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THE EFFECTS OF TYPES OF ASSESSMENT (CLOZE, OPEN- ENDED, TRUE/ FALSE) ON IRANIAN UPPER INTERMEDIATE MALE AND FEMALE EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible effects of three types of reading assessment on Iranian upper intermediate EFL learners' reading skill. A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was employed in this study. The subjects of the study consisted of 120 upper intermediate male and female EFL learners. These subjects were divided into four groups. During treatment, reading comprehension was assessed through cloze type for Group A; open-ended type for group B; true/false item for group C, and a combination of cloze, open- ended , and T/F for group D in each reading session. All groups were pretested to measure their initial reading skill before conducting the experiment. The experiment lasted for about 3 months. After treatment, a posttest was administered to all groups again. The collected data were analyzed using analyses of variance and t-test. The pre-test data analyses revealed that there were no significant differences in the initial reading skills between the four groups ($p \geq 0.05$). However, the post-test data analyses showed that there was a statistically significant difference among the four groups of ($p \leq 0.05$). These findings suggest that reading assessment in the form of various formats is more influential in improving upper intermediate EFL students' reading skills than single types of assessment. The findings imply that a multi-dimensional comprehensive approach to reading assessment is more likely to improve reading skills of upper intermediate-level EFL students.

Keywords: assessment, cloze, open- ended, true/ false

1. Introduction

In language testing, examiners can use different types of test formats for evaluating learners' understanding of the main subjects. Tests may have a variety of formats, lengths, item types, scoring criteria, and media. Miller et al. (2009, p.139) state, "The significant objective of classroom testing and assessment is to get valid, reliable, and useful information with respect to the student achievement".

In general, test formats can be classified into two main categories including recognition tests and production tests (Farhady, 1985). The most common forms of recognition tests are true-false, multiple-choice and matching-type items. In recognition items, examinees need to comprehend the stem and then recognize and choose the right answer. In true-false items, a stem is given and the examinees are required to recognize whether the idea introduced in the stem is true or false (Farhady,

1985). Multiple choice (MC) items, on the other hand, include a stem, which is followed by a few alternatives. Cloze-tests have also been used for evaluating reading comprehension. Taylor (1953) first used the term "cloze-test". He defined cloze procedure as a new tool for measuring readability. He believes that the term "cloze" is derived from Gestalt psychology concept of "closure". It explains a propensity that people have to finalize a known, but not quite completed pattern. An alternative way of testing reading comprehension is by open-ended questions. In production tests like open-ended questions, the learners are required to produce language. Open-ended questions help learners to take the test and answer the questions in their own way, in comparison to questions with limited multiple-choice possibilities (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). There are some advantages and disadvantages for different language test types. In a language classroom, tests can be used to diagnose problematic areas for the learners or determine sources of learning difficulties, indicate the effectiveness of instructions and teaching activities, motivate student involvement in the learning process, show learner development in language learning, and provide students with feedback about their language learning progress for further classroom-based applications of language tests (Brown, 1998; Cohen, 1994).

2. Review of literature

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Brown (2010) defines reading as a process in which the reader constructs meaning and interacts with text through combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, the stance she or he takes in relationship to the text, and immediate, remembered, or anticipated social interaction and communication (Brown, 2010). This means that the way people comprehend reading is related to various reader intentions that are connected to situation context and their social anticipation. According to Alexander (1989, p.12), "reading is interactive process in which a reader's previous understanding of the issue and goal for reading affects what is understood from the passage".

Comprehending a reading text implies drawing needed information from it as efficiently as possible (Grellet, 1981). Reading comprehension is a complex task that involves many levels of processing. One of the most basic features of comprehension is the skill to deal with unknown words encountered in text (Paynter, Bodrova, & Doty, 2005). As comprehension involves the interaction of different cognitive skills and processes, there are many situations where difficulties arise that many lead to comprehension failure (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Alderson (2000, p.1) believes that "reading comprehension is to process text meaning through some processes of interaction with print". Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 443) state, "reading is an activity of perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension". Arietta (2010, p.5) defines reading comprehension as "holistic process of constructing meaning from written text through the interaction of the knowledge the reader brings to the text, i.e., word recognition ability, world knowledge, and knowledge of linguistic conventions. The reader's interpretation of the language that writer used in constructing the text; and the situation in which the text is read". Sadeghi, (2007) states there are two factors, which may affect reading comprehension, namely internal and external factors. The internal factors relates to reader variable. This refers to everything that is related to the reader. Background knowledge, cognitive abilities and strategies, and affective characteristics can be considered internal factors. While the external factors refers to text variable, context variable and writer variable. This study is an attempt to examine the effects of item format on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

2.2 Techniques of Testing Reading Skill

In many second and foreign language-teaching situations, reading receives a significant attention. For many foreign language learners reading is one of their most important goals. According to Richards & Renandya (2002), reading is a skill, which is highly valued by students and teachers. Harris (1968) states that the same general types of tests, which are used to test the reading ability of the native English speakers, have the same effectiveness with the foreign learners of the language. Alderson (2000) identifies three different types of questions used in reading test. He classifies them "as "textually explicit" questions in which the respondents are able to find both the question information and the correct answer, "textually implicit" questions in which the respondents are expected to find the answer by combining information across sentences and "scripturally implicit" questions, in

which the respondent needs to refer to his or her background knowledge since the text does not contain the correct answer itself". There are many kinds of testing techniques for reading comprehension. Brown (2004, p. 190) suggested, "Reading aloud, written response, multiple-choice, picture-cued items, editing, gap filling test, cloze-test, C-test, cloze-elide test, short-answer test, ordering test, and summarizing test".

Heaton (1991, p. 105) has also suggested "word matching, sentence matching, picture and sentence matching for initial stages of reading; matching tests for intermediate and advanced stages; true/false reading tests, multiple-choice items, completion, rearrangement, cloze procedures, open-ended and miscellaneous items, and cursory reading". Three types of reading test that were examined in this study are discussed in the following section:

2.2.1 Cloze Tests

Cloze tests have been widely used for measuring reading comprehension since their introducing to the testing world by Taylor in (1953). However, Klein-Braley (1982), criticized cloze procedure mostly for their deletion and scoring problems. They introduced their newly developed testing procedure, C-test, which was an expanded form of cloze tests without their deficiencies (Klein-Braley, 1995). After that, the effectiveness of C-test and cloze test became the main interest of the scientists in the field of language testing. Urquhart and Weir (1998, p. 156) further explain that it refers to the tendency of individuals to complete a pattern once that have grasped its overall significance. Harmer (2002, p. 323) states, "cloze test is the deletion of every nth word in a text". Manning (1987) also says that classic cloze words are systematically deleted from a text and the testers are required to replace them. This testing technique is considered appropriate to test reading comprehension. It is based on what Heaton (1991) says, "Perhaps the most common purpose of the cloze test, is to measure reading comprehension".

۲.۲.۲ Open Ended Questions

According to Denton (2007), "one effective way to expand children's curiosity, reasoning ability and creativity is by asking open-ended questions, those with no single right or wrong answer. Instead of predictable answers, open-ended questions elicit fresh insights and ideas, opening minds and enabling teachers and students to build knowledge together" (Denton, 2007, p. 46). Open-ended question can be defined as a test item that helps the test taker to answer in his or her own way, in comparison to questions with restricted multiple-choice possibilities (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

2.2.3 True False Items

Another language test format used in reading assessment is true false format. The Most frequent use of the true-false item is in evaluating the examinee's skill to identify the correctness of statements of fact, definitions of terms, and differentiate fact from opinion. True-false tests include various opinion statements to which the examinee is required to answer true or false. In most situations, respondents guess what opinion the teacher holds and mark the answers accordingly. This is one of the disadvantages of true false items. Proponents of true false items such as Miller (2009) assert that true false items have utility for measuring a broad range of verbal knowledge. In developing the true false item test, Miller (2009, p. 184) proposed some factors in organizing true false items test. "First, avoid broad, general, unimportant and negative statements, avoid long complete sentence, avoid including two ideas in one statement, if opinion is used attribute it in some sources, true statement and false statement should be more or less identical in length. The number of true statements and false statements should be roughly the same".

Inspired by the reviewed literature the researchers formulated the following research questions and hypotheses.

RQ1. Does item type (cloze, short-answer, True/ False) significantly affect Iranian upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency?

H01: Item type (cloze, short-answer, True/ False) does not significantly affect Iranian upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency.

RQ2. Does item type (cloze, short-answer, True/ False) affect Iranian male and female upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency differently?

H02: Item type (cloze, short-answer, True/ False) does not affect Iranian male and female upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency differently.

3. Methodology

This quantitative study was conducted in two high schools in Roodbar, Guilan. The data were collected from students' reading comprehension mean scores in four test item formats including cloze, open- ended, true false test, and a combination of the cloze, open- ended, true false test items. They were analyzed and compared in order to find out which one of the test formats were more effective to be used in assessing and improving students' reading comprehension.

3.1 Participants

The populations of this study were 120 Iranian upper- intermediate EFL learners (69 female and 51 male participants). Subjects of this study were in fourth grade high school. Their age ranged from 17 to 19. OPT was administered to examine the homogeneity of the participants regarding their general foreign language proficiency at the beginning of the study. The four groups received the same amount of instruction (two sessions a week, 90 minutes each session, nearly 12 weeks).

3.2 Instrumentation and Materials

The instrumentation used in this study included:

- OPT test (Oxford placement test): consisted of 60 multiple choice grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary items for checking the homogeneity of the groups regarding language proficiency. The reliability index was estimated through a pilot study on 15 EFL learners ($\alpha = .76$).
- Longman complete course for the TOEFL test (Deborah, 2004): reading comprehension tests for both pretest and posttest were selected from this book. Each test comprised of 40 multiple choice questions ($\alpha_{\text{pretest}} = .81$; $\alpha_{\text{posttest}} = .79$).
- Grade four high school English textbook (Birjandi, Anani Sarab, & Samimi, 2013): the course book was taught during the instructional sessions.
- Teacher- made reading comprehension tests: To determine possible gradual improvement in reading comprehension ability of the participants each week, teacher- made tests that were in four formats were developed based on the learners' course book. This study consisted of eight teacher-made tests for each group (8 cloze type for Group A; 8 open-ended type for group B; 8 true/false item for group C, and 8 tests that included a combination of cloze, open- ended , and T/F for group D).

3.3 Procedure

First, OPT test was administered to 156 EFL learners and 120 upper intermediate EFL learners were selected based on Oxford test direction. Next, they were randomly divided into four groups. After that a standard reading comprehension test taken from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test (Deborah, 2004) was administered to four groups as pre-test. It contained 60 questions in multiple-choice form. All the participants received the same educational instructions. The reading passages were taught in three phases (pre reading- while reading and post reading phases) for all the groups. During pre-reading stage, connections were made between students' background knowledge and their prior learning experiences. During reading stage, the teacher helped students to know the meaning of the text. After reading, teacher gave feedback on students' pronunciation, and then asked the students to retell the text on their own word to make certain that they have understood the text. The main difference was that at post-reading stage, students did the comprehension exercises which was specific to their group (i.e. cloze type for Group A; open-ended type for group B; true/false item for group C, and a combination of cloze, open- ended , and T/F for group D). Each week the participants were given a teacher- made reading test that was related to the lesson they were taught every session to assess their reading comprehension; so, all the participants received 12 sessions of instruction and 8 quizzes. At the end of the last session, the participants were given a posttest in order to see the effect of the test format on the performance of the students.

3.4 Data Analysis

SPSS version 22 (Science Statistical Package for the Social) was used for all the statistical analyses in this study. One way ANOVA, independent samples T-test, and Paired sample t-test were used to analyze the statistical data and to answer the research questions.

