English, question paper and answer sheet
Use of English

Part One: Multiple Choice Cloze

For Questions 1-12, read the text below and decide which answer A, B, C or D best fits each space.

Example: (0) A in B at C of D to

No More Classes

The use (0) ... computers has meant students can study language programs (1) ... their own speed when and for how long they want - and no need to worry about the teacher having a favorite or doing (2) ... another boring lesson. What's more, in the virtual classrooms of the future the student will (3) ... on their headset, and be transported into an imaginary school, choose their class, take the books they need off the shelf and (4) ... conversations with other computerized students.

They might (5) ... choose to pay a visit to the supermarket or the train station, the bank or the restaurant. At the (6) ... of a button they would be transported to (7) ... realistic settings where they could practice their English, maybe getting a hand (8) ... a virtual English companion. All this perhaps, at the computer, from the comfort of their home: no (9) ... to catch the bus to college, or a plane to England.

Exciting? Certainly, and an interesting alternative to traditional classroom lessons. But would it ever (10) ... the classroom? Hopefully not. (11) ... the need to relate to real people talking about real issues and generally learning a little more about others will always lead language learners to (12) ... at least a little of their time with real people.

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. A with | B for | C at | D in |
| 2. A still | B for | C yet | D already |
| 3. A place | B put | C set | D get |
| 4. A take | B do | C catch | D hold |
| 5. A although | B preferably | C instead | D contrary |
| 6. A force | B hit | C depressed | D push |
| 7. A so | B such | C like | D alike |
| 8. A with | B to | C from | D for |
| 9. A role | B duty | C obligation | D need |
| 10. A replace | B restore | C succeed | D recover |
| 11. A definitely | B mainly | C totally | D surely |
| 12. A spend | B make | C have | D do |

Part Two: Open Cloze

Read the following extract from a brochure giving advice on taking an examination. For questions 13-24, type the word which best fits in each space. Use only one word in each space.

(0) to

Exam Tips

When the day comes give yourself plenty of time (0) ... do everything: have breakfast but don't drink (13) ... much; go to the toilet; arrive on time, but not too early or you will find yourself getting more and more nervous while you wait to start. Try not to talk (14) ... the exam before you go in.

In the exam, calm (15) ... down by breathing deeply and thinking positively. Read (16) ... exam questions carefully and underline all of the key instruction words (17) ... indicate how the questions should (18) ... answered. If possible start with the ones (19) ... can do easily to give you confidence. Remember what you've learnt from practicing questions and doing mock exams previously and plan your use of time. Don't panic (20) ... everyone around you seems to start writing furiously straight away and don't be tempted to follow their example.

Finally, after the exam, don't join in a discussion about (21) ... everyone else did, (22) ... you want to frighten yourself, and drain your self-confidence for the next exam. Above (23) ..., remember that exams are not designed to catch you out, (24) ... to find out what you know, what you understand and what you can do.

Part Three: Word Formation

Read the text and then write the correct form of the word in CAPITALS to complete the gaps. There is an example at the beginning.

Example: 0 natural

Food Production

In the not-too-distant past farm animals were able to live (0) ... lives in what we would now term 'free-range' conditions. Such farming methods however, (were not able to supply the rapidly growing (25) ... of the world and the increasing demands on food (26) ... In order to cope with this rising demand, factory farming methods were introduced along with the (27) ... of genetically engineered (28) ... hormones, which resulted in a massive increase in food (29) ... However, these developments in the use of factory farming and drug (30) ... have led to a widespread feeling that animals are being caused a lot of distress and that the quality of the food itself suffers as a consequence. Certainly, many people (31) ... with the idea of keeping animals in one building for their entire (32) ... and argue that more emphasis should be given to (33) ... farming methods. A growing number of people are choosing to eat organic food, supporting farmers who use free-range methods, a system which has proved to be both ...(34) ...and humane.

NATURE

POPULATE

CONSUME

DEVELOP

GROW

PRODUCE

TREAT

AGREE

EXIST

ALTERNATE

ECONOMY

Part Four: 'Key' Word Transformation

For the questions 35-42, complete the second question so that it has the similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

Example:

I haven't seen you for years.

AGES

It's (been ages since I) saw you

35. I want to go to university this year.

INTERESTED

I to university this year.

36. "Have you been on holiday recently, Jane?" asked Tony.

BEEN

Tony asked Jane on holiday recently.

37. I was too tired to go to the party.

THAT

I was I couldn't go to the party.

38. There's no point asking Lynda to help as she's really busy.

WASTE

It's asking Lynda to help as she's really busy.

39. The union claims its members will only return to work if the company agrees to a meeting.

NOT

The union claims its members will the company agrees to a meeting.

40. I'm sure it was Ana I saw in town as I recognized her coat.

MUST

It Ana I saw in town as I recognized her coat.

41. We demanded to see the hotel manager to make our complaint.

SEEING

We the hotel manager to make our complaint.

42. The boss wouldn't object to you going early today.

OBJECTION

The boss would not you going early today.

Answer Sheet

Part 1

items	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

11				
12				

Part 2

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

Part 3

25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34

Part 4

35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42

AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER QUESTIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Teacher questions, as a kind of input provided by a teacher (Hasan, 2006), form an integral part of classroom interaction (ho, 2005). The problem which is going to be mainly investigated here is types of teachers' questions and teachers' modifying strategies in a class. Because as Holland and Shortall (1997) point out, "two of the most common ways in which L2 teachers engage in interaction with learners is by way of asking questions and providing feedback, and these deserve some consideration" (p. 104), focusing on them can be expected to show useful findings which will contribute to deeper insights about the ways to improve L2 teaching and learning. In the classrooms observed in the present study, the overwhelming frequency of display questions and the great amount of closed questions is remarkable. It can be inferred that the teacher exercises a strong control over what and how much is being said. The implication here is that when selecting the range and differential use of questions, teachers may need to compromise their personally held beliefs regarding language use with the objectives of the EFL program.

Key words: teacher questions, taxonomy of question types, frequency of question types

1. Introduction

Since spoken language is "the medium by which much teaching takes place and in which students demonstrate to teachers much of what they have learned" (Cazden, 1987, cited in Wittrock, 1988), the application of discourse analysis to second language teaching and learning can reveal much about how teachers can improve their teaching practices by investigating actual language use in the classroom, and how students can learn language through exposure to different types of discourse. Nunan (1989) asserts that "If we want to enrich our understanding of language learning and teaching, we need to spend time looking in classroom" (p.76).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), failed communication is a joint responsibility and not the fault of speaker or listeners. Similarly, successful communication is an accomplishment jointly achieved and acknowledged. It is the

teachers' responsibility to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities. In recent years, a much greater role has been attributed to interactive features of classroom behaviors, such as "turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning, and feedback" (Chaudron, 1988: 10). In second language classrooms, "learners often do not have a great number of tools... teachers' questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication" (Brown, 1994a: 165). Questioning is reported as one of the commonly used strategies, as the success of a class largely depends on questioning and feedback.

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2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Teacher Questions

Teacher questions, as a kind of input provided by a teacher (Hasan, 2006), form an integral part of classroom interaction (Ho, 2005). Nunan and Lamb (1996) suggest that teachers use questions "to elicit information, to check understanding, and also to control behavior" (p. 80). In most classrooms, questioning remains the common strategy for eliciting responses from students during the whole class teaching. Chaudron (1988) mentions that "teachers' questions constitute a primary means of engaging learners' attention, promoting verbal responses, and evaluating learners' progress" (p. 126). In other words, it means that teacher questions play an important role in managing classroom routines. Studies of ESL classrooms have mainly focused on the effects of teacher questions on learner production of the target language and the types of student responses given (Tsui, 1995).

Teacher questions have been categorized in a number of ways: 1) open and closed questions, 2) display and referential questions, and 3) yes/no questions. Tsui (1995) classifies the category of open/closed questions according to the kind of response elicited. The former can have more than one acceptable answer while the latter can accept only one answer. The second category of questions, display/referential questions, relates to the nature of interaction generated (Tsui, 1995). For display questions, the teacher already knows the answers. They are asked in order to check if the students know the answers. On the contrary, for referential questions, the teacher does not know the answers and the students answer the questions in order to give the teacher information (Tsui, 1995). Thompson (1997), however, categorizes the first two types of questions based on two dimensions. One relates to "the content of the question" (p. 101): whether it asks something about facts or opinions, while another relates to "the purpose of the question" (p. 101): whether the teacher already knows the answer or not. It is believed that closed or display questions elicit "short,

mechanical responses" while open or referential questions elicit "lengthy, often complex responses" (Ho, 2005, p. 298). The last type of questions, the yes/no questions, is categorized by Thompson (1997) according to "the grammatical form of the question" (p.100).

However, it is too simplistic for the above systems to classify teacher questions into either open or closed. From the analyses of the questions asked by three non-native ESL teachers during reading comprehension in the upper secondary school in Brunei, Ho (2005) found that there are numerous instances of questions, particularly those reading comprehension questions that can neither be considered closed nor open. These questions are mainly used to gauge students' overall vocabulary level, grammar and other general knowledge. Banbrook and Skehan (1989) also note that the display-referential distinction can be influenced by "the students' interpretation of the teacher's intentions" (p. 146) of asking the questions.

Open or referential questions are more preferred on pedagogical grounds because they are the questions commonly asked in the 'real world' of students outside the classroom (Long & Sato, 1983). However, "there is a divergence between what theorists would consider to be good practice and what is actually going on in classrooms" (Banbrook & Skehan, 1989, p. 142). In a traditional language classroom, factual questions are the most common while open questions are the least common (Myhill, Jones, & Hopper, 2006). This situation can be found in Harrop and Swinson's (2003) analysis of recorded teaching of ten infant school teachers, ten junior school teachers, and ten secondary school teachers. It was found that many questions asked by these three groups of teachers were closed questions (44.6%, 41.1% and 48.6% respectively), while open questions were rarely asked (7.1%, 7.4% and 9.8% respectively). Also, in Burns and Myhill's (2004) research study in which episodes of fifteen minutes from 54 lessons were drawn from Year 2 and Year 6 classes, the analyses showed that the most common form of questions asked by the teachers is the factual questions (64%).

The questions teachers ask are mostly display questions because of the unpredictability of the students' response for open questions (Edwards & Westgate, 1994). The answers are usually predetermined by the teacher and so negotiation of meaning is rarely necessary. Teachers' questions are one topic that has attracted many researchers' attention these days (Nunan, 1989). Much that defines questioning lies in the features of questions and of their purpose in classroom interaction. "Much of the work on questions has centred in developing taxonomies to describe the different types" (Ellis, 1994, p. 587). Several ways of distinguishing on question types have been developed by researchers in the seventies (e.g. Kearsley, 1976) and eighties (e.g. Hakasson & Lindberg, 1988) and they are still being developed. One of the taxonomy is the framework of Long & Sato (Ellis, 1994). It has seven sub-categories under two headings of types; 1. Echoic Types: a) comprehension checks, b) clarification requests, c) confirmation checks, 2. Epistemic Types: a) referential, b) display, c) expressive, d) rhetorical. In fact, both Chaudron (1988: 126-7) and Nunan

(1989: 30) cited in their books a general taxonomy of question types, which is given in table 1.

Table 1:
Taxonomy of question types

Question Type	Explanation
Closed	have a short, fixed answer, for example "What day is it today?"
Open	typically require a longer, less limited response, for example "What did you do yesterday?"
Display	those to which the questioner already knows the answer and is merely testing the respondent's knowledge or understanding.
Referential	those to which the questioner does not know the answer and is genuinely seeking information.
Procedural	relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes such as "Who is absent today?"
Convergent	often have short answers which "encourage similar student responses" and require low level thought processing, for example "Can you ski? – "Yes, I can", "No, I can't".
Divergent	necessitate more wide-ranging, longer responses with higher level thought processing for example "Why is the Beatles' "

	music so popular in Japan ?”
Rhetorical	those which the questioner answers him/herself.
Interaction	Comprehension: elicits assurance from the listener that a message has been received correctly.
	Confirmation checks: assume a positive response and “allow the speaker to correctly interpret reactions by the listener”
	Clarification requests: similar to confirmation requests but with a more open answer.
Instructional	Any question presented in the classroom. Presupposes that the question is intended to solicit learner production.
Conversational	Any question asked outside the classroom.

Display refers to questions for which the teacher knows the answer and which demand a single or short response of the low-level thinking kind. Referential questions, by contrast, demand more thought and generate longer responses and for which the teacher does not know the answer in advance. Richards and Lockhart (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, pp. 185-187) divide questions into three useful categories: procedural related to classroom procedures such as “Do you know what to do?”; convergent, which requests a short answer around a specific theme such as “Do kids help out with the housework?”; divergent questions, the last, are like referential questions as in “Sally, what do you think?”. Their categories differ from the simple display/ referential variety in that convergent questions include those to which a teacher may not know the answer but which narrow the range of possible responses, most notably closed questions demanding a yes or no answer.

2.2. Effects of Teacher Questions

Most research on teacher questions has focused on open/referential and closed/display questions but yes/no questions are also commonly used. The effects of display questions on students’ discourse patterns were generally considered to be negative but positive for referential questions. Brock (1986) conducted a research

study in which the effects of referential questions on adult ESL classroom discourse were investigated. In this study, four experienced ESL teachers and twenty-four non-native speakers (NNSs) enrolled in classes in the University of Hawaii's English Language Institute were involved. Two of the teachers were provided with training in incorporating referential questions into classroom activities while the other two teachers were not provided with any training. As a result, the treatment-group teachers asked more referential questions than did the control-group teachers. Each teacher was randomly assigned with a group of six students for a single period of forty minutes. The results showed that the student responses in the treatment-group classes were significantly longer and syntactically more complex than those in the control-group classes. This suggests a positive correlation between asking referential questions and students' production of target language. In another study, the ethnographic research done by Ernest (1994), it was discovered that when the teacher asked display questions, students' responses were brief, with little elaboration. Lastly, Goodwin (2001), cited in Myhill, Jones, & Hopper (2006), argues that "pupil responses tend to be short, and the teacher does not encourage elaboration of responses" (p. 11) when the display questions are asked.

From a pedagogical point of view, it appears that asking display or factual questions will produce negative effects on students' second language learning and thus, they should be avoided. Nunan (1987) also believes that display questions do not resemble real communication and are therefore pedagogically purposeless. However, Burns and Myhill's (2004) study showed that among the factual questions asked, 45% of them had a function of inviting more responses. McCarthy (1991) also claims that display questions and closed questions still have the function for the teacher to check the students' state of knowledge and provide them with opportunities for practicing language forms. Therefore, Nunn (1999) emphasizes that display questions are pedagogically purposeless only when they are viewed from the perspective of communicative language teaching.

For the yes/no questions suggested by Thompson (1997), Gower, Philips, and Walters (1995), cited in Thompson (1997), point out that these questions are easier for learners to answer and may therefore be suitable for those weaker students as they do not need to produce much language output. However, the research evidence in this aspect is limited that further research devoted to this area seems to be essential.

In brief, classroom data from a number of studies show that display questions are commonly asked while referential questions are rarely asked. For the former type of questions, the responses elicited tend to be brief, with little elaboration, but the responses elicited by the latter type of questions are usually longer and syntactically more complex.

3. Method

3.1. The Participants

The selected teacher in the present study is a 27 female English teacher having BA in English Literature, teaching at Pardis English Institute in Borujerd with four years of experience. Two of her classes were observed. One of them had male students, and the other one had female students (Three sessions of the first and two sessions of the second class were observed). The students were intermediate 12-15 years of old. The classes had seven students each.

3.2. Data Collection

The data were collected in five sessions of intermediate students' general English classes in Pardis English Institute in Borujerd. Nunan (1989) says "there is no substitute for direct observation as a way of finding out about language classrooms" (p. 76), therefore in this study, the author came into the classroom personally to observe. The observation was conducted in five sessions; about 5 hours (an hour for each session) were observed and recorded. Then, they were transcribed and used for analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis

According to the taxonomy of question types mentioned above, questions were counted and multiple-coded. For example, "who is absent today?" can be both procedural and referential. The result of the data analysis is shown in Tables 2.

Table 2:
Frequency of question types during instruction

Question Type	Frequency of Use	Equivalent Percentage
Open	15	3.75%
Closed	40	10%
Display	190	47.5%
Convergent	50	12.5%
Procedural	20	5%
Referential	50	12.5%

Interaction	35	8.75%
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Table 3
 Target of teacher's questioning

Whole Class	Individual		Total
	Volunteer	Roll Call	
50	50	300	400

4. Discussion

The above tables show that during instruction, the teacher used procedural, open, closed, display, convergent, referential, and interaction questions. Referential questions also account for a relatively high percentage even if lower than display questions. Maybe the teacher believes Thornbury's (1996) proposal that referential questions dominate real-life situations. Although referential questions may encourage students to try harder to respond (Nunan, 1989), counter to Chaudron (1988), this additional effort does not necessarily lead to higher quality communication if the question is also convergent in appearance, yielding highly similar, brief, relatively undemanding responses. In conclusion, the overwhelming frequency of display questions shown in tables 2 and the great amount of closed questions among them is remarkable. It can also be inferred that the teacher exercises a strong control over what and how much is being said. The implication here is that when selecting the range and differential use of questions, teachers may need to compromise their personally held beliefs regarding language use with the objectives of the EF program.