4. Results

4.1 The results of the Pre-test

To establish that the subjects were at almost identical level in terms of their reading comprehension at the beginning of the study, a pretest was administered to the four groups. Prior to fulfilling the analysis, the main supposition of One Way ANOVA specifically, normality of the distributions was evaluated through running Levene statistics.

Table 1: Test of Homogeneity of Variances for the pretest

Pretest scores			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.041	3	116	.377

The results of Levene statistic revealed that the group variances were similar in reading pre- test (P pre- test (.377) $\geq .05$). Table 2 presents the results of ANOVA for the pre-test scores of reading test.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA for the pretest scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.633	3	8.544	.381	.767
Within Groups	2599.533	116	22.410		
Total	2625.167	119			

Results of One Way ANOVA reflected that there was no significant difference in learners' performance in terms of their reading comprehension on the pre-test across the four groups. The significance value of the F test was greater than (0.05) for the pretest. To answer the first research question, the One-Way ANOVA procedure produced a one-way analysis of variance for the quantitative dependent variable to be specific post reading comprehension by the single factor or independent variable (types of assessment). The equality of the variances for the four groups was examined for the results of the posttest, too. To test this assumption, Levene's homogeneity of variance test was run for the results of the post-test.

Table 3: Test of Homogeneity of Variances for the posttest

posttest scores			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
11.454	3	116	.103

Thus, the important first step in the analysis of variance indicated that the variances of the groups were equivalent for the posttest of reading test (sig=.103 $\geq .05$).

Table 4: One-way ANOVA for the posttest scores

posttest scores					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2346.467	3	782.156	52.234	.000
Within Groups	1737.000	116	14.974		
Total	4083.467	119			

The significance value of the F test in the ANOVA table was less than (.05). Thus, the hypothesis that average assessment scores of the reading test (post-test) were equal across the three groups was rejected (F 3, 116= 52.234, Sig. = .000 $\leq .05$).

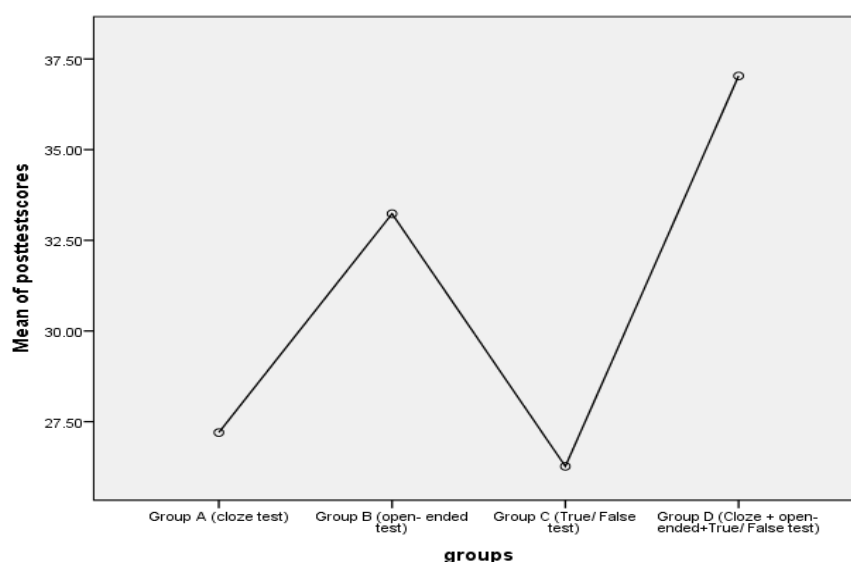


Figure1: Mean Plot for the Results of the reading post Test

In general, *F* statistics established that there was statistically a significant difference among the four groups' means, and means plots showed the location of these differences. Participants of the experimental group D (cloze, open-ended, and true/false) outperformed their counterparts namely groups (A), (B), and (C). After it was revealed that the groups differed in some way, post- hoc test disclosed more about the structure of the differences.

Table 5: Multiple Comparisons for the Results of the Posttest

Scheffe		Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) groups	(J) groups				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Group A (cloze test)	Group B (open-ended test)	-6.03*	.99	.00	-8.86	-3.19
	Group C (True/ False test)	.933	.99	.83	-1.90	3.76
	Group D (Cloze + open-ended+ True/ False test)	-9.83*	.99	.00	-12.66	-6.99
Group B (open-ended test)	Group C (True/ False test)	6.96*	.99	.00	4.13	9.80
	Group D (Cloze + open-ended+ True/ False test)	-3.80*	.99	.003	-6.63	-.96
Group C (True/ False test)	Group D (Cloze + open-ended+ True/ False test)	-10.76*	.99	.00	-13.60	-7.93

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The highest mean difference was found between experimental (D) group and group(C) mean difference= (10.76). On the other hand, the lowest mean difference was reported for experimental (A) group and experimental (C) group (mean difference= .933).The experimental group (D) outweighed the other three groups in terms of their reading comprehension. In the second place, experimental (B) group performed better than the groups (A) and (C). Finally, group (C) performance was lower than the other three groups. In order to investigate students' development within groups, four paired t-

tests were also run, which showed the subjects' progress in pre-test and post-test that are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Paired Samples Statistics for the Four Groups

groups			Mean	N	SD	SEM
Group A (cloze test)	Pair 1	pretest scores	25.53	30	5.61	1.02
		posttest scores	27.20	30	5.69	1.03
Group B (open- ended test)	Pair 2	pretest scores	26.50	30	4.65	.85
		posttest scores	33.23	30	3.82	.69
Group C (True/ False test)	Pair 3	pretest scores	25.40	30	4.09	.74
		posttest scores	26.26	30	3.09	.56
Group D (Cloze + open- ended+ True/ False test)	Pair 4	pretest scores	26.23	30	4.43	.80
		posttest scores	37.03	30	1.80	.33

The mean scores of the group (A) has been improved from (25.53) in pre- test to (27.20) in post-test; that of the group (B) has changed from (26.5) in pre- test to (33.23) in posttest, the mean of the group (C) has changed from (25.40) in pre- test to (26.26) in post- test , and finally group (D) has changed from (26.23) in pre- test to (37.03) in post- test on the reading test.

Table 7: Paired Samples Test for the Pre and Posttests

Groups			Paired Differences						t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	SD	SEM	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
						Lower	Upper				
Group (cloze test)	A	pretest scores - posttest scores	-1.66	1.78	.32	-2.33	-.99	-5.10	29	.00	
Group (open- ended test)	B	pretest scores - posttest scores	-6.73	5.65	1.03	-8.84	-4.62	-6.52	29	.00	
Group (True/ False test)	C	pretest scores - posttest scores	-.86	3.74	.68	-2.26	.53	-1.26	29	.21	
Group (Cloze + open- ended +True/ False test)	D	pretest scores - posttest scores	-10.80	4.49	.82	-12.47	-9.12	-13.1	29	.00	

As depicted in the Table 7, three groups had progressed statistically significant in the post-test. Based on the results of paired T-test, this progress was statistically significant for the groups (A), (B), and (D) ($P \leq 0.05$). However, for group (C) that received evaluation based on "true/ false items" the difference between pre and posttest was not significant ($p \geq 0.05$). In other words, all the three groups made a substantially progress in the post- reading test except group (C). These results also rejected the first null hypotheses that item type does not affect Iranian upper intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The second research question dealt with if item type (cloze, short-answer, True/ False) affects Iranian male and female upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency differently.

Table 8: Independent Sample T-Test for Females and Males of the Four Groups

Groups			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower	Upper
Group A (cloze test)		Equal variances assumed	2.58	.11	.16	28	.87	.35	2.13	-4.01	4.72
Group B (open-ended test)		Equal variances assumed	.20	.65	1.93	28	.06	2.58	1.33	-.15	5.31
Group C (True/False test)		Equal variances assumed	1.16	.28	-1.31	28	.19	-1.50	1.13	-3.83	.83
Group D (Cloze + open-ended True/False test)		Equal variances assumed	.76	.38	1.79	28	.08	1.16	.64	-.16	2.49

The results of independent samples T-test for the four groups supported the second null hypothesis and showed that there were not significant differences between male and female upper intermediate EFL learners' reading proficiency in posttest ($p \geq .05$).

4.2 Discussion

Alderson (2000: 86) states, "there are factors affecting the difficulty of reading test items. One of them is different type of question". Pearson and Johnson (1978) in Alderson (2000) suggest that test items might vary in their difficulty. The findings of this study showed that there was a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension score tested by using different item types during the class performance. The result of reading scores of the group who were evaluated by the test that combined the three item formats (cloze, open-ended, and true/ false) was better than the result of other groups. In the second place, those who were evaluated based on open-ended questions, had higher performance. It seems that since students of group (B) were required to produce rather than recognize the answer, they tried to be more involved in reading texts and this might have helped them to achieve better results. The participants whose evaluation was based on cloze and true/ false had the least performance on reading test. Cloze Test and true/false were easier for the students because there was an option provided in each text, so the learners did not make further effort to improve their vocabulary. The students could freely determine the words that were appropriate to fill in after they knew the context. They could choose the words that were more familiar or common for them. On the other hand, in the open-ended questions, they had to refer to the context to be able to provide the right answer and this helped them to be involved more with it. The results showed that the fourth group that had all types of assessment during class assessment were more successful. This indicates that all types of assessment are complementary and that one type cannot significantly improve reading skills, nor can it be responsive to individual differences. Therefore, a multi-dimensional comprehensive approach is more likely to improve upper intermediate-level EFL students' reading

skills. This implication is in line with Smith and Levin's (1996) contention that "no single type of assessment can always meet all purposes, in all situations," therefore, the solution, as they argue, is to "make the best use possible of various assessment strategies in order to meet the diverse criteria of and purposes for the overall assessment" (p. 111). The results revealed no significant differences between males and females in the reading comprehension scores across passages. Therefore, when examining comprehension across multiple passages, males had no advantage over females, and females had no advantage over males. This finding contrasts previous research that suggests that females are better second language learners than males (Huebner, 1995).

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using different types of item types in reading comprehension assessment. It was found that using multiple test items is more effective than using single test item type. The results also implied that production item types such as open ended items could help EFL readers better comprehend the reading text. Results showed that there was a significant difference between the performances of the four groups. The comparisons made showed that the reading comprehension of those students in the treatment group, where cloze tests, open-ended questions, and true/ false items were implemented simultaneously, differed significantly from those of students in the other groups where single way of testing reading comprehension implemented. It was concluded that using a combination of item types has significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian upper intermediate EFL learners. The findings of this study are in agreement with the existing studies in the literature that revealed that test methods could enhance students' reading comprehension ability. This study also has several important teaching and pedagogical implications. Findings of this study showed that test methods have an important role in EFL instruction. Findings of this study encourage teachers to use different test methods such as cloze tests, true /false and open-ended questions in order to enhance reading comprehension ability of learners. Additionally, this study was conducted for EFL upper intermediate students; this study can be expanded in wider population. It can be replicated with other levels such as elementary or advanced. Finally, interested researchers can investigate the impact of other types of test methods such as multiple choice question, cloze Elite test, matching items etc. on other language skills such as writing or listening.

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THE EFFECT OF READING ACADEMIC TEXTS ON LEARNING AND RETENTION OF ACADEMIC VOCABULARY: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF MODEL ESSAY

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ABSTRACT

word knowledge plays an essential role in determining the success of efl and esl learners in eap setting. it is determinant in speaking, reading, writing and listening (adolphs and schmitt, 2003). this study aimed at investigating the effects of reading academic essay as a representative model of academic texts on incidental vocabulary learning and retention of words from academic word list (coxhead, 2000), and to evaluate the success of the material used. to this end, 40 pre-university and university students were chosen to take part in the experiment. after administering a pretest and during 17 weeks of experiments, study group received fifteen academic model essays, while the control group equally received fifteen top ielts model essays written for academic module. the students in neither groups received instruction of the target words to ensure the incidental manner of learning them. at the end of the experiment, they were given a vocabulary test, to see the effect of reading academic essay on their vocabulary learning and retention. then, their pre and post test scores were compared using a dependent t -test. the result of t-test for vocabulary test ($t = -8.39$, $p = .001$) showed that their vocabulary knowledge had improved significantly in post test compared to pre test. also they were administered a delayed post test the result of which showed that besides having a positive effect on vocabulary knowledge, academic essay affects students vocabulary retention positively. therefore, the findings of this study offers that 8.5 -11% of each academic essay is approximately comprised of academic words from awl and, if used as supplementary reading material beside textbooks, can help students to improve their knowledge of academic vocabulary. it is assumed that, the findings of this study can have some main implications for instructors, pre-university and university students as a part of an academic preparation program for the texts and tasks they encounter in college or university.

key words: vocabulary learning, vocabulary retention, academic word list, academic essay

1. Introduction

"Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p.255). Similarly, Sedita (2005) emphasizes the significance of knowledge of vocabulary since it consists of all lexical items which we have to be familiar with as a means of conveyance of our meanings and of effective communication. Accordingly, educators and educational researchers from all around the world for years emphasized that vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in reading comprehension and more importantly in making an efficient verbal and nonverbal communication (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1997; Nation, 2001; Coxhead & Nation, 2001).

Nation (1990, P. 2-3) states three strong reasons to emphasize the necessity of a systematic and principled approach to vocabulary by both teachers and learners. The first of them is, because the considerable research on vocabulary we have good information about what to do about vocabulary

and about what vocabulary to focus on. The second reason is to show that there is a wide variety of ways for dealing with vocabulary in foreign or second language learning. The third reason for emphasizing the necessity of a systematic and principled approach to vocabulary is that, both teachers and students see vocabulary as being a very important, if not the most important, element in language learning (p. 3).

Having a limited vocabulary is considered a serious barrier for reading comprehension and consequently a barrier to improve one's mental lexicon. As Hunt and Beglar (2005) mention: "the heart of language comprehension and use is the lexicon". Furthermore, Donmore (1989) takes the view that vocabulary growth results in promotion of reading comprehension. Some researchers (e.g. Laufer 1986; Nation 1990) believe that many of learners' difficulties, both receptively and productively, result from an inadequate vocabulary, and even when they are at higher levels of language competence and performance, they still feel in need of learning vocabulary. One of the research implications about the importance of vocabulary is that "lexical competence is at the heart of communicative competence" (Meara, 1996, p.35). This is the case in first language (L1) contexts (Anderson & Freebody, 1981) and in second language (L2) contexts (Laufer, 1991).

Based on what Hwang and Nation (1995) claim, knowledge of the 2,000 most frequent word families enables L2 readers to recognize 84% of the words in various types of authentic texts. This falls well short of the 95% of words which Laufer (1991, 1992) indicated needs to be recognized for unassisted reading, and which would require a minimum vocabulary size of 3,000 word families. More recently, research has provided some evidence with respect to the question what constitutes a sufficient number of words for different tasks. For participating in an everyday conversation it is assumed a learner needs 2,000-3,000 of the most frequent English words (Adolphs and Schmitt 2003), whilst s/he needs 5,000 words to begin to read authentic texts (Schmitt 2007) and around 10,000 for starting an academic degree course (Hazenbergh and Hulstijn 1996, as cited in Daller & Milton, 2013).

According to many researchers, there is a general consensus on reading as one of major sources of vocabulary learning (Nagy, Herman et al. 1985; Day, Omura et al. 1991; Hulstijn 1992; Dupay & Krashen 1993; Levine Ferenz & Reves 2000; Nation 2001; Krashen 2004; Waring & Nation 2004; Horst 2005; Pigada & Schmitt 2006; Huang & Liou 2007; Min 2008; Schmitt 2008; Paqout, 2010). Such claim is also applicable to EAP situation as the ability to read academic texts is considered the most important skill that university student of ESL or EFL need to acquire. Indeed, good reading comprehension is essential not only to academic learning in all subject areas but also to professional success and, indeed, to lifelong learning (Pritchard, Romeo, & Muller, 1999). Texts absolutely contribute to vocabulary learning process (Coxhead, 1988; Gass, 1997; Nation & Coxhead, 2012). Indeed, the most vocabulary is acquired through context (Sternberg, 1987; Coady, 1993).

For academic purposes, the use of academic vocabulary and academic texts is a crucial focus in the teaching and learning of English; however, it often causes a great deal of difficulty for language learners (Ferrara & Fine, 1988; Coxhead & Nation, 2001; Chung & Nation, 2003; Cobb & Horst, 2004). Coxhead & Nation (2001) summarize three possible reasons to support the importance of teaching and learning academic vocabulary. First, academic vocabulary represents a substantial number of words in academic texts. Second, learners are more familiar with technical vocabulary in their own academic fields than with general academic vocabulary. Third, while it may be difficult for language instructors to teach technical vocabulary, because they often lack the necessary background knowledge, they have few such problems with academic words, and so these important items can and should be taught.

In order to help learners to focus on the seemingly most important words in their studies word lists based on written or spoken texts and corpus analysis have been created for language learners (Campion & Elley, 1971; Ghadessy, 1979; Francis & Kucera, 1982; Hofland & Johansson, 1982; Nation, 1990; Coxhead, 1998 & 2000; Horst, Cobb, & Nicolae, 2005; Huang, 2007; Wang, Liang, & Ge, 2008). In order to build up the academic word list, Coxhead has compiled 3.5 million running words drawn from the four disciplines of law, art, commerce, and science from several hundred written academic texts. The list contains 570 word families not included in the most frequent 2,000 words of English. The basic idea behind the compilation of the list, according to Coxhead (2000), was that it could serve as a basis for making sound decisions concerning the selection of vocabulary items worth focusing on during class time, as well as independent study activities. For learners with academic goals, the 570 word family Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) is like a specialized extension of the high frequency words. It covers about 10% of academic texts, 4% of newspapers and approximately 2% of

the running words of novels (Chung & Nation, 2003). This vocabulary has been called academic vocabulary (Martin, 1976), sub-technical vocabulary (Cowan, 1974) or semi-technical vocabulary (Farrell, 1990). Numerous studies have shown that AWL vocabulary is essential in comprehending texts from a variety of specialist fields (Chen, Her, & Huang, 2008; Chung & Nation, 2003; Mudraya, 2006).

Teachers and materials developers who work with vocabulary lists often assume that frequently occurring words and those which occur in many different kinds of texts may be more useful for language learners to study than infrequently occurring words and those whose occurrences are largely restricted to a particular text or type of text (Nation, in press; West, 1953). Without a basic knowledge of these terms, students will have difficulty understanding information they read or hear (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). The important factor underlying all attempts to teach academic English, however, is the fact that university students who require reading English texts in their fields of study have to expand their vocabulary knowledge in a much more efficient way than ordinary ESL/EFL learners (Cobb 2000).

Almost all recognized text-based studies (e.g. Hwang and Nation, 1989; Hirsh and Nation, 1992; Klinmanee & Sopprasong, 1997; Chen, Hu, & Ho in, 2009), that were meant to investigate the effect of different texts on learning vocabulary, all approved the favorable conditions that such texts provided for learning more vocabulary. Paquot (2010) states that although many corpus-based studies of vocabulary in academic discourse conducted by many researchers (e.g. Johansson, 1978; Coxhead, 2000; Mudraya, 2006) all considered book sections, journal articles and textbooks, academic writing includes other kinds of text than professionally edited articles and books, notably students' essays.

2. Statement of the Problem

The importance of academic reading has been well recognized by many researchers. Levine, Ferenz, and Reves (2000) state that the ability to read academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that university students of ESL or EFL need to acquire. The key to understand academic texts is having a good academic lexicon. The main reason for the emphasis is the crucial role such vocabulary plays in reading academic texts and producing academic writing (Cobb, 2007). In fact, knowledge of such vocabulary will not guarantee success, but lack of knowledge of that can lead to failure (Biemiller, 1999). Singleton (1999) calls for greater collaboration between researchers in terms of qualitative, quantitative as well as durative research and warns that vocabulary researchers risk becoming a self referring ghetto unless they start integrating research from other disciplines. Despite the burgeoning interest in recent years, however, a question mark still remains over the precise nature of the vocabulary that needs to be taught in EAP courses, and how best to teach it (Behrouzi & Taherian 2012). Model texts serve to model rhetorical elements, principles and patterns either by including a description of parts (thesis statement, claim, support, refutation, introduction and conclusion) or by having students discern these on their own (Rosa, A. & P. Eschholz, 2007). A model essay written by a native speaker may also be a beneficial resource if it can function as a feedback tool (Qi, D.S. & S. Lapkin, 2001).

Regarding all the acknowledging comments on the prominent role of essays in academic area (mostly in the module of academic writing) and the essential role of the promising academic vocabulary used in such texts, to date no published study has investigated the extent to which such texts may provide L2 learners with opportunities to expand their academic vocabulary knowledge, and also to see if reading such academic texts may have significant impact on learning and retention of academic vocabulary. Therefore, this study will extend the research on seeking answers to this long neglected problem.

3. Review of Literature

Grabe and Stoller (2001) claim that in academic setting, reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. One approach to defining English in academic setting is through analyzing the linguistic elements that make up the register of schooling. One of the pioneer works in distinguishing academic English from other types of reading is Cummins's 1979 study that distinguishes academic English (English needed for higher education or for occupational purposes) as Cognitive Academic English Proficiency (CALP), from Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) which is the everyday language.

Cummins argues that CALP is both cognitively demanding and context-reduced, whereas BICS is cognitively undemanding and context-embedded.

Reading and learning from texts is one of the demands of every academic language in all academic contexts. According to the dictionaries (e.g. Oxford Dictionaries) academic reading text (document) is basically defined as anything related to an educational or scholarly institution or environment that can be used in academic contexts such as school or classroom. It can include school books, articles, textbooks and anything that has been written by someone with experience in the field. According to Spack (1993) academic reading as a means of academic English, is often a process of actively engaging with what is read, gleaning information and then fitting this information by thinking things through, and finally being able to interpret the content flexibly to suit the purposes of the academic writing assignment. Hellekjær (2009) describes Academic reading as a complex, multi-level and different process from other kinds of reading. It is also defined as purposeful and critical reading of a range of lengthy academic texts for completing the study of specific major subject areas. However, for most second language readers, the major problem in academic reading will simply be the gap between what they know and what the native speakers know in relation to the language and the content of the text written, as nearly all authentic texts are for native speaking readers (Eskey, 1986). Similarly, text types refer to typical formats of text organization, and the traditional way in which texts follow norms of structure, style and layout.

Almost all academic reading texts are presented to students in written form. Thereby, almost always the term academic reading text implies the old familiar “academic written input” or the academic writing and/or any documental material that meets the requirements of academic writing’s theoretical and contextualized frameworks in a more productive way, written by scholars or native-like proficient learners to be used for academic purposes. Reading such texts remain a staple within academic curricula worldwide, presenting teachers and students with the official knowledge of school subjects as well as the preferred values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors of experts in those. According to Parrish (2004) benefits of using reading texts can meet a learner’s needs or expectations of having something concrete to work from and take home for further study.

While English language instruction has many important components, the essential constituents to many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are textbooks (Moghtadi, 2014). Textbook, as a representative of academic materials, has always been on the center of course designer and researchers’ attention. Although Joan (2001), analyzing textbook tasks for the potential controller of learning conditions related to content choice, procedure options, and evaluation techniques, found that students potentially have few choices and thus little control of the educational process. Furthermore, course books are often quite short and they often fail to present appropriate and realistic language models as well as fostering cultural understanding (Kayapinar, 2009).