In terms of target of teacher's questioning, as can be seen from Table 3, individual class activities dominated in these five sessions, perhaps for the reason that the classes were small classes of 7 students each in which it was possible for all the students to have an opportunity to speak in public. We have also noticed that during the instruction, display questions dominated, even if there existed referential questions, they are not absolutely genuine questions which really seek information, because teachers mostly aimed at eliciting language from students, therefore in most cases answers are easy to find if students can devote themselves to the class, which can be shown by the fact that most of nominated students could give correct answers.

5. Conclusion

The results of the present study imply that language teachers should be provided with more training in developing their questioning techniques. Those teachers who teach language learners with higher language level, in particular, should be able to encourage their students to elaborate further on their responses rather than just accept brief and syntactically simple answers. To develop teachers' questioning techniques, analyzing lesson transcriptions is a good way to raise teachers' awareness of the types of questions they ask so that they may avoid asking too many display and closed questions which inhibit students' opportunities to develop their second language skills.

Besides these, more referential questions should be asked. As mentioned previously, the types of questions asked are usually determined by the pedagogical purposes of the lessons. However, even in grammar lessons, teachers should not just ask display questions that elicit mainly the answers of grammar drilling exercises. Instead, teachers should design some less controlled but contextualized practice in which they can guide students to give acceptable answers by asking some referential questions. In this way, students' second language development can be facilitated.

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RELEVANCE AND THE LOCALIZED AND TRANSLATED HEADLINES OF INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN IRANIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

This research study aimed at investigating the relevance at work when localizing and translating the headlines in the international commercial advertisements. It sets to discover the extent to which the headlines in Persian versions of the international advertisements -translated or localized- are successful in establishing association with cultural schemata in the mind of Iranian audience and to what extent they are relevant in their viewpoints. The data contains both the localized and translated headlines of randomly selected advertisements in Iranian media and publications. The criteria of assessment were the relevance factors proposed in the Xu and Chen's (2006) model. In the final part of the paper, it was found that localization is a better strategy to achieve the targeted relevance. The results also showed that "focus" and "clarity" were the most effective variables in preserving the relevance in the localized and translated headlines of the international advertisements.

Key words: Culture, International Advertisement, Headline, Localization, Novelty, Relevance theory, Scope, Topicality, Translation, Understandability

Introduction

In the era of information, advertisements have infiltrated into all walks of life and have become an important source of information as well as an indispensable part of our life in the modern world. Some distributors of foreign commodities prefer making creative and new advertisements rather than the advertisements designed by the producer company. But sometimes, they use the original advertisements in the target market and adapt them to the target audience schemata by translating their elements including headlines or by localizing them according to the target culture. In recent years, a great number of foreign commodities have been introduced into the Iranian market. Following welcoming of Iranian people, the increasing need of translating and localizing the advertisements of such products is felt.

Demooij (2004) believed that the advertisements are affected by the global trade which is growing day by day. Advertisers bear this idea that developing all

advertising in the home country of the advertiser and producer company for being used in other countries- either in English or translated into other languages- will be cost-effective.

To make their advertising adjusted for the target cultures, the investors carry out translation and localization to ensure acceptance of their products by new consumers.

Internationalization of Advertisements

The overriding problem of translation of advertisement, as stated above, is the cultural gaps between the source language and the target language. This problem of advertising causes certain advertisements in other countries to fail to be relevant from the viewpoint of the target audience. A new phenomenon has happened in recent years which has helped translators to solve this problem and that is internationalization.

Localization Industry Standards Associations (LISA) gave definition of the new concept of internationalization as “the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for redesign” (1998, p. 3). Indeed, internationalization of advertisements solved the translational problem of cultural differences to a large extent.

Obviously enough language and culture are interdependent. Variation in cultures reflected in language, making language another main problem in translation of advertisements.

On the other hand, variations between language and culture cause some scholars to oppose internationalization. Consumers’ needs, and the way advertising appeals to these needs as well as language are the varieties across the globe and these are the major obstacles to internationalizing the advertisements. Recent decades observed a heated debate on how to cope with these differences.

Demooij (2004) believed that practice had shown that standardized global advertising is not equally effective in all markets. Much of it is wasted in markets where consumer values are different from the values promoted in the advertising message.

To make the problem clearer, it is necessary to discuss the main features of advertisement the problems of translating this persuasive genre and its translation procedures.

Advertisement Characteristics

According to the *New Encyclopedia of Britannica* (2010), advertising is designed to inform, influence, or persuade people. To be effective, an advertisement must first attract attention and gain a person’s interest. It must then provide reasons for buying a product and for believing the advertiser’s claims.

In fact, the strategies of advertisements in influencing consumers are appealing to needs, motives and emotions in addition to giving information. The advertisers

should understand the versatility of people's needs and emotions in order to produce effective advertisements. Demooij (2004) pointed out that principally the global advertising was conceptualized based on the idea of universality of basic emotions such as happiness, anger and fear. However, the needs and motives of the audience change according to their cultural differences and this is what makes the translation of advertisements problematic.

Different languages conjure different sets of symbolic references like myths, history, humor and the arts. Different cultures build different schemata, i.e. knowledge structures of events, objects, people and phenomena which a person possesses (Müller, 1998). The concepts and ideas and the terms representing them are different across languages and cultures. In return, these cultural differences make problems in finding appropriate linguistic and conceptual equivalents in translations of advertisements in other cultures.

Demooij (2004) considered the lack of fit between the advertising message and the consumers' schema into consideration as the cause of ignoring the message by the audience.

Adapting the appeals and relevant culturally motives is the strategy a translator should use to make an effective translation of the advertisement. Using an alternative advertisement with different textual appeals but keeping the pictures constant is one mistake the translators of ads make, because a picture can have different meanings across different cultures. Pictures as signs act like contexts of words and texts and the audience may interpret it differently from others based on the schemata and cultural backgrounds they have in their minds.

In other words, advertising is not made of words, but made of culture and it is what translation fails to convey. So it is difficult to transfer advertising to other cultures without understanding that culture. Another strategy to tackle this problem is localization.

Localization of Advertisements

Localization of the advertisement is one aspect of advertisement internationalization. Local sensitivity is a necessity for global advertisers to design the advertisements of which converting to other cultures from different countries are not a difficult task. Indeed, the concept of localization is a newly born concept.

Since the early 1990s, localization has become part of language industry, especially in the areas of software, product documentation and e-commerce. Pym (2004) was the introducer of localization phenomenon in translation. He considered localization as elaborate form of translation. He noted localization as "adaptation and translation of a text to suit a particular reception situation" (Pym, 2004, p. 1). In fact, both refer to general processes of language transformation. Although discourse on localization introduces some fancy terms, translators face nothing essentially new. In Pym's opinion, notwithstanding, "what makes localization a new paradigm is the key role

played by internationalization, which is the preparation of material so that it can be translated quickly and simultaneously into many different target languages" (Pym, 2010, p. 121).

According to LISA (1998, p. 3), "localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold" (quoted in Pym, 2010, p. 122).

Many advertisements which could be seen in Iran are the translated forms with the taste of locale, with the color of local culture and indeed in the native language. In other words, localization could fill the cultural and linguistic gaps between the source and target advertisements. Localization aims not only at language, but also at signs and every other factor reflecting the culture.

Relevance Theory as a theoretical Framework

The relevance theory of communication was developed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986. It did not take long before it was applied to translation by Gutt in 1991. The basis of the theory was Grice's (1989) central claims on maxims of human communication- verbal and nonverbal- which puts the expression and recognition of the intention of the author as the essential feature of a successful communication.

According to the relevance theory, utterances raise expectations of relevance not because speakers are expected to obey a co-operative principle and maxims or some other specifically communicative convention, but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition, which communicators may exploit (Wilson & Sperber, 2002).

As Bassnett (2001) indicated, translation is a cross-cultural event and part of cross-cultural communication (communication is an event in which people share their world of thought with others). According to Gutt (1991), from relevance theory point of view, translation is defined as an instance of interpretive use of language across language boundaries. It is in fact the act of communication in terms of cause-effect relationship and indeed part of human psychology.

Judgment of relevance requires some criteria. Many researchers suggested numerous factors affecting relevance. By contribution of Grice's theory of communication, Xu and Chen (2006) proposed a five-factor model of relevance: topicality, novelty, reliability, understandability, and scope. Xu and Chen (2006) proposed Grice's (1975, 1989) maxims on human communication as theoretical foundation to identify the core relevance criteria. To remember, it should be noticed that Grice (1975, 1989) described the hearer's expectation of the speaker's message in terms of conversational maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The definitions of these criteria will be given in the methodology part.

In this study, the above-mentioned factors proposed by Xu and Chen (2006) were used in testing relevance of the headlines in the localized and non-localized advertisements in the Persian language.

Research Questions

To what extent were the localized and non-localized headlines of international advertisements relevant to the Iranian audience?

Methodology

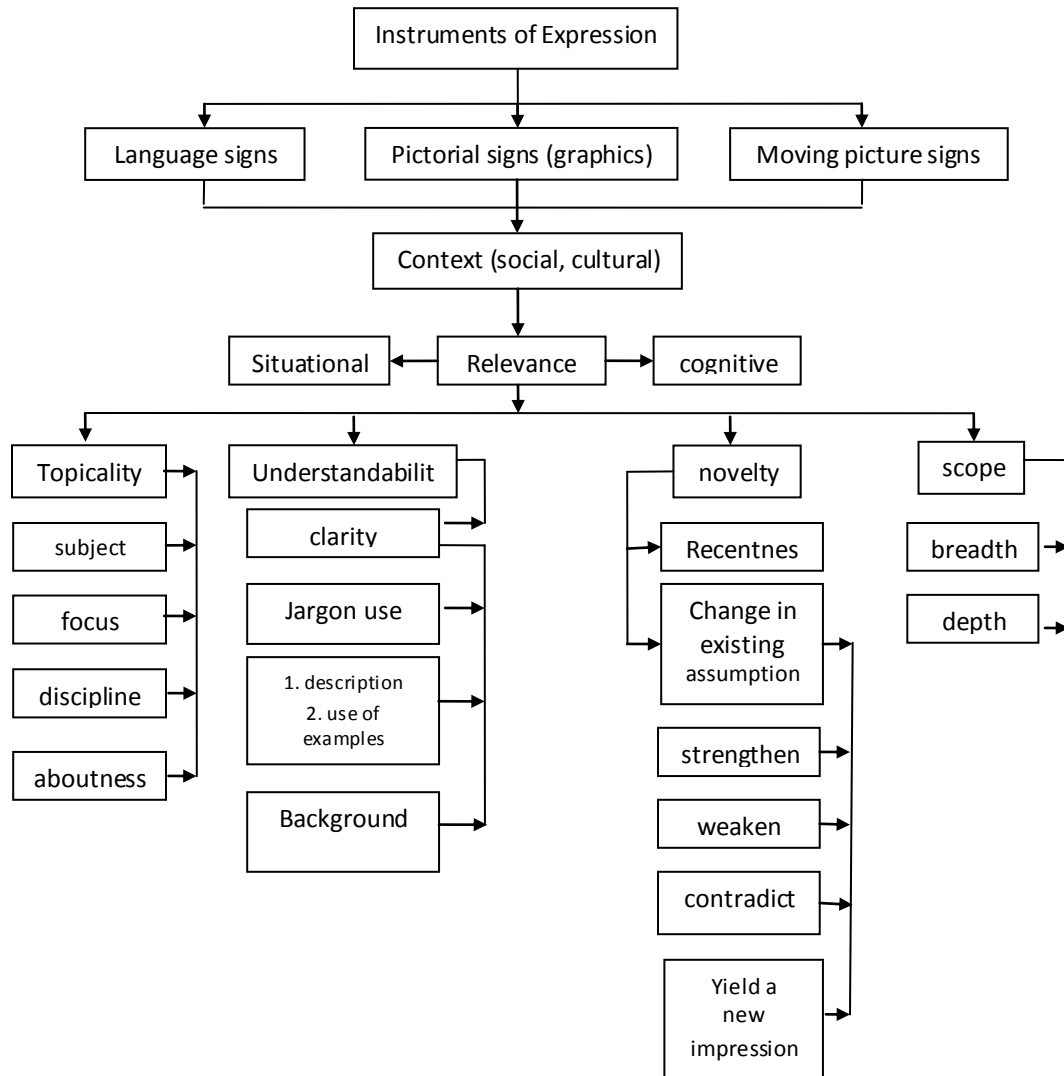
Materials

This collection contains the headlines of original advertisements and their corresponding Iranian localized and non-localized headlines which randomly adopted from magazines, billboards and official websites. The subjects of advertisements whose headlines are studied in this paper cover a wide variety of goods from cosmetics to beauty care products, to home appliances and to electronic devices. The brands which were included in questionnaires are as follows: "Dove: beauty and hair care products", "Burjois: cosmetics", "Aquafresh and Signal: Tooth care products", "Kenwood: kitchen appliances", "LG and Samsung: Housewares and electronic products", "Nokia: cell phones" and "Trust: Watches". Selection of these brands was completely random.

Instruments

A questionnaire was used as an instrument of data gathering. This questionnaire was designed based on the relevance model which Xu and Chen (2006) proposed for their research, indeed with a number of adjustments. This questionnaire contains 9 questions and asks subjects' opinions about the relevance of the headlines in the adverts. The diagram below shows the main relevance criteria all of which were incorporated into the questionnaire. This model puts 4 main criteria of relevance as the cornerstone of the analytical model.

Diagram 3.1- Relevance Model
Adapted from Xu and Chen's Relevance model (2006)



As can be seen in the diagram, the main elements of relevance are **topicality, understandability, novelty** and **scope**. Each criterion has in turn sub factors:

"Topicality" in this domain is the extent to which an advertisement is perceived by the audience to be related to the advertised product. This factor is like the Grice's maxim of relation that is defined as "to be relevant".

"Understandability" is composed of jargon use and clarity. Description and use of examples clarifying the meaning is one sub criterion of understandability. In contrast, use of jargons and technical language makes understanding of the contents more difficult. To understand the jargon concepts, background information is needed and therefore, the more jargons is used, the more background information is required. This factor is equivalent to the Grice's maxim of manner introduced as: "avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly." Generally, this factor can be defined as the extent to which the advertisement is perceived by the audience as easy to understand.

"Novelty" covers the two sub factors of change in existing assumptions and recentness or creativity. According to the relevance theory, anything which changes the opinion of the audience is relevant. This attitude change and cognitive effect- as the essence of relevance theory- can take four forms of strengthening the previous assumptions, weakening them, contradicting them and finally creating a completely different assumption about the particular discussed matter. The recentness and creativity of an advertisement means that the audience sees a property in the advert that has not been previously presented to him/ her. This factor is in line with Grice's maxim of quantity which stresses on "supplying new information". Novelty in this particular genre could be conceptualized as the extent to which an advertisement is new to the audience.

And finally "depth" and "breadth" constitute the "scope" criterion. The item asking if the headline shows the general or specific properties of the advertised product was designed to address these two sub factors. This factor also bears similarity to the Grice's maxim of quantity which demands the communicators to be as much informative as necessary. This factor could be defined as the extent to which an advertisement is appropriate to the audience's needs. It means that the advertising text should be broad and detailed enough to satisfy the audience's curiosity about the product.

To analyze the data more easily, an eight-point scale was presented to the participants for answering the questions. 0 and 7 were the two end points of the measurement scale. Each point has a nominal value. (0: not at all, 1: a little, 2: low, 3: to some extent, 4: average, 5: much, 6: high and 7: strong).

Participants

The questionnaires were given to 30 subjects. People from all ages and both genders were asked to participate in the study. The researcher tended to control the two factors of educational and social background. The participants were bachelor, master and PhD students and alumni.

Results and Data Analysis

Table 1 shows the mean scores of the factors increasing the relevance while Table 2 represents the mean scores of the two factors under the heading of "understandability" declining the relevance.

Table 1 – Mean scores of the relevance factors

Items	Constructs								
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I	.6	3.8	.2	.3	.6	8	.6	3	.8
II	.6	.2	.9	.1	.7	7	.8	3	.6
VI	.2	4	4	.5	.2	7	.3	8	.4
VII	.4	.5	.5	6	.6	6	.6	6	.8
IIIX	.2	.4	.7	.8	.2	06	3	4	.1
IX	.9	.6	.6	.1	.7	7	.6	5	.4

I=clarity, II= focus, VI= image use, VII= recentness, IIIX= scope, IX= change in assumption

1= Dove therapy system, 2= Nokia cell phone, 3= Aquafresh toothbrush, 4= Burjois Lipstick, 5= Trust watch,

6= Signal whitening toothpaste, 7= Kenwood chef, 8= LG LED, 9= Samsung Vacuum cleaner,

Table 2. Mean scores of the two sub factors of understandability

Items	Constructs								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
III	0.	5	4	4	4.	1	2	5	1

	73	.7	.3	.8	06	.5	.2		.4
V	0. 73	4 .4	2 .7	4 .3	2. 1	1 .2	1	4 .2	1 .6

III= background information, V= jargon use

As can be seen in the appendix, most of the headlines studied in this paper are the non-localized translations of the headlines in the original advertisements. Only two localized headlines were created by the Iranian advertisers, i.e. the headlines of "Signal Whitening toothpaste" and "Kenwood chef" and the results related to these two headlines show that they are acceptably relevant to the audience.