According to Cheung and Wong (2002), the major premise of an academic curriculum should aim at developing students’ intellectual abilities in subject areas that are worthy of study. In order to achieve that goal, ELT course designers and instructors need to have prospective learners exposed to different text types if prove helpful. In fact, there are some other types of academic texts which follow academic discourse, and although not disfavored, rarely sought to find out their potential effects on vocabulary learning. So it paves the way for more research on the potentials of other academic reading texts except for textbooks and also makes a room for the idea of using other types of academic texts in both EAP and EAP preparation settings.

Academic essay could be a proper case for investigating its possible effects on learners’ learning and retention of academic vocabulary for the benefits that such academic text provides its users with. Morgan (2011) states that while reading model essays students are, in terms of language and academic discourse, exposed to the rhetorical style of academic context. In fact, if features of academic language are represented along a cline, then professional model essays represent one end of the spectrum in terms of the language used, the style of discourse employed as well as the assumed knowledge of related previously conducted researches. According to many researchers (e.g. Park, 1986; Paxton, 2007; Charles, 2007; Hyland, 2009) rhetorical style in the textbooks can mislead students into believing this to be the style of academic writing that should be mimicked in their own essays. This, indeed, calls attention for broadening views on the role and possible effects of applying safer academic written materials in EAP contexts such as academic essay, as a better model, which follows academic rhetorical style while not necessarily being used in textbooks. In fact, this paper is not offering the idea of replacing textbooks with other ELT materials as new alternatives but calling more

attentions on the use of other academic materials as supplementary materials beside textbooks for the benefits that they provide learners with.

Studies investigating the effects of text types on learning vocabulary (e.g. Chern, 1993; Haastrup, 1991; Haynes, 1993; Parry, 1993; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999) have identified many factors such as the nature of the word and the text that contains the word, and the kind of information available in the text to be influential. According to Huckin and Coady (1999, p.188), certain kinds of texts (those personally interesting to the learners) facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition. Zwaan (1994) suggested that readers mentally represent and process text differently depending on the genre of text involved and their related expectations and schemas.

In spite of this fact, there are not many research that have specifically investigated the effects of text genre on vocabulary learning and retention. Here the findings of the few related researches to the matter of text types and the learning opportunities they provide learners with are presented. Hu and Nation (2000), for example, examined the relationship between text coverage (the percentage of running words in the text) and reading comprehension for non-native speakers of English with a fiction text. In order to achieve this goal they replaced various proportions of low-frequency words in the text with nonsense words to ensure they were unknown. Also in that research reading comprehension was measured in two ways: by a multiple-choice reading comprehension test, and by a written cued recall of the text. The findings of the research showed that a 98% text coverage would be needed for most learners to gain adequate comprehension.

In separated studies, the impact of different types of contexts for example a novel (Saragi et al., 1978), a graded reader (Horst et al., 1998), specially constructed paragraphs (Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984), and narrative and expository texts of about 1,000 words (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985) on incidental vocabulary learning were investigated. Other contexts used in incidental learning of vocabulary experiments were Studies on learning from context have used single sentences (Dempster, 1987; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997), multiple sentences (Dempster, 1987), L2 sentences together with their L1 translations (Griffin, 1992), L1 sentences containing the L2 target vocabulary (Pickering, 1982), three sentences one of which was a definition (Gipe & Arnold, 1979), and L1 and L2 glossed passages (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997).

Gardner (2004), explicitly stating the concept of genre, analyzed the lexical differences between narrative and expository reading materials and their potential effects on student's vocabulary acquisition. The findings of his study showed that student's narratives tend to utilize a greater proportion of General High Frequency words than their expository texts. Gardner (2004, p. 24) argues that this is because narratives place fewer lexical demands on children in general. Although, more recently, the findings of similar studies conducted by Shokouhi and Maniati (2009) and Khansir and Mohammadi fard (2014) demonstrated the relative superiority of expository texts over narratives in terms of enhancing readers' incidental vocabulary acquisition of unknown words.

In the same vein, Sanders and Noordman (2000) also investigated the role of coherence signals (connectives) in text processing in narrative, and expository text types. Using reading verification and free recall tasks, they investigated the type of coherence relation between segments (e.g., problem-solution vs. list), and the implicit and explicit marking of the relations by means of signaling phrases in expository texts. Their study's result applied that explicit marking of the relations resulted in faster processing but did not affect recall. Furthermore, Joyce, et al. (1998, cited in Alavi and Abdollahzadeh, 2006) examined the effects of text genre and repeated reading on written language comprehension in younger and older healthy adults. Participants verified four text-based statements (i.e. explicit, implicit, contradicted, and elaborated) after reading expository, narrative, and procedural texts. Text genre, statement type, and repeated reading produced significant effects. It was also proved that text genre influenced reading time, with expository passages being read faster than narrative and procedural passages, irrespective of age. However, it can be readily observed that none of these studies has touched upon the issue of academic essay. That is, they were either dealing with a change in the grammatical and lexical structure (Chung, 1995; Urano, 2000) or the topic (Pulido, 2007). Chen et al. (2009), although, in a more related study investigated the number of academic vocabulary used in the abstracts of business and management journals. Doing so, they investigated and compare the different use of AWL vocabulary in Taiwanese and international B&M journal abstracts, the study collected 880 English abstracts from the fields of business management (BM) and technology management (TM). The findings of that study offered that AWL vocabulary was frequently used in B&M journal abstracts and that the abstracts of the international B&M journals used many more

academic words than the English abstracts of Taiwanese journal papers. Since, studies concerning the topic, cited above, have paid little to no attention to the crucial effect of academic genre on incidental learning of new lexical items, examining the effect of academic texts seems to be a much needed line of inquiry. Therefore, this study is intended to shed some light on this subject with a focus on academic genre, particularly the academic essay.

4. Method

A: Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

1. Does reading academic model essay have a significant effect on learning of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does reading academic model essay have a significant effect on retention of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners?

Based on different studies and researches concluded so far and also according to the literature discussed in the previous section, the following null hypotheses have been provided:

H01. Academic model essay will not have a significant effect on learning of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners.

H02. Academic model essay will not have a significant effect on retention of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners.

B: Participants

Originally, 45 students volunteered for this study from a local institute (Nikan language institute) in Gilan, Iran. All of the participants of this study were male and were aged between 17-21. Among the candidates for participation in the experiment were both pre-university and university students (non-English major freshman students of Payam-e Noor university, and Islamic Azad university of Rasht). They, basically, were from two different classes but all in their last term of English at intermediate level, having studied English for at least five years in total. Almost all of them had studied intermediate level books including *Hey There4* (Morales & Jackson, 2009, NY: Pearson Education) and *Landmark intermediate level* (Haines & Stewart, 2008, NY: Oxford university press) before the experiment. Their homogeneity was ensured through a standardized language proficiency test i.e. Oxford Solution Proficiency Test and those whose scores met the requirements of the proficiency test, were assigned into two groups each comprising 20 students (one study and one control group).

C: Design of the Study

The study employed a quasi-experimental design. It involved three variables: two dependent variables and one independent variable. The two dependent variables were (1) learning of academic vocabulary (2) retention of academic vocabulary, and the independent variable was academic model essay. The students were divided into two groups; one study and one control group.

D: Materials and Procedures

The materials used to conduct this study were first a novelty test prepared from 97 lexical items (using *VocabProfile* application of *Compleat Lexical Tutor* software package) chosen from the academic model essays which were used as study group's treatment. The participants of the experiment from both study and control group were asked to write synonyms for the words they knew. The novelty test was administered to the students in order to verify that the selected target words were unfamiliar to all subjects. Then, the words that were known by the subjects were eliminated from the study. The second material used in the study was a pre test. Through adopting the test framework from the *Focus on Vocabulary 2: Mastering the Academic Word List* (Schmitt, D. & Schmitt, N., 2001, NY: Pearson Education), 40 multiple choice items were contrived using the 81 AWL words from the study treatment (academic essays) which were proven to be unknown and most difficult to participants in novelty test. Due to the long interval between the pre test and post test, the same test was used as immediate post test at the end of the study right after receiving the last treatment during the seventeenth session of experiment. The reliability of the test was calculated by Cronbach's Alpha which was .89.

Finally, in order to see the long term effects of reading academic essays on participants vocabulary retention, and to answer the second question of the study, both groups were administered a delayed post test a month after the experiment. The data were analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Comparing performance of the two groups accomplished by doing a T-test.

5. Results

As a longitudinal study, it took about 9 weeks to conduct the research experiment. Data were gathered from control and experimental groups before and after the treatment. To ensure the homogeneity of the groups in terms of their language proficiency a pretest was administered to the groups in this study. To do exact analysis, descriptive statistics for the two groups were analyzed and the findings were fed to SPSS software. Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the pre test in both study and control group.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the pre test of the study group and control group

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Study	20	6.00	1.85
Control	20	6.00	1.87

Table 2 also presents the results of an independent samples t-test to compare the vocabulary gain of the control and the study groups in the pre-test. As it can be seen, there was no significant difference in the scores of the study group and the control group, so they were homogeneous ($t = .695$, $p = .491$).

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test for the Pre-test

Study group & Control group	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences			
			Lower	Upper		
Pre test	.400	.575	-.765	1.565	.695	.491

Answer to the First Research Question

To answer the first research question on the effect of reading academic model essay on students' vocabulary learning, first the mean scores and standard deviation of the study group in the pre and post vocabulary test were calculated and then their pretest and post test scores were compared using a dependent t-test. As shown in Table 1, the participants' mean scores were higher in post test ($M = 12.00$) compared to pretest ($M = 6.00$). This means that the study group performed better in post test compared to pretest.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of the pre test and post test scores of the study group

Study Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre test	20	6.00	1.85
Post test	20	12.00	2.79096

In addition, the result of t-test (Table 4) shows that reading academic model essay had a significant effect on their vocabulary learning; that is, there was a significant difference between their pre and post test scores ($t = -8.39$, $p = .001$).

Table 4. Paired sample t-test result for the pretest and post test scores of study group

Study Group	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences			
			Lower	Upper		
Pre test-post test	-5.80	3.088	-7.245	-4.354	-8.39	.001

Based on the results of the paired sample t-test for the pretest and post test scores of study group, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

Answer to the Second Research Question

In order to assess the effect of reading academic model essay on participants' vocabulary retention (second research question) and to compare its short and long term effect, first the mean and standard deviation of the post test and delayed post test scores of the study group were computed and then their scores were compared employing a dependent t-test. As seen in Table 5, the study group had higher mean scores in post test (12.00) compared to delayed post test (9.50).

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of the post test and delayed post test scores of the study group

Study Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post test	20	12.00	2.79096
Delayed post test	20	9.50	1.98083

Table 6 shows the t-test result of the post test and delayed post test of the study group. As shown in the table, the study group performed better in the post test than the delayed post test ($t = -6.09$, $p = .001$).

Table 6. Paired sample t-test result for the post test and delayed post test scores of the study group

Study Group	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences			
			Lower	Upper		
delayed post test-Post test	-2.35	1.725	-3.157	-1.542	-6.09	.001

In order to investigate the difference between the short term retention of the AWL words learnt via reading academic essay and that of the control group who were exposed to academic words through reading IELTS model essays, after computing the mean scores and standard deviation of the post test of the two groups, their scores were compared using an independent t-test. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the post test scores of the study and control groups.

Table 7. Mean and standard deviation of the post test scores of the study and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation

study	20	12.00	2.79096
Control	20	7.00	1.91

Table 8 shows the result of the independent t-test of the post test scores of the two groups. The t-test result ($t = -6.34$, $p = .001$) and mean scores show that there was a significant difference between the study and control group in the post test.

Table 8. Independent sample t-test result for the post test scores of study and control group

Study group & Control group	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences			
			Lower	Upper		
Post test	-4.80	.756	-6.33	-3.26	-6.34	.001

Finally, to explore the difference between the long term retention of the AWL words learnt via reading academic essay and that of the control group who were exposed to academic words through reading IELTS model essays, first the mean and standard deviation of the delayed post test of the study and control groups were computed and then an independent t-test was run to compare the scores of two groups in the delayed post test. Table 9 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of two groups in the delayed post test.

Table 9. Mean scores and standard deviation of two groups in the delayed post test.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
study	20	9.50	1.98083
Control	20	6.00	1.58

The result of table 9 shows, study group has gained higher mean score in delayed posttest ($M = 9.50$) compared to control group ($M = 6.00$). Moreover, the result of the t-test (Table 10) shows that there was a significant difference between the two groups in delayed post test.

Table 10. Independent t-test result for the delayed post test scores of the study and control groups

Study group & Control group	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences			
			Lower	Upper		
Delayed pt	-3.65	.576	-4.79	-2.50	-6.43	.001

6. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the extent to which exposing Iranian EFL students to academic model essays could improve their incidental academic vocabulary learning. Also, it was an attempt to explore whether there was any significant difference in the effect of reading such academic texts on Iranian EFL students' short and long term retention of words from the Academic Word List (AWL). The results highlighted improvement in gaining academic vocabulary in study group after receiving 15 academic model essays during seventeen sessions of the experiment. Consequently the first null hypotheses of the study, concerning academic model essay will not have a significant effect on learning of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners, was rejected.

Considering the need for academic preparation programs that focus on college and university requirements, where the mainstream learning is almost always intentional, the findings of this study prepared proofs for the possibility of existence of a room for incidental learning of academic vocabulary from AWL even in an EAP setting. According to Ellis (1999), the distinction between incidental and intentional learning is based on the distinction between 'focal' and 'peripheral attention'. To him, "intentional learning requires focal attention to be placed deliberately on the linguistic code (i.e., on form or form-meaning connections)," while "incidental learning requires attention to be placed on meaning (i.e., message content) but allows peripheral attention to be directed at form" (pp. 45-46).

In fact, the findings of this study offer that by utilizing academic texts (particularly academic model essay) as supplementary teaching materials beside course books during an intensive, in-class, EAP reading program we allow learners to improve their incidentally gained knowledge of academic vocabulary, beside those words which are learned intentionally while reading course books (as a means of main teaching materials). This happens only when learners encounter the supplementary materials after the compulsory reading of pre-decided books from the curriculum are presented to them, when their attention is placed on message (meaning) rather than linguistic codes (form), as they do not feel pressured by the inherent forceful nature of books to analyze every single item for upcoming exams.

The results of the study also show that in spite of the fact that the study group's mean scores from the post test and delayed post test were low, they showed a significant difference with control group's mean scores from the same pre and post tests. The probable reasons for the low mean scores could be the inevitable difficulty of coping with EAP materials, and the nature of incidental vocabulary learning which proves more profitable in advanced levels in comparison to elementary or intermediate levels of language proficiency. As Waring & Nation (2004) explain when students read texts that contain many words they do not understand they will be frustrated and little to no learning will take place.

Based on the statistical results concerning the second question, the effect of reading academic texts (particularly model essay) on students' short term and long term retention was also significant and study group outperformed the control group both in post test and delayed post test. Consequently the second null hypotheses of the study, concerning academic model essay will not have a significant effect on retention of academic vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners, was rejected. As a conclusion, reading academic model essay can improve students' incidental academic vocabulary learning from the Academic Word List (AWL) and provide them with a good opportunity to have longer retention.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF WASHBACK IN LANGUAGE TESTING: ANALYZING THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Washback refers to the extent to which the test impacts language learners and teachers to do things they would not otherwise do. This study aims to analyze the validity and reliability in relation to the effectiveness of washback in language testing. The researcher collected primary data for answering the research questions and testing the hypothesis. The participants of the research are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Sample consisted of 50 learners. Twenty-five students had attended test-based classes, and the other twenty-five students had attended general classes. The hypothesis compared the difference between groups using independent samples t-test. The findings of the study showed a significant difference between the mean scores of two groups. Students who had attended test-based classes had significantly lower scores than the students who had attended general classes. The study found that the test influences the classification of curriculum content into important and unimportant. It also creates a fear factor of the test in students. Teachers also emphasize on the content that is relevant to the test. They are also interested in improving the overall test score of the class. In the process, they lose sight of the total picture and the broader vision of imparting knowledge and quality education.

Key words: Washback, language testing, reliability, validity, EFL

Introduction

Washback is a concept used in applied linguistics that refers to the extent to which the test impacts language learners and teachers to do things they would not otherwise do (Tomlinson, 2013). The concept of systemic validity is also applied to washback. Washback validity implies that the validity of the test should be measured by the extent to which the test has a positive influence on teaching. In the fields of applied linguistics and education, there is a general conception that testing influences learning and teaching. It results in being trapped in a circle. The circle revolves as follows; 'what is assessed becomes what is valued, which becomes what is taught' (Safa & Goodarzi, 2014).

Testing has never been a neutral process. It always has consequences because of being a differentiating ritual for students. The principle idea in washback is that examinations or tests should drive learning and teaching. Due to this, washback is also known as measurement-driven instruction. The washback exists due to its significant impact on the lives of test takers and the high authority of external testing. Consequently, testing drives the curriculum. It also drives students' approaches to learning and teaching methods. There are two major areas of washback. The first is related to traditional, large-scale, multiple-choice test. They may have positive or negative influences on the quality of learning and teaching. The second is related to those studies where a particular examination or test has been improved or modified to exert a positive influence on learning and teaching.

It has been argued that washback may be counterproductive for the learning of students. The negative effect may also influence the writing of the students. The argument is based on the notion that goals can impact performance when there are clear directions about what to include in an essay. The instructions may give the impression to students that an argumentative essay, for example, will be evaluated on the basis of how well the position of the writer is backed up with data. The goal instructions also make an influence on the way in which teachers teach students in argumentative

writing. When the goal instruction of an exam is limited to data and claims, without any consideration of counter argumentation, there can be a considerable impact on learning and teaching, especially in exam-oriented societies such as the Chinese society (Liu & Stapleton, 2014).

The concept of washback is important due to the impact of the test on educational systems, society, and individuals. There are two levels on which the washback is operational. The first is the micro level, in which the test has an impact on individual teachers and students. The second is the macro level, in which the test has an impact on the educational system and society. Laborda et al. (2012) analyzed the effects of washback at both macro and micro level. The findings of their study are shown in Table 1 below:

Table1 washback effects

Value/ Specificity	Factors Mediating Washback	Participants	Processes	Products
<i>General Positive Washback</i>	<i>Macrocontext:</i> General improvement of speaking skills at national level	School decisions: Bilingual, additional education in English longer classes, bilingual education (primary and secondary)	Students could perform in face- to-face situations but according to subproject 2 they could also improve the computer skills	
	<i>Microcontext:</i> Instrumental motivation: International trade; student mobility, Positive parental perception	Teacher Training and new standards in teacher education. Revision of teaching diplomas Student's Motivation intrinsic and extrinsic Refined goals		
<i>Specific Negative Washback</i>	Teaching in high school: Exam oriented Teacher's beliefs: Centrality of test Language learning Communicative language teaching	Syllabus Specific objectives Classroom activities and interaction In-class evaluation practices		Students' level of communicative competence clearly oriented towards the test

Tayeb et al. (2014) mentions four different notions of washback. The first is the washback effect that describes the impact tests have on learning as well as teaching. The second is the measurement-driven instruction that emphasizes that tests should drive the learning. The third is curriculum alignment that describes the relationship between the testing and the teaching syllabus. The fourth is systemic validity that results in the integration of tests into the system of education.

The concept of washback was first introduced in 1993 by Alderson and Wall. They posed the question if the washback exists. Since then, the efforts of the scholars have resulted in five main models of washback. The first is the model proposed by Alderson and Wall in 1993. They argued that the test influences learning content, learning rate, learning strategies, and attitudes towards learning. Hughes described the second model in 1993. He emphasized that the test affects three elements of the learning process. These include processes, participants, and products of learning and teaching. Bailey proposed the third model in 1996. The model emphasized that students are stakeholders in the learning process. They are indirectly influenced by other participants' processes. Shih proposed the fourth model in 2007. The model classified the influences of test into three sets of factors. These include intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, and test factors. The three factors have mutual influences on each other and an overall influence on the learning of students. Green proposed the fifth model in 2007. The model emphasized on washback directions of variability, intensity, and test shakes. It was argued that a positive washback can be achieved through an overlap between the focal construct and test characteristics (Xiao, 2014).

The concept of washback is associated with the idea of whether the successfulness of candidates in a test is an indicator of the development of life skills that are needed for everyday communication. A standardized test such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS) claims to be a test of

proficiency. However, its influence on learning and teaching is dependent on the development of life skills required for social communication.

Based on the overview and background of the topic, the researcher has formulated the following research questions for the study. The review of the literature also assisted the literature in the formulation of research questions of the study.

1. What are the effects of washback in learning of language?
2. What are the effects of washback in teaching of language?
3. How can the validity of washback be analyzed?
4. How can the reliability of washback be analyzed?

1. Materials and methods

2.1 Participants

The participants of the research were English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Sample consisted of 50 learners. Twenty-five learners belonged to the institutes that were teaching measurement-driven or test-based English. These institutes would provide the certification of completion only when the student has successfully cleared the test. The test was the only measure of the English learning. The other twenty-five learners belonged to the institutes that would provide a certificate of completion only based on the attendance. If the students have attended at least 75 percent classes, they will be provided certificates of the completion of the course. The age of the students ranged from 13 years to 18 years. They had Arabic, Chinese, and French as their first languages.

2.2 Instruments

The instrument of data collection was a face-to-face interview with the students. An expert in English language asked questions about the language from each participant. The expert has been made aware of the questions that are usually asked in the tests of English language. He intentionally asked those questions as well that were not included in any of these tests. The purpose was to analyze if the knowledge of the students who attended test-based classes is limited to the test questions only, or they have an overall understanding of the concepts and constructs. The questions were related to grammar, vocabulary, sentence comprehension, sentence completion, and identification of errors. The language expert gave the score to each participant from 1 to 100.

2.3 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the researcher used inferential statistics. The following hypothesis was put to the statistical test:

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in the average scores of students who attended test-based classes and who attended general classes.

H_a : There is statistically significant difference in the average scores of students who attended test-based classes and who attended general classes.

To test the hypothesis, independent-samples t-test was used. The test compares the means between two groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. In this study, the independent variable consisted of two categorical, independent groups. The first group comprised of students who attended test based classes. The second group comprised of students who attended general classes. If the group means are different, then the value of Sig. (2-tailed) in the Independent Samples Test table should be less than 0.05 for the confidence interval percentage of 95 percent. The researcher entered the data in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and obtained the tables of Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test.

2. Results and discussion

The results of the participants are as follows:

Table 2 the result of the participants

Participant #	Class	Interview Score
1	Test Based	70
2	Test Based	60
3	Test Based	75
4	Test Based	90

Participant #	Class	Interview Score
5	Test Based	80
6	Test Based	60
7	Test Based	79
8	Test Based	74
9	Test Based	89
10	Test Based	65
11	Test Based	56
12	Test Based	82
13	Test Based	74
14	Test Based	61
15	Test Based	90
16	Test Based	63
17	Test Based	76
18	Test Based	87
19	Test Based	60
20	Test Based	50
21	Test Based	41
22	Test Based	78
23	Test Based	64
24	Test Based	81
25	Test Based	69
26	General	89
27	General	95
28	General	79
29	General	69
30	General	76
31	General	87
32	General	96
33	General	82
34	General	69
35	General	77
36	General	68
37	General	86
38	General	89
39	General	92
40	General	76
41	General	73
42	General	63
43	General	93
44	General	84
45	General	86
46	General	76
47	General	79

Participant #	Class	Interview Score
48	General	71
49	General	86
50	General	92

The independent samples t-test was run in SPSS. It produced the following two tables

Table 3 group statistics

	Type of Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score in the Interview	Test Based	25	70.96	12.844	2.569
	General	25	81.32	9.348	1.870

The sample size (N) for both test-based and general classes were 25. The mean interview score for test-based class students was 70.96, and general class students had a mean score of 81.32. The standard deviation of the test-based data was 12.844, and general data was 9.348.