As can be seen in the tables, the factor "clarity" in all headlines was marked as high except in the headlines of "Aquafresh toothbrush" and "Burojois Lipstick" which were not much understandable to the audience and the "understandability" of two headlines of "Nokia cell phone" and "LG LED" were evaluated as moderate. The transliterated words such as "سویت کیس" /su:i:tki:s/ (sweet kiss) and "باز" /ba:z/ (buzz) in the localized headlines could be considered as the cause of low understandability. These words are not commonly used by the Persian speakers and the audience did not, therefore, know their meaning. In the headline of "LG LED", an English word is transferred to the localized advert. Of course, the Iranian customers are familiar with such a word- LED- because it is normalized by frequent use in the Persian language and this is why the clarity of this headline is higher than the two other localized headlines with transliterated terms. In the localized headline of "Nokia cell phone", no specialized term is used; however, the respondents should have the background information to understand the word "مسیریابی" (mæsi:r yaabee: direction navigating) and this might have made the participants mark this headline's clarity as moderate.

The headline of the localized advertisement of "Burjois" lipstick" seems not to have been able to satisfy cultural expectations of Iranians as the respondents considered this headline as a new and creative one. The word "kiss" applied in this headline is considered as a taboo term in the Iranian culture.

The first construct in the questionnaire explored the relevance of the headline in the localized advertisement of "Dove Therapy system". The results demonstrate that this headline is very clear and it focuses on specific matters. No specialized term is visible in the headline and its fluency and clarity made the respondents understand the headline easily without any need of background information. The images of different types of hair in this localized advertisement also helped the audience to have no problem in getting the message of the translated headline. Although one property of this product, i.e. repairing hair damages is mentioned in this headline, the respondents believed that the the information presented in the headline is not broad and deep enough. The creativity of the headline was evaluated as moderate and certainly the informal tone of the headline was influential in such evaluation. The

participants expressed that this headline didn't incite them to buy the advertised product.

The headline of this localized advertisement of "Nokia cell phone", which was studied in the second construct, focuses highly on just one of the capabilities of some Nokia cell phones, i.e. "GPS navigator application". The high scores in response to the item asking about focus verify this fact. The image of a compass device which accompanies the headline of this advert supports the meaning of the headline. The participants also asserted that this image helped them understand the meaning of the headline more easily. This high focus on one application of the advertised cell phones caused the respondents not to consider this localized headline as a general headline. According to the opinion of the respondents, the jargon use is moderate and consequently the need of background information to understand the meaning of the headline is high. Nevertheless, the respondents found the headline as moderately clear and understandable. It seems that most of the respondents were familiar with the concept of the "direction navigating" in the word "مسیریابی" (*mæsi:r ya:bi:*), which was identified as the jargon; the participants apparently knew GPS software application and device because it is expected that the high need for background information causes the low clarity while the raters perceived the meaning and subject of the headline well enough. Pointing to only one, and not all, of the applications and capabilities of Nokia cell phones in this advertisement appeared new to the audience. However, this headline couldn't incite the subjects to buy Nokia cell phone for this particular application perhaps because it might not have been interesting and attractive for this sample of the audience and was of no use to them. The results steers the researcher to judge this headline as relevant.

The English word "buzz" in the headline of the original advertisement of "Aquafresh three way buzz toothbrush" has been transliterated in the localized advert of this product while this word has also been translated in the localized advert by the word "لرزان" (*lærza:n* in the sense of "vibrating") and the addition of such transliterated word appears not only futile but also confusing. Incidentally, such transliterated word - "باز" /*ba:z*/ - has a meaning in the Persian language and surely the confusion of meaning has taken place here. Even if the respondents understood that the word "باز" /*ba:z*/ was a transliterated term, they couldn't understand its meaning because it was not coined by the Persian language; none of the participants understood the meaning of this transliterated word. The image of the advert which shows how the toothbrush works was identified as supportive of the headline's understandability; but use of the transliterated word decreased the "understandability" as the respondents also scored the "clarity" as low and the "need of background information" as moderate. Of course, the raters didn't consider the word "باز" /*ba:z*/ as a jargon as can be seen in the results of the factor of "jargon use" which was evaluated as low. According to the results, this headline seemed new to the respondents but it couldn't convince them to purchase this product. The results show the low persuasive potential of the headline as it is ambiguous and general with no explanation about the mentioned property of this product. The participants

rated the factor of focus as moderate. The mean scores of the "scope" factor show that this headline points to the specific features of the product and is not a general headline. Despite the negative influence of the application of the mentioned transliterated word, the headline was not identified as totally irrelevant.

In the localized advertisement of "Burjois Lipstick", too, transliteration was used as a technique of translation. "سویت کیس" / su:ji:t ki:s/ (sweet kiss) is the transliterated phrase the translator has used in the headline. It appears that the purpose of the Iranian advertiser by transliterating this specific phrase was to hide its meaning since this concept is a kind of taboo in the Iranian culture. The sexual matters, especially of the women, are not spoken about in public and it conforms to masculinity property of the Iranian culture. Pointing to a tabooed matter and not eliminating or substituting of this phrase by a euphemism might have caused the respondents to score the "newness" factor as high. The respondents asserted that this headline presents some specific properties of the product such as "naturalness" and so it is not general. Some of the respondents who have no enough English knowledge, didn't understand the meaning of the transliterated phrase at all but some of those who found its meaning- especially the older ones who avoid speaking about taboos- tried not to point to the meaning explicitly but stated it by euphemistic terms. "Clarity" of the headline was evaluated as low. The image isn't helpful in understanding the meaning as it just emphasizes color spectrum of the product and its production in France instead of focusing on the issues mentioned in the headline. Those who didn't understand the meaning of the transliterated phrase, considered it as a specialized term and therefore the "jargon use" and "need for background knowledge" were scored as moderate. The raters believed that the headline focused to a large extent on specific issues. However, this headline wasn't successful in inciting the sample audience to buy the product. This might be due to masculine gender of part of the respondents and low understandability of the headline. In general, the translated headline is not much relevant.

Relevance of the headline in the localized advert of "Trust watch" was another case investigated in the questionnaire. According to Table 1, the respondents understood the meaning of the headline well enough. However, the descriptive answers to the item asking about the meaning of the headline illustrate that some of the respondents thought that the word "trust" was an English word which had been transferred to the localized headline and they didn't recognize it as the commercial brand of the product. To remind, it should be stressed that the original advertiser played with the word "trust" in both senses of confidence and the commercial mark of the product; but it doesn't seem that the Iranian advertiser followed such a goal because the word "trust" in the original headline is used in the verb part of speech and the syntactic and semantic differences between the Persian and English languages don't allow the advertiser to transfer this verb without any shift of grammar. The picture of the advertisement isn't helpful for the audience to understand the headline since this image doesn't mention "Switzerland" which is the focused point of the headline; the image contains only one model of this company watches as well as a man who is

running in order to show the time is passing fast. This headline is also evaluated as general because it doesn't point to any specific property of the product and it is only its quality which is stressed; in fact, it looks more like a brand slogan and not a headline. The mean score of the "jargon use" factor is low but the respondents scored "need for background information" as moderate; to understand the meaning of the headline, the participants should know "Switzerland" is the leading manufacturer of the best watches in the world. High understandability shows that the audience has the required background knowledge. The headline is not creative as the respondents believed; the numbers in Table 1 show the convincing potential is moderate in this headline; certainly only the phrase "Swiss made" could motivate a person to buy such product. Conclusively, this phrase as a headline of an advertisement is not relevant so much.

The questionnaire also investigated relevance of the localized headline of "Signal whitening toothpaste". As can be seen in Table 1, this headline was evaluated as very clear by the audience. The respondents believed that this headline emphasized much on specific issues. The picture of a beautiful smile with white teeth used in the localized advert is related to the meaning and the focused points in the headline; the whitening effect of the product is also shown in this image by comparing the teeth color before and after using the product and disappearance of dreg layer is also presented by this picture; therefore the image can help the audience to understand better the meaning of the headline. The high focus on whitening feature of the product made the subjects evaluate the factor "scope" as moderate. Although the headline was not new to the audience, it could be successful to some extent in encouraging people to buy this toothpaste; surely, the high focus on the specific feature of the product and the attention of the sample audience in this study to the beauty and health was effective in increasing the persuasive potential of this headline. Hence, it is concluded that this localized headline was highly relevant to the audience.