Table 4 independent samples test

		Score in the Interview	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		2.483	
t-test for Equality of Means	Sig.	.122	
	t	-3.261	-3.261
	df	48	43.857
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002
	Mean Difference	-10.360	-10.360
		Std. Error Difference	3.177
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	-16.748
		Upper	-3.972
			-3.956

From the table, it is evident that group means are significantly different because the value in the Sig. (2-tailed) row is 0.002, which is less than 0.05. The Group Statistics table shows that people who attended test-based classes had lower interview scores than those who attended general classes. Hence, this study found that students of test-based classes had statistically significant lower scores (70.96 ± 12.844) compared to students of general classes (81.32 ± 9.348), $t(48) = -3.261$, $p = 0.002$.

The findings of the study indicate the validity and reliability of washback in language testing. When the students are made to realize that they will have to appear in a test, they tend to focus everything within the parameters of the marks of the test. The content that could have been asked in the test becomes the most important. The remaining content is ignored and considered unimportant. It was reflected in the inability of the students who attended test-based classes. They could not answer those questions that are not asked in tests but part of the curriculum. The students of general classes, however, tend to have a holistic approach towards the course. They give equal attention and focus on complete content because there is no test to classify the content as relevant or irrelevant. Also, the focus of the general classes' students was found to be enhanced due to the absence of fear factor. The test generates a feeling of fear in students that in order to get a certificate of completion, they must be successful in the test. Else, their whole time and investment will be wasted. On the other hand, students of general classes attend the classes with a peace of mind with no fear of test. They just need to attend the classes to get the certificate of completion. The washback effect has a negative effect on the learning of students as found in this study. The effect is reliable and valid measure in calculating the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

The washback effect also influences the teaching methodologies of the instructors. Instructors tend to emphasize those aspects of the curriculum that might be asked in the test. Hence, the test guides the teaching methodology. Also, the good results of the class reflect well on the performance of the teacher. Hence, the teacher becomes interested in improving the scores of the students in the language tests. In the process, the totality of the contents of curriculum is hidden, and the teacher loses sight of the holistic nature of the course and the importance of all the themes and chapters for the lives of the students.

3. Conclusion

Washback refers to the effect of testing on learning and teaching. The concepts of validity and reliability are also applied in the context of the effectiveness of washback in language testing. The validity and reliability are measured by the extent to which the test has a positive influence on teaching. The findings of this study indicate that washback significantly affects the learning and teaching methodologies. The test divides the curriculum into the portions of relevant/irrelevant and important/unimportant. Also, it creates a fear factor in students during the process of learning. The teachers are also inclined to emphasize on contents relevant to the test. They get interested and attracted in improving the grades and scores of the students. The broader vision of imparting knowledge and quality education is lost in the process.

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THE IMPACT OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS BASED PRONUNCIATION TEACHING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

The present study has made an attempt to investigate the impact of contrastive based pronunciation teaching on listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. For this purpose, the participants were chosen based on their performance in an OPT test. Participants with the score of 1SD above and below the mean ($1SD \pm \text{Mean}$) were selected to conduct the study. For the first step, participants were divided into experimental and control group. Then in the second step, pre-test on listening comprehension was administered with both groups. Unlike the control group, the experimental one received four-week contrastive based pronunciation teaching includes segmental features and errors made by learners. After four-week treatment post-test was conducted and the results were entered into SPSS and analyzed through inferential statistics (t-test) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The result showed significant difference between both groups in terms of their development. The finding of the study indicated that using contrastive based pronunciation teaching can improve the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners.

Key words: contrastive analysis; efl; pronunciation; listening comprehension; opt

1. Introduction

Listening is one of the most problematic skills for foreign language learners and it takes up 40-50% of the total time spent on communication (Mendelson, 1994). Without this ability effectively communication breaks down and messages are easily misunderstood or even worst the sender of the message can easily become frustrated and irritated. The time an individual is engaged in communication is devoted 45 percent to listening showing the significance of this skill among other language learning areas. But EFL learners often find a tremendous amount of difficulty while they are listening to the language they are learning. They may listen to appropriate tape recording based on their level or they may be helped by the teacher but still have problem in real life communication when they miss some important details. Rosa (2002) states that this problem is due to the reduced language students are exposed in the classroom and this causes they have problem in real life speech. To develop this skill, different methods and activities have been applied by the teachers and students. For instance, teachers use pre-listening activities like short free discussion on the topic students are going to hear and writing new or unfamiliar words on board or other types of activities based on the learners' knowledge and level. Nevertheless, listening has remained one of the most difficult skills due to certain reasons and should be given more attention (Rivers, 1968). Early in the 20th century, teaching listening and pronunciation was not regarded as an important component of language teaching and English language researchers and teachers focused primarily on reading and grammatical skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, by changes in approaches of English Language Teaching led to changes in classroom applications and paying more attention and focus on these skills.

English Language Teaching (ELT) believes that exposure to the language and practice of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation will help this skill to develop. Although they are key factors to master a foreign language, in ELT field more consideration is on grammar and vocabulary while pronunciation does not take enough weight that this neglect causes they find difficulty in real life communication. A major difficulty facing almost any EFL learner is the achievement of acceptable

pronunciation that enables them to be understood by the L1 English speakers. In fact, learners may master the elements of language such as syntax, morphology, or even semantics to the level of almost 'native-like' competence but often fail to master phonology. Such observation of L2 pronunciation errors, suggest the critical need for EFL teachers to become more aware of the impact that the learners' L1 sound system will bring to the learning of English pronunciation and the result of it on L2 listening comprehension. Because students start pronouncing words with the similar sound in own language and cannot understand the real life words when they expose to real life language. To achieve this awareness, Contrastive Analysis can convey insights into the differences and similarities between the L1 and L2 phonological characteristics. In fact, with the application of Contrastive Analysis, EFL teachers can find out on which particular phonological characteristics of English they should concentrate their efforts on. And by controlling this factor can improve learners' listening comprehension ability.

Through the years searching for the best method of teaching listening and pronunciation to EFL learners has been a matter of interest to many different scholars, many different methods have shown up and many different investigations have been conducted. Therefore, to shed light on the concept of contrastive based pronunciation teaching, the present study aims at investigating the effectiveness of this concept on improving listening comprehension ability in Iranian EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Listening comprehension

Listening has been defined by different researchers. Due to lack of agreement between researchers as to what constitutes listening, it has been a challenge for EFL/ESL learners. This lack of agreement has spawned over 50 definitions and models for listening, but not one testable theory. In L2 can be defined as the ability to understand language used by native speakers. Mendelssohn (1984:64) defines listening as the ability to understand the spoken language of native speakers. According to Postovsky (1975) "it ranges in meaning from sound discrimination to oral comprehension (i.e., actual understanding of the spoken language)" (p. 19). The student should be able to hear oral speech and interpret it. He/ She should be able to segment the stream of sounds, group them into lexical and syntactic units (words, phrases, sentences), and understand the message they convey" (Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty, 1985: 73). Another definition was proposed by O'Malley & Chamot. For them, listening is an active and conscious process in which the listener construct meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources of fulfil the task requirements. (1989: 434)

This definition seems to be extensive and inclusive of several elements involved in the listening comprehension act. It involves the idea of active and conscious process. The listener builds expectation on the basis of contextual and world knowledge by using different strategies. Traditionally, listening was viewed as a passive process, in which our ears were receivers into which information was poured, and all the listener had to do was passively register the message. Today we recognize that listening is an 'active' process, and that good listeners are just as active when listening as speakers are when speaking. Usually we are unaware of these processes in our own language. Therefore, achieving comprehension seems relatively effortless unless we encounter unhelpful demanding conditions, such as poor acoustics or an unfamiliar accent (Schmitt, 2002).

The definitions provided by several researchers imply that there is more to add in what is called "listening." As a source for second-language acquisition the role of listening (SLA) is important (Rost, 2002). The reason for the importance of listening has been interest of many researchers and various book chapters or articles. For example, Hedge (2000) argues that listening plays an important role in everyday life and states that when a person is engaged in communication nine percent is devoted to writing, 16 percent to reading, 30 percent to speaking, and 45 percent to listening which illustrates the place of listening in everyday communication. The importance of listening can be seen more clearly when the lack of listening input is analyzed. To illustrate, the case of people who cannot speak because they cannot hear is a tangible proof of this. There are indispensable situations in which people need to comprehend the things around them aurally; that is, in which they need to activate their listening skills. If someone listens to another with full attention, conviction, commitment, and support, the speaker feels affirmed and important and has a sense of his/her value and the validity of his/her feelings, ideas, and experiences.

For the purpose of improving this skill many researchers have studied the ways to develop listening comprehension (e.g. Berne, 2004; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2009). Researchers such as Nunan and Miller believe that developing cognitive strategies (i.e., listening for main idea, listening for details, etc.) as well as integrating listening with other skill areas like speaking, vocabulary and pronunciation is helpful. From the other side, learning strategy has been an interest of many researchers (e.g. Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Murphy, 1985; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). However, using strategies alone will not aid in improving this involved process. What can be deduced from all the definitions given above is that they all emphasize on the important role of listening to analyze the received information and comment on them.

2.2. Pronunciation and Contrastive Analysis

Pronunciation is a set of habits of producing sounds, which is acquired by repeating it over and over again and by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Cook (1996) states that learning to pronounce a second language means building up new pronunciation habits and overcoming the bias of the first language. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments) aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality). Comparing one language with another is not new in linguistics. Certainly the most longstanding theory of phonological acquisition is contrastive analysis hypothesis. Contrastive analysis is essentially founded on the assumption that languages can be compared and contrasted. That is to say, contrastive studies contribute to our knowledge of language structure and of the relations obtained between language systems; therefore, Contrastive Analysis is mainly concerned with linguistic matters. The means for such comparison is provided by linguistics to render descriptive accounts of the learner's native language and the target language (Keshavarz, 1949).

This theory holds that second language acquisition is filtered through the learners' first language, with the native language facilitating acquisition in those cases where the target structures are similar, and 'interfering' with acquisition in cases where learners cannot remember whether to say 'civility' (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, 1996). A contrastive analysis of English and Iranian phonology can help to identify potential, even likely, challenges for Iranian speakers of English. This proposition is founded on Lado's (1975) claim that the learners "transfer the forms and meaning" (p. 2) from their first language (L1) to their second language (L2). Based on this assumption, structural linguists systematically compared and contrasted the structure of the learner's native language with that of the target language in order to identify areas of difficulty for second language learners and to produce appropriate teaching materials to overcome their difficulties. The student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult (Lado, 1957, p.2). Although knowledge of L1 transfer is not the only factor affecting pronunciation of an L2, it is certainly an important component in a balanced approach to more intelligible production (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). There are numerous phonological features on which English and Iranian differ.