The headline studied in the seventh construct of the questionnaire is related to "Kenwood chef". High mean score of the "clarity" factor indicates the high "understandability". The respondents also scored the criterion of "focus" as moderate. The image of this advert didn't help much the participants in understanding the headline. This picture also doesn't stress the focused points in the headline as it contains the image of members of a happy family in the kitchen with emphasis on the different roles of man and woman and stereotypical portrait of an Iranian Muslim woman who is a kind mother and wife; that is actually reflection of masculinity-oriented subconscious mind of the Iranian advertiser. The major goal of the picture is to introduce the product and its indifferent components and to show a happy family using this product. The moderate focus on detailed specificities of the product results in moderate mean score for the factor of "scope". The creativity was also moderate in the headline as the sample audience stated and it wasn't persuasive enough to convince the respondents to purchase the product.

Relevance of the headline of "LG LED" -a known product in Iran- was investigated in the eighth construct of the questionnaire. In this headline, it can be seen that the commercial brand, i.e. "LG" is transliterated while the word "LED" is transferred. Since the word "LED" as a kind of monitor is normalized in Persian because of its frequent use in daily language, the respondents were familiar with its concept. Despite the fact that the respondents identified this word as a specialized term and evaluated the "need of background knowledge" required for understanding the headline as high, the headline was moderately clear enough as the participants suggested. All of the respondents indicated that the headline emphasized much on specific issues such as "LED". Although the picture of the localized advertisement contains the photo of the product, its helpfulness to understandability of the headline was rated as moderate. The raters evaluated the "scope" factor as moderate because of high focus on "LED" monitor of the advertised television. The respondents found this headline as new and they asserted that this headline could convince them to buy the product. This high persuasive potential may relate to the acceptable quality of "LG" products. Based on the results, this localized headline was relevant to the audience.

The last headline whose relevance was explored in this questionnaire relates to "Samsung vacuum cleaner". This headline is much clear and understandable for the audience. The picture which is used in the advert helps the audience to have a better understanding of this headline as it shows the image of the product in a limited clean space which is marked with a circle around this machine; however, low noise, which is the the most focused point in the headline, isn't shown in this image. The participants rated this headline as moderately general because only one property of the product is stated in the headline. The respondents believed that this headline was somewhat creative and they also evaluated its persuasive potential as moderate. The mean scores in Table 1 represent the acceptable relevance of this headline.

To sum up, it could be asserted that those translated headlines which apply the transliterated words unfamiliar for the audience are not relevant. The clarity and fluency of the headline and no use of ambiguous language are also influential in increasing the relevance of the headlines. Those headlines designed regarding general properties of the target culture were also relevant to a large extent which shows the importance of culture as an effective factor in relevance. The fact that should be noticed in designing a headline is the essential qualities of briefness, clarity and comprehensibility since the main purpose of the headline is presenting the product features in a short phrase.

Generally, the Iranian advertisers created relatively good localized headlines for the adverts and their localization hasn't been satisfactory only in the cases where they tried to transliterate the words of the original adverts in the localized headlines.

Discussion and Conclusion

As discussed in the previous sections, the relevance theory is a framework for linguistic and cognitive communications. All texts are produced in order to

communicate a message to the audience and therefore should be relevant to them. Translation as an act of communication and localization as an elaborate form of translation and as a kind of adaptation, as Pym (2004) puts it, could apply the relevance theory. Based on the relevance theory, the linguistic and contextual differences are the sources of problem for a good translation. Culture as a contextual element is also an impediment for a successful translation and as we know, localization is firmly associated with culture. In the case of this study, it is obvious that the differences existing between our culture and Western culture make the localization and translation of the international adverts difficult for Iranian advertisers.

Following the culture categorizations of Hall (1976) and Hofsted (2001), contrary to many of western cultures, Iranian culture is "collectivist". That implies the tendency of the people to be a member of groups and caring the groups to which the people belong. In such culture, of course, family is important.

The "masculine" culture in Iran appreciates the achievements and successes in contrast to feminine cultures in which caring others and life quality and tranquility is important (Hofstede, 2001).

According to Hofsted's (2001) divisions of culture, the Iranian culture is characterized by "large power-distance" feature representing the inequality in power distribution; people in a spectrum of power accept their position and they observe this position in their relations with different members of the society with different power positions. This cultural characteristic causes the language users to adopt contextual style for communication in the sense of accurate choice of language register in relations with the other society members; choice of the best address form is one sample of application of contextual style.

"High uncertainty avoidance" in the sense of people fidelity to common laws and norms is another feature of Iranian culture. In such cultures, the rules are needed in every aspect of life, the rituals and ceremonies are very important and innovation and creativity is low.

Since symbols and implicit meaning is very common in communications of Iranian people, Iranian culture could be categorized in the group of "high context-communication" cultures; that is, most of the information is implied in the message in such culture.

In the localization process, all of these cultural characteristics should be considered by the translators. On the other hand, the responses of the audience to the localized text and in this case, advertisement, are subconsciously affected by such cultural properties.

Focus on successful and well known brands and status products, distinct roles of men and women, the polite forms of address based on the situation of addresser and

addressee, frequent use of symbols and stereotypical portrayals of women according to Islamic -Iranian norms all are reflections of the Iranian culture in the localized advertisements.

As discussed earlier, relevance is an indicative of the success of the advertisement in satisfying the goal of producing the desired response. Based on the relevance theory, when the communicator's intention and the receptor's expectation meet, a successful communication takes place. As Sperber and Wilson (1986) believed, a text is relevant to a receptor if and only if it yields a positive cognitive effect in the sense of making a change in an individual's awareness. To put this theory into practice, some factors are required to measure the relevance. Therefore, the researcher adopted a relevance model. Extent of relevance of a number of headlines as a sample corpus was found by use of this model.

The findings show the significance of the factors of "clarity" and "focus" for the relevance of the essential element of commercial advertisements, i.e., headline. Regarding the briefness and clarity as the principal specificities of a headline, those headlines that use the ambiguous language, transliterated or transcribed words or specialized terms couldn't be relevant to their target receptors and this fact has been confirmed by the results of this study. Gully (1997) also found in his research on applied techniques in discourse of Arabic advertising that the code switching and mixing is not always a reliable translation technique in advertisements and it is applicable only for creating rhymes. The findings of another researcher, Basem Al-Agha (2006) also approved the hypothesis of inadequacy of borrowing and transliteration strategies in translation of headlines. Of course, the results illustrate that only those foreign words which have been coined in the Persian language and are used commonly by the Persian speakers don't spoil clarity and understandability. Another fact which has been extracted out of the results was that understanding the mentioned issues in the headlines which require much background information is difficult. Often, the jargons and the culture specific terms challenge those receptors who have no related background knowledge.

Moreover, regarding the fact that the advertisement is an operative type of text, according to Reiss (1971), its eventual aim is to elicit the desired response from the audience. Therefore, presenting an advertisement to different people with various perceptual backgrounds cannot extract the demanded reaction from all of them. Conclusively, to fulfill the persuasive goal of an internationalized commercial advertisement, in any region with its specific cultural values, localization is a supplementary and indeed necessary practice. The advertisements of the internationally known products are produced in Iran, too and the major differences of Iranian culture and the western culture compel the Iranian translators and marketers to take the local sensitivities of Iranian culture and society into account. In general, in the cases that Iranian advertisers took the cultural properties into account, the headlines were more relevant to the audience while in those cases where this important variant, i.e. culture has been ignored, the relevance decreased.

It is hoped that this research could pave the way for the future researchers who are interested in application of the relevance theory in translation and localization and also who want to study the problems and obstacles of the translation of advertisements.

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THE EFFECT OF EFL TEACHERS' QUESTIONING BEHAVIOR ON THE AMOUNT OF LEARNERS' CLASSROOM INTERACTION DURING PRE-READING DISCUSSION TASK

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Abstract

The primary aim of learning a language is to use it in communication and teacher-learner interaction is a key to reach that goal. Eight reading classes at intermediate level were audio-taped. The study explored recurring patterns of questioning behavior and their interactive effects were observed through nonparticipant observation. The findings of this study indicated that Display and Closed questions were used by the teachers more frequently than Referential and Open questions. Also, it was concluded that Referential and Open questions could create more interaction.

Key words: Referential/ Display and Open/Closed questions, classroom interaction, pre-reading discussion task

Introduction

The growth of interest in the analysis of teacher language has been stimulated by the rejection of language teaching methods as the key determinant of successful learning. The notion of methods came under criticism in the 1980s and mainstream language teaching no longer regarded methods as the key factor in accounting for success or failure of language teaching (Seedhouse, 1999). By referring to several studies, Ellis (1990) points out although these studies revealed the effectiveness of some methods; they were not able to demonstrate that one method was more successful than another. Thus, researchers began to focus on classroom interaction as the major variable affecting SLA. They have tried to pay "attention to the processes of classroom interaction by collecting language data from the classroom itself" (Ellis, 1990: 66).

Thus, within the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research, classroom-based research has emerged as an important kind of research which attempts to investigate the nature of classroom language and classroom interaction. This kind of

research is motivated by an attempt to look at the classroom as a setting for classroom language learning in terms of the language input provided by the teacher's talk (Chaudron, 1988). Teacher talk study has originated from classroom research which tries to investigate what happens inside the classroom (Allwright & Baily, 1991). Its aim is to identify the processes that facilitate or debilitate L2 classroom learning.

Recently, there has been much research on teacher talk (e.g. Long and Sato, 1983). Issues such as the amount and type of teacher talk, speech modifications made by teachers, instructions and explanations, error correction and questions have been more or less the center of attention. An important aspect of classroom interaction which has received a great deal of attention, is teachers' questions which may serve various functions including focusing attention, exercising disciplinary, controlling the instruction, motivating learners and encouraging them to participate in classroom interaction (Shomoosi, 2004).

Teacher's questioning

All over the world, classroom interaction is usually dominated by question and answer, with teachers asking most of the questions. Questions provide the practice and feedback essential for the development. They alert students to the information in a lesson. They can be used to review previously learned material to establish a knowledge base for the new material to be learned. The Longman Dictionary of English language provides the following definition for a question: a command or interrogative expression used to elicit information or a response, or to test knowledge. Question is a tool used in the direct interaction between the teacher and learners. Questioning is one of the most common techniques used by teachers (Richards & Lockhart, 2000; Walsh, 2006) and serves as the principal way in which teachers control the classroom interaction. Johnson (1995) points out "typically teachers retain this control through question-answer mode of interaction". In Ur's view (2000, in Tuan & Nhu, 2010), the teacher questioning serves purposes such as letting learners present their ideas, testing their understanding knowledge or skills, engaging them actively in participating in learning, stimulating their thinking and getting them to review and practice previously learnt materials. According to Tuan and Nhu (2010) it is important to the teachers to be familiar with the impact of questions on communicating and learning in the classroom, and find ways to improve the use of questions by themselves and their students.

Types of questions

According to Chaudron (1988), most of the studies on teachers' questions have investigated the ways in which questions facilitate target language productions or correct learners' responses. Language teachers have often used questions which produce only short responses from students. Several studies (Long and Sato, 1983; Brock, 1986, cited in Tuan & Nhu, 2010) have focused on the types of questions such as display/referential questions to find out which one produce 'communicative' responses, arguing that referential questions are more likely to produce 'natural'

responses than display questions. According to Brown (2001), display questions refer to questions for which the teacher knows the answers and demand a single or short response. By contrast, referential questions demand more thought and generate longer responses.

It has often been observed that teachers tend to ask more display questions than referential questions (Long & Sato, 1983, cited in Tuan & Nhu, 2010; Anani, 2008). The explanation for this is the role the teachers play. If the teachers just pass on information rather than encourage students to participate in classroom activities, they tend to ask display question. Long & Sato (1983) conclude that is because the teachers emphasize much more on the form and accuracy of the language, instead of the meaning of language and communication. Long & Sato (1983) and Bock (1986) believe that referential questions may create a more near-normal speech (Flor & Juan, 2006). With the purpose for communicating rather than testing learners' knowledge, referential question has greater potential to generate social discourse and it is used when the teacher's aim is to enhance students' speaking skills and to create a social-like atmosphere in the classroom. Besides, students' answers to referential questions are more meaningful, longer and subjective in most circumstances (Long & Sato, 1983; Brock 1986, and Tsui 1995, cited in Tuan & Nhu, 2010).

Later studies (Banbrook and Skehan, 1990; Seedhouse, 1996, cited in Walsh, 2006) question the value of the distinction between display and referential questions and focused on the purpose of the teacher in questioning. The purpose of all questions is to elicit responses and the display/referential distinction is a useful one which teachers should be aware of (Cullen, 1998).

Another classification is a distinction between yes/no questions (closed questions) which are easier to understand, encouraging learners to find out the facts or to present their knowledge and produce learners' very narrow short- sentence responses and wh-questions (open questions) which provides learners with more space to talk. They provide learners with more opportunities of interactions at advanced level of thinking and encourage learners to participate actively in their learning for producing more language output. It is assumed that referential and open questions are more effective in evoking extended learner speech; then, teachers should use them to foster learners' talk (Flor & Juan, 2006).

Musumeci (1996) points out that classroom discourse differ from 'normal' communication in terms of the number of questions used and their function: to encourage involvement rather than elicit new information. In that study, Musumeci reveals that the length and complexity of learner utterances are determined more by whether a question is closed or open than whether it is a referential or display one.

The purpose of teacher questioning determines types of teacher questions in the classroom. According to a teacher's pedagogic goal, different question types are more

or less appropriate and the use of appropriate questions requires an understanding of the function of a question in relation to what is being taught (Walsh, 2006).

The Importance of Reading and Pre-reading Task

Most researchers (Flor & Juan, 2006) would agree that reading is one of the most important skills for educational and professional success. In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension, Langer (1981: 147) stated that “reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one’s knowledge of the language.”

Reading reinforces the learner’s other language skills. Carrel and Floyd (1989) confirm that those who read more, have larger vocabularies, do better on test of grammar and write better. Chastian (1988:218) while accepting the significance of reading for meaning claimed that all activities serve to facilitate communication fluency in each of the other language skills.

Studies of pre-reading activities (Tudor 1989; Celce-Murcia, 1991, cited in Alemi & Ebadi, 2010) have demonstrated the facilitative effects of activating reader’s prior knowledge as relevant to understanding of the new text. According to them, pre-reading activities do not only prepare readers for the concepts that follow but also makes the reading task easier and connecting the new concept more meaningful to prior knowledge. Pre-reading activities are, thus, intended to activate appropriate knowledge structures or provide knowledge that the reader lacks. Tudor (1989, cited in Alemi & Ebadi, 2010) calls pre-reading activities as ‘enabling activities’ because they provide a reader with necessary background to organize activity and to comprehend the material. These experiences involve understanding the purpose(s) for reading and building a knowledge base necessary for dealing with the content and the structure of the material. They say that pre-reading activities elicit prior knowledge, build background, and focus attention.

A reader's background knowledge with respect to text topic and genre is recognized as a significant factor in text comprehension. As a result, textbooks and pedagogical practice now routinely include pre-reading activities with authentic texts or other reading selections. Interestingly, a benefit of such activities is the focus or purpose for reading that they can provide. Pre-reading discussion can focus on a critical argument or controversy surrounding interpretation of a text. More simply, discussion tasks can elicit students' personal views or previous readings on a topic or their expectations with respect to text content or point of view (Knutson, 1998). Thus, due to the interactive nature of pre-reading discussion task, this study was focused on the role of the various features of EFL teacher talk during implementing this task to find out how Iranian language teachers could enhance learners’ contributions in classroom interaction.

Method

Research question and hypothesis

The major purpose of this study was to examine teacher/learner interactions in the classroom to find out what was going on there, and to examine which factors could increase or motivate meaningful teacher/learner interactions. Thus, the following research questions were posed:

1. Is there any difference between the distribution of teachers' display/referential and close/open questions in different classes?
2. What's the impact of teachers' question type on creating more interaction in EFL classroom?

The following two hypotheses were shaped in the beginning:

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference between the distribution of teachers' use of display/ referential and closed/open questions.

Hypothesis 2: Referential questions create more interaction in the classroom than display questions do.

Referential questions are those questions for which the answer is not already known by the teacher. Such questions may require interpretations and judgments on the part of the "answerer".

Display questions refer to those questions for which the questioner knows the answer beforehand; such questions are usually asked for comprehension checks, confirmation check, or clarification requests.

Closed questions (yes/no questions) are those generally easier to understand and to answer.

Open questions (Wh-questions) are those that put higher demands on the respondents' language skills and leave them more space for their answers (Flor & Juan, 2006).

Interaction is used in a general sense in this study, referring to any sort of interaction, student-student or teacher-student discussions, group discussions, and any type of classroom participation (Long and Sato, 1983, in Shomoosi, 2004).

Participants

Four EFL teachers in two language centers in Sari were treated as subjects, who taught intermediate levels in these language centers. The teachers were all Iranian-Persian native speakers- aged from 26 to 30. These teachers were selected base on two issues, first they were all MA students majoring ELT, and second they had at

least four years of foreign language teaching experience in various language institutes. In the following parts, subjects are represented as T1, T2, T3, and T4:

T1 is a male teacher with over 4 years teaching experience. T2 is a female teacher, like T1, who also has more than 4 years teaching experience. T3 is also a male teacher who is 26; his teaching experience is about 6 years. T4 is a young female with 5 years teaching experience.