2.3. Developing listening by teaching pronunciation

Pronunciation is not only about the mouth, but also the ears. And, with English being a global language, the ears must learn to be flexible in order to make sense of all those varieties of spoken English out there. Recalling that the difficulty in listening comprehension might stem from pronunciation, it would be wise to develop listening by raising language learners' pronunciation awareness (Ak, 2012; 34). Rixon (1986) lists the problem areas stemming from pronunciation in listening comprehension as (1) the difference between English sounds and spelling, (2) The sound changes in connected speech, (3) Rhythm of English, and (4) different pronunciation patterns of same sounds. She suggests that training in these problem areas can promote development of listening comprehension.

Morley (1991) emphasizes that listening tasks based on speech-pronunciation would foster comprehension of listening by developing learners' discrimination skills. Nunan and Miller (1995) also believe that listening can be developed by pronunciation. In their book showing new ways of teaching listening, they suggest several pronunciation activities in order to improve listening skills. Although the literature suggests the possibility of developing EFL listening comprehension skills

with pronunciation awareness, there have been very few research studies investigating the effect of pronunciation on listening comprehension.

3. Research Question

The present study aimed at answering the following question:

Does contrastive based pronunciation teaching has any effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension?

4. Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated:

Contrastive based pronunciation teaching does not have any effect of listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners.

5. Material and Methods

5.1 Participants of the Study

The present study was conducted at Iran Language Institute (ILI) with two classes of upper Intermediate students with 20 learners in each class studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The participants of this study were all female native speakers of Farsi. After the enrollment procedures, in June, students take a proficiency exam that is developed by the testing unit (with the assistance of all instructors), and are placed into levels according to their test results. Iran Language Institute's program offers 3 hours of lesson a week.

All participants were 18 to 30-year-olds. To make sure of the homogeneity of participants in terms of English proficiency, listening comprehension ability, an oxford placement test (OPT) was conducted on 80 upper Intermediate students. Having calculated the mean and the SD, 40 participants with the score of 1 SD above and below the mean ($1SD \pm \text{mean}$) were selected to conduct the study. Then students were randomly selected into two groups of experimental and control. In both experimental and control groups there were 20, in total 40 students. As this course was a general English course, Communicative Language Teaching was used in both classes and all methods except for listening instruction in the experimental group and control group were the same. On the first, participants were informed about the purpose of this study and were taught about contrastive based pronunciation explicitly. They were given the definition of this term. In the next session experimental group received treatment which was contrastive based pronunciation teaching includes introduction of consonant and vowels, absent sounds in Farsi, place of articulation of those absent words, and practice on initial and consonant clusters and most frequent errors by Iranian foreign language learners in total. Table below shows it in detail.

Errors	Definition of the problem
Substitution of /ə/ (Mid and central vowel) with /e/ (Front, short vowel) or /ɜ:/ (Mid-central long vowel), e.g. /e'baot/ for /ə'baot/	The absence of /ə/ in Persian and substitutes resulting in ease of articulation.
Some diphthongs are replaced with a long vowel or a short vowel e.g. /aʊ/ pronounced as /ɒ/ e.g. <i>or</i> for <i>our</i>	In terms of length, they are similar (Roach, 2009, p. 17), but the glide or movement is eradicated. This results in ease of articulation by using long vowels in Persian instead of unusual diphthongs.
Substitution of /s/ or /t/ for /θ/ (Dental fricative), e.g. <i>thank</i>	The error originates from the absence of /θ/ sound in Persian. Learners will produce the nearest available sounds as they perceives.
Substitution of /z/ or /d/ for /ð/ (Dental fricative), e.g. <i>then</i>	The error originates from the absence of /ð/ sound in Persian. Learners will produce the nearest available sounds as they perceives.
Short vowels are pronounced as long vowels e.g. /ɪ/ pronounced as /i:/, e.g. <i>sheep</i> for <i>ship</i>	Long vowels are different with short vowels not in length but also in quality
Substitution of /ŋ/ (Nasal velar) with /n/ (Nasal alveolar) and /g/ (Plosive velar), e.g. <i>sing</i>	The absence of /ŋ/ sound in Persian makes the learners produce two separate sounds
Substitution of /w/ (Labial-velar approximate) with /v/ (Labiodental fricative), e.g. <i>work</i>	The absence of /w/ sound in Persian.
Insertion of intrusive vowels e.g. /e/ before	Consonant clusters do not occur within single

consonant clusters and in the middle of clusters. Specially before clusters beginning with /s/, e.g. <i>eschool</i> instead of <i>school</i>	syllable in Persian and learners tend to add a short vowel either before or in the middle of various English clusters.
Palatalization of velar stops, i.e. /k/ & /g/ (both plosive velars), e.g. <i>book</i> and <i>gather</i>	The error originates from producing Persian equivalent sounds which differ from their English equivalent in the place of articulation.

The teacher/ researcher gave about 30 minutes of pronunciation instruction to experimental group.

5.2. Materials

The materials used in this study were:

1. An Oxford Placement Test) Oxford Placement Test (OPT) which is a standardized Cambridge exam so reliability of the test is not needed to be tested.
2.) Listening tests used to determine the students level of listening comprehension before and after the contrastive based pronunciation training. The tests contained 35 multiple choice questions requiring the participants to choose the best response from the options according to the statement they hear in the recording.
3. Pronunciation pack for treatment

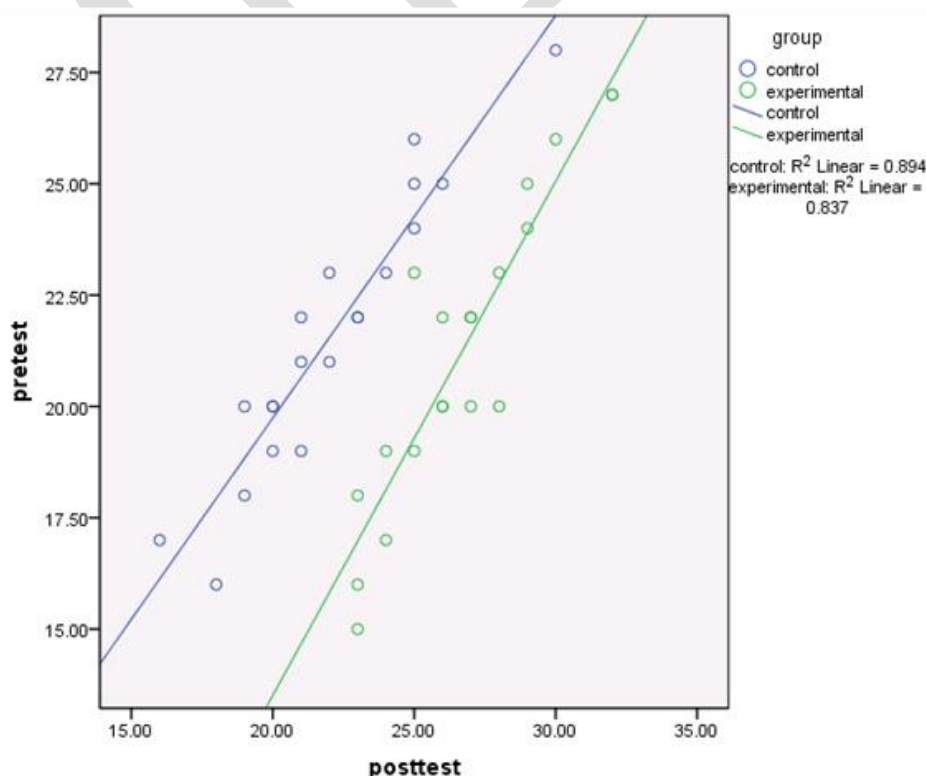
6. Research and discussion

To fulfill the purpose of this study a pre-test, post-test design was used. The data collected from the participant's pretest and posttest were analyzed quantitatively to answer the question addressed in the study. To do so the results of quantitative data have been analyzed through descriptive statistical methods (mean and standard deviation), inferential statistics (t-test) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Before conducting an ANCOVA, its assumptions were examined.

1. Linear relationship between the dependent variable and the random variable which can be examined through the distribution graph between each pair of variables (Multicollinearity).
2. The homogeneity of variance assumption
3. The homogeneity of regression slopes assumption.

The relationship between random independent variables and dependent variables is illustrated in graph 1.



Graph 1: Listening comprehension ability of control and experimental groups

As seen in the graph there is a linear relationship between random independent variables (pre-test) of listening comprehension ability and dependent variables (post-test) of listening comprehension ability since the regression lines are almost parallel which means the relationship between the variables in both groups is similar. The correlation coefficient between the dependent variables is illustrated in table 1.

Table 1: The correlation coefficient between the random variables of listening comprehension ability (pre-test) and the independent variables

Variable	Listening comprehension ability	P
Listening comprehension ability (pre-test)	**0/688	0/000
P<0/01**		

The correlation results show that there is a significant and acceptable relationship between listening comprehension random independent variable (pretest) and listening comprehension dependent variable (posttest), therefore ANCOVA can be applied. Statistical index of listening random independent variables (pretest) and listening dependent variables (posttest) and the results of the T-test in both experimental and control group are presented in tables 4-2 and 4-3.

Table 2: Statistical characteristics of the dependent variable (post-test) of listening comprehension ability in the control and experimental groups

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exp.	22.0000	3.22817
Cont.	26.7000	2.75490

The figures shown in the table above indicate that there is a difference between the average mean of the control group and the experimental group in the dependent variable (post-test), and the difference is not meaningful ($F(1,38)=0/044$, $p=0/835$).

Table 3: Paired T-test to compare the mean difference between pre-test and post-test experimental and control groups

Group		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	ErrorMean Difference	T	Sig
Experimental	Posttest	21.2500	3.47737	.77756			
	Pair 1				-5.45000	-16.602	.000
Control	Pretest	26.7000	2.75490	.61601			
	Pair 1 Posttest	21.5500	3.08605	.69006	-.45000	-1.917	.070

The figures in table 3 show there is a significant difference between the averages of experimental group in the dependent variable (post-test). In other words, since there has been no instruction in the control group, no change has been evident; but experimental group there is a difference between pre-test and post-test.

Table 4: Mean and the rounded mean of listening comprehension ability dependent variable

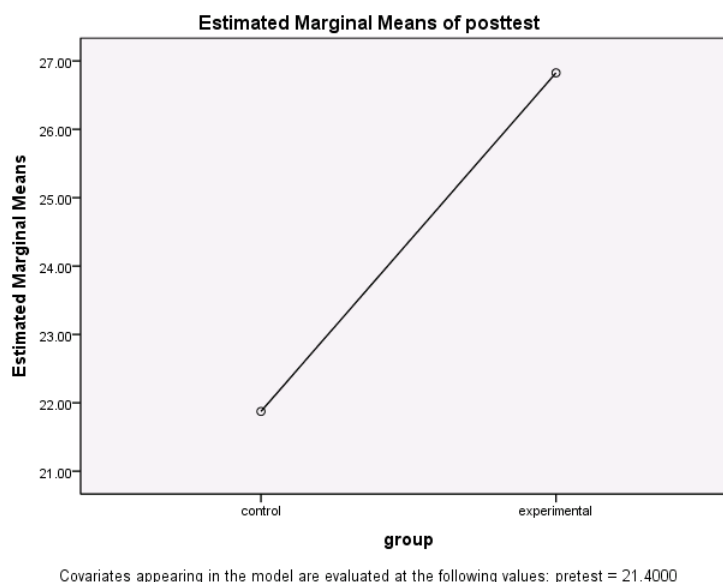
Source	M	Post-test	SD	Rounded mean	SE
Control	22.00	3.228	21.874 ^a	.264	
Experimental	26.70	2.755	26.826 ^a	.264	

The rounded means of listening comprehension ability dependent variable are presented in the above table which means the effect of random variables is statistically removed. The means show that the mean of experimental group is higher than the mean of the control group.

Table 5: The correlation coefficient of listening comprehension ability with removing mutual effect in the experimental and control groups.