Task

Reading sections in Richards, Hull, and Proctor's (2005) *Interchange Third Edition* is divided into three tasks: pre-reading discussion, reading, and post reading comprehension questions. Pre-reading discussion task was selected in this study as the most interactive generating task. Pedagogic goals of the pre-reading discussion tasks are to activate the relevant schemata for the subject /concepts in the reading passage, to promote discussion, to tap learners' opinion and personal knowledge. Thus, this task aims to integrate both reading and speaking skills.

Instrumentation

To meet the purpose of the study, the following instruments were used:

1. Classroom observation
2. Lessons' Audio-recordings
3. Lessons' transcriptions
4. The required textbook was *Interchange, Third Edition, and Book 3*. Each unit consisted of different sections: Snapshot, Conversation, Grammar, Word power and Reading. However, the focus of this study was on reading sections specially pre-reading discussion task.

Procedure

Four teachers of EFL were invited to take part in this study. Their reading classes were observed as carefully as possible during a two-month period. The researcher carried out the observation personally, sitting in the classes from beginning to the end of each session, taking notes of teachers' questions, and listening to the discussions of the students to find any noticeable patterns. The researcher conducted two 40-minute audio-recordings of their lessons. The whole process of teaching readings was tape-recorded to reflect what actually happens in classroom. A total of approximately 5 hours' recordings were transcribed. After the class, a detailed transcription of the recording was prepared and analyzed statistically with reference to earlier studies, first, to find and reveal noticeable generalizations and patterns in teachers' questioning behavior and EFL classroom interaction and second, to verify the hypotheses.

Results

As discussed earlier, the role of teacher's question in facilitating language learning in classroom is very important. Therefore, in this section, in addressing the first research question, *Is there any difference between the distribution of teachers'*

display/referential and closed/open questions in different classes? Statistical analysis was used. In order to find a distribution balance for teacher's Display and Referential questions, their corresponding numbers in each session were added up. Table 1 provides the results concerning the types of teachers' questions, display/referential and closed/open questions, and their percentage in the whole process of the reading instruction. It was found that out of a total of 327 questions, 213 were Display (65%), 114 Referential questions (35%), 193 were Closed (59%), and 134 Open (41%).

Table 1: Frequency of display/referential and open/closed questions and the percentage in the total sum

Teachers	Display Q		Referential Q		Closed Q		Open Q	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
T1	56	74	20	26	46	61	30	39
T2	68	69	30	31	66	67	32	33
T3	37	46	43	54	31	39	49	61
T4	52	71	21	29	50	68	23	32
Total	213	65	114	35	193	59	134	41

Table1 reveals that there was a tendency for the teacher to use more display (65%) and closed questions (59%) than referential (35%) and open questions (41%). Statistically speaking, the number of DQs used by EFL teachers was significantly higher than the number of RQs they asked. In other words, the distribution of the two question types was absolutely different; then, the first hypothesis was rejected.

As for the second hypothesis, four groups of questions were randomly selected from among the obtained data for statistical analysis. The total of utterances each question resulted in classroom interaction was measured (in sentence); then, they were added

up; and a mean was calculated for each type: RQ-mean= 2.75, DQ-mean= 0.80, OQ-mean= 1.08, CQ-mean= 1.0 sentence). Independent t -test was used to compare the means of RQ/DQ and OQ/CQ. Results showed that the amount of learners' speech responding to referential questions was significantly ($P<0.05$) greater than display questions. However, no significant difference was found between open and closed questions.

Table 2: The amount of interaction caused by four question types

Question Type	Number	Interaction Mean	SD	p-value
RQ	20	2.75	1.21	0.008
DQ	15	1.73	0.80	
OQ	13	1.08	0.28	0.73
CQ	5	1.0	0.00	

Referential question from the study data were found to cause more learner speech than display questions. It is reasonable to accept that learners tend to speak and participate more when the expected answer is longer. While display questions are usually asked for *comprehension checks*, *confirmation checks* or *clarification requests* (Long and Sato, 1983; Brock, 1986, in Johnson and Johnson, 1998), Referential questions are usually used for *information gaps*. Therefore, motivation and interest cause the interaction to be more lifelike.

Referential Question:

1. Why don't you like such movies?
2. Why? I love dancing
3. What is it?
4. How many movies are produced in Iran every year?
5. I love them, isn't it good to stick to their own tradition and style?
6. Do you believe in ghost? Do you have any idea?
7. What do you mean you saw a ghost?
8. What are the conditions?
9. Why do you always prefer to at breakfast?

10. Why breakfast is important?
11. Why eating dinner is not good?
12. Do you have any information about the writer?
13. Why is market research important, what is your idea, Mina?
14. Imagine you are a market researcher, what do you do?
15. What about being an spy?....spy?
16. Why don't you believe in soul?
17. What did you see?
18. Have you seen any eye catching news...in newspapers?
19. What kind of traditions do you know?
20. Which one do you like best and why?

Display Questions:

1. What happened in the film, what happened?
2. Did you read the third paragraph, which one is older, Hollywood or Bollywood?
3. What are their stories about?
4. Why did the people go there?
5. How was his experience?
6. What does it mean 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away'?
7. Do you think there is a relationship between these 2 sentences?
8. What is the main difference between breakfast and dinner according to this paragraph?
9. How did you understand it from this passage?
10. What does the text say about Mexico?
11. What did you come up with the first paragraph?
12. Where was she?
13. What is the fifth paragraph about?
14. What is the meaning of 'market research'?
15. Why wasn't it successful in America?

Open Questions:

1. What is Bollywood?
2. What do you mean?
3. Which one is older?
4. Which one has the largest movie industry?
5. What does currently mean?
6. How do the filmgoers think of the Bollywood?
7. What are they?
8. Where did it happen?
9. What happened to the miners?
10. What was in the picture?
11. What do you usually eat for breakfast?
12. 'An unexpected best seller' what does it mean?

Closed Questions:

1. Aren't they good?
2. Are you sure that they exist?
3. Does our body need something sweet in the beginning of the day?
4. Is there any reason for that?
5. Could you guess the meaning of 'extraordinary'?

Discussion

The findings are in line with Long & Sato's (1983), Brock's (1985) and Anani's (2008) studies in which they found teachers use more display than referential questions in the classroom which offered very few opportunities for the learner to practice genuine communicative uses of the target language. Brock (1986) found that higher frequencies of referential questions asked by teachers would have some effects on classroom discourse: students' responses to display questions would be shorter and syntactically less complex than their responses to referential questions; confirmation checks and clarification requests by the teacher would occur more frequently following referential questions than following display questions, and this would lead to more negotiation of meaning which is crucial to the target language acquisition.

Anani (2008) found that a teacher uses significantly more referential than display questions in a task-based class. The high-frequency use of display questions suggests the lack of two-way flow of information in classrooms. Teachers exert a tightly control over students by initiating display and closed questions, therefore, students have few opportunities to initiate, to communicate with teachers or other students. According to the result we have observed in this study, the technique of teachers' question does not contribute to students' active involvement.

The results show that, in the classes under investigation, there was a preference for display and closed questions over referential and open questions. So, in this respect, the subject teachers shared the similarities and common tendency in teaching. Most of the questions they use were display and closed questions which led to short stretch of talk on the part of the learners. Most of the time, they used questions to check the learners' understanding about the text, not to stimulate thinking or to provide more space for learners' interaction. The teachers' questions could not help the learners to produce longer language production. In this study most of the teachers' questions focused on the learners' understanding about the text asking about words, phrases, sentences and expressions, and neglected to let learners practice language through using them.

Conclusion

The study focused on what is going on in the classroom by focusing on teachers' questioning behavior in Iranian EFL context. Classroom processes are extremely complex and it would be naive to think that an observer can gain a full understanding of what is going on in the classroom by observing and analyzing a number of lessons. Through observation, it was found that display and closed

questions outnumbered referential and open ones. It was observed that referential questions made more classroom interaction.

In her output hypothesis, Swain (1985) emphasizes the role of output in successful L2 learning and argues that learners can improve their language level through pushing them to produce spoken and written output or through using the language exposed to them in meaningful ways. Producing one's own message may force the learners to pay attention to the means of expression in order to convey their. Teacher/learner interaction is based on questions and answers, and the teacher's questions play crucial role in the classroom. Thus, questions push learners to produce the target language and this output leads to better learning, then questions can be an important tool in the language classrooms, especially in those EFL contexts where the classroom provides the only opportunity to produce the target language.

In this study, it was found that teacher's questioning behavior affects EFL classroom interaction. The display and closed questions were more frequently used which created less interaction in the class; however, it was concluded that the application of more Referential questions by the teachers produced very useful and interesting classroom interactions. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL teachers in Iran should use more of referential questions in the classroom as a means of improving classroom involvement of learners and promoting classroom interaction. As (Chaudron, 1988: 52) states that "if teachers spend much time in drill-like questioning, learners may have less opportunity to evaluate input or produce creative language".

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