Variable	source	df	Sum of squares	Mean Squares	F	p	Eta
Listening	Contrast	1	244.724	244.724			
Comprehension	Error	38	51.549	1.393	175.653	.000	.826
ability							

As it can be seen the effectiveness of F ratio is statistically significant ($\text{Eta} = 0.826$, $p = .000$, $F(1,38) = 175.653$) which shows there is a significant difference between the listening comprehension abilities of the experimental and control group. Therefore, it can be concluded that contrastive based pronunciation teaching has a positive impact on listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. In order to clarify the above points, the information is presented in graph 4-2. In this graph experimental and control variables are presented in the horizontal axis and the writing dependent variable posttest is presented in the vertical axis.



Graph 2: The post-test means of listening comprehension ability in the experimental and control groups

The graph above shows that there is a significant difference between the listening comprehension ability of experimental and control groups. The graph clearly indicates that the participants who have been treated with contrastive based pronunciation teaching have a higher listening comprehension ability compared to the control group.

7. Conclusion

According to the statistical tests conducted by the researcher, there is a statistically significant increase in the experimental group after a four-week of contrastive based pronunciation teaching. The results of the ANCOVA test which was used to analyze the data driven from the participants clearly showed the nullification of the hypothesis and the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of listening comprehension ability. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants who were given the contrastive pronunciation teaching showed a greater improvement in their listening comprehension. According to the findings, the development that the experimental group has performed is significantly higher than the control group. Thus, the results suggest that contrastive based pronunciation training has an effect on the listening comprehension skills Iranian EFL students. This finding is in accordance with the literature which highlights the relationship between pronunciation and listening. Although this relationship has been proposed by several scholars (e.g.,

Gilbert, 1995; Nunan & Miller, 1995; Rixon, 1986), the research studies and focused only on segmental features of pronunciation.

8. Pedagogical Implication

In the light of the above mentioned findings, the following recommendations in terms of EFL teaching are given to teachers and practitioners in the so called field:

1. The positive result of this study implies that using contrastive based pronunciation teaching in an EFL classroom does improve the listening ability of language learners. Therefore, improving the learner's listening comprehension ability should be considered in designing courses and also in the techniques used by EFL teachers since critical thinking techniques are teachable and learnable.
2. The teachers working in this field should specify more time and effort in teaching listening skills to their learners. EFL teachers would also need to change their attitude to teaching English in general and pronunciation in particular and change the perspective from focusing on making their learners produce correct grammatical and vocabulary forms to incorporating pronunciation skills in their teaching procedures since enhancing the learner's listening comprehension can have a great impact on their not only language learning but also their whole academic success. Teaching pronunciation in particular should be regarded as a way of helping the students analyze the problems they face, and showing their point of view. Pronunciation classes should not be passive ones. Instead students should always be asked to be active and comment on the process.
3. In all different learning situations specially in EFL learning, effort should be made to create a positive and stress-free atmosphere in which learners can easily express themselves and talk to their teacher and peers.
4. Pronunciation component of English language teaching can be accommodated in classes with more attention given to pronunciation, especially by integrating it with the listening skills since both skills contribute to each other. Also, suggested approaches in teaching pronunciation, such as minimal pair distinction activities or presenting features in context, can be followed to help students be successful in practicing this skills.

According to the findings of the study, at the end of the 4-week period, the experimental group significantly developed in listening comprehension. However, the development of the experimental group was significantly higher than the development of the control group. On the other hand, the significantly higher development of the experimental group can be ascribed to the contrastive based pronunciation training they received throughout 4-week period.

Recent trend in the literature on listening favors top-down processing and strategies over bottom up (e.g., Field, 2004). Nevertheless, since pronunciation awareness training is a type of bottom-up processing, the findings of this study (which is parallel to the previous literature, e.g., Brown, 2006; Coskun, 2011) imply that bottom-up processing cannot be disregarded. Use of bottom-up strategies should be encouraged in classes, wherefore; teachers can focus on the small units of listening to reach the whole end.

Because pronunciation has not received the attention it deserves, Kelly (1969) considers it as the Cinderella component of English language teaching (term first introduced by Kelly). This neglect may be because the teachers at language schools do not think pronunciation is important, or they do not feel competent enough to teach this skill. However, as this study has indicated, pronunciation plays an important role in the ELT world, particularly in developing listening skills. Therefore, another implication of this study may relate to the teacher training programs. Prospective language teachers might be trained in current approaches regarding listening and pronunciation, and if needed further pronunciation training can be applied. Some teachers might prefer a different teacher such as a visiting teacher to do pronunciation training, which might be also included in the professional development programs.

To conclude, all stakeholders, the administrators, curriculum designers, material developers, and teachers can draw on the findings of the present study to shape curricula, create syllabi, develop materials, and conduct classes accordingly.

9. Suggestions for further studies

Though some positive findings were identified in this study about contrastive based pronunciation teaching on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners, more research is recommended to further investigate this area. As discussed above in the limitations of the study, a 4-week period is not enough for a language skill to develop. Therefore, for future research studies, the period can be extended and the training can be applied for a longer time period. In addition, the present study was

conducted with only Upper Intermediate Level participants, for further studies a wider scope of samples can be employed and different proficiency levels might be examined. Similarly, the sample size can also be expanded, there were 40 participants in the present study, in order to reach more generalizable findings a larger sample size can be assigned. This research study investigated the contrastive based pronunciation teaching as a whole, by teaching some of the most frequent errors for Iranian EFL learners, but for future research, the segments (the constituents of the segments of pronunciation) and suprasegmental features in combination can be investigated further in different research designs; such as having three experimental groups: one group segmental features, another group studying suprasegmental features, and the last group studying both segmental and suprasegmental features to see which one of them aids listening comprehension more. In a similar vein, how to teach pronunciation can also be examined and the different methods of teaching can be compared.

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EFFECT OF CALL-BASED AND FLASH CARD-BASED TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING ON THE TARGET LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, we witness the growth of the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in different educational fields because of rapid modern changes in language software. However, CALL is not usually used for language teaching and learning in Iran. The present study examines the effect of two techniques, which are Computer Assisted Program (CAP) and Flash Cards (FC), for learning new vocabularies at the elementary level. This study seeks to compare these techniques in order to discover which one is more effective and useful. To this end, 45 young EFL learners participated in this study. They were randomly assigned into CAP group (n=15), FC group (n=15) and CAP and FC group (n=15). To collect data, a proficiency test was used to homogenize the participants. After taking the pre-test, specific treatment was employed in each class, and finally the pos-test was taken. The result of ANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference between the 3 groups, and the CAP group excelled in their achievement. Therefore, the CAP technique was found to be more effective in learning vocabulary.

Key words: Vocabulary learning; Flash card; Computer assisted program; EFL language learners

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is considered a complex and gradual process and students who want to learn it should work hard to learn different skills in practice. Meanwhile, learning vocabulary is a vital part of learning a foreign language which can lead to the improvement of the communicative competence. It is incredibly essential in reading comprehension, writing and listening skills. According to Lewis (1993), some language theorists believe that vocabulary and not grammar is the central part of learning a foreign language. (Cited in Poordaryaeinejad, 2011)

Although vocabulary teaching was ignored to a great extent in some methods of teaching for a few decades in the past, there is now a widespread agreement that language learners need to improve their range of vocabulary substantially. (Shakouri and Mehrgan, 2012)

One way of learning vocabulary is through flash card (FC). A flash card is a set of cards bearing information, as words or numbers, on either or both sides, used in classroom drills or in private study. (Budden, 2004)

By advancement of technology, some researchers believe that traditional methods are not efficient enough, so applying new methods to enhance learners' motivations and their attitude to learn are necessary. One of the educational facilities is employing Computer Assisted language Learning (CALL) which is a new issue in both computer and linguistics sciences. Application of CALL is experiencing a renaissance in the modern language teaching and learning arena, with a high growth of popularity. (Naraghizadeh and Barimani, 2013) CALL has different subfields such as Computer Assisted Program (CAP), Computer Assisted Vocabulary Learning (CAVL) and Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) which help learners to improve their second language skills like learning vocabulary.

Both FC and CAP are useful techniques of teaching and learning vocabulary. The major objective of the current research is to compare the effect of using CAP and FC on vocabulary learning of Iranian EFL language learners at elementary level in order to find out which technique is more effective and appropriate.

2. Review of literature

One of the considerable and inseparable parts of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary. EFL learners often claim that their primary problem in learning the target language is lack of vocabulary knowledge. Poor vocabulary is one of the learners' sources of complaint in the process of language learning. The problems arise where a poor knowledge of vocabulary impeded reading or listening process, and they can serve as a stumbling block in effective communication. (Shakouri and Mehrgan, 2012) In other words, communication breaks down when EFL learners do not use the right words.

The important role of vocabulary has been emphasized in many different methods in language teaching. One of the basic issues that the EFL learners face in their learning career is how they can learn words in the easiest way. (Shakouri and Mehrgan, 2012)

2.1. Flash Card (FC)

One technique for learning vocabulary is the use of flash cards. A flash card is a cardboard consisting of a word, a sentence, or a simple picture on it. It should be noted that the letters on it must be visible and large enough for everyone sitting in the front and the back of the classroom. To make sure that everyone can see the letters on the card, it is better to write words with capital letters. (Budden, 2004) Flash cards can be employed for the first exposure to a word, but many language learners keep on using them to review it afterwards. One main benefit of flash cards is that they can be taken almost anywhere and practiced when one has spare time. (Brown, 2000) Another is that they can be arranged to create logical grouping of the target words. (Gairns, Redman and Cohen, 1990 cited in Eslahcar Komachali and Khodareza, 2012)

According to Young, Hecimovic and Salzberg (1983), flash cards have been used to teach sounds of the alphabet or it helps students to improve word recognition if they are poor readers. Ervin (1988) pointed out that flash cards are used to teach language learners to practice their vocabulary development and completion drills in the learning of foreign language. According to Palka (1988), they are used not only for teaching vocabulary but also for teaching propositions, articles, sentence structures, tenses, and phrasal verbs. In addition to teaching vocabulary, flash cards have been used to improve both comprehension and reading speed. (Tan and Nicholson, 1997)

According to Din and Wienke (2001), employing flash card is an influential training and learning method for teachers and students in chemistry course and also flash cards can be used to appropriately help teachers teach, students learn and comprehend chemistry vocabulary.

2.2. Computer Assisted Program (CAP)

CALL is a modern method which is based on computer program and used to both teach and learn vocabulary. Using computer is so interesting for learners especially children. The variety of computer programs can be a key point to raise learner's enthusiasm to learn and memorize vocabulary.

CAP is considered as a subcategory of CALL that refers to the use of computers and related technologies to enhance language learning and expand opportunities for instruction. As new digital technologies, such as tablets, cell phones, and other mobile devices are developed, new affordances of CAP must be studied for their effectiveness in language instruction and learning. (Budden, 2004)

Computer programs are interactive and can illustrate a concept through attractive animation, sound, and demonstration. They allow students to progress at their own pace and work individually or solve a problem in a group. Computers provide immediate feedback, and they let students know whether their answer is correct. If the answer is not correct, the program shows students how to correctly answer the question. Computers offer a different type of activity and a change of pace from teacher-led or group instruction.

CAP improves instruction for students with disabilities because students get immediate feedback and do not continue to practice the wrong skills. Computers capture the students' attention because the programs are interactive and engage the students' spirit of competitiveness to increase their scores. Also, CAP moves at the students' pace and usually does not move ahead until they have mastered the skill. Computer programs are becoming the most favored resource when it comes to expanding vocabulary knowledge because they utilize the best of other methods all in one tool.

3. The study

Participants, materials and procedure

In order to carry out this research, an institute with well-equipped audio-visual technology was necessary. A proficiency test was administered to the participants of an English institute to obtain a homogenous sample. As a result, forty five participants had the required language qualification for a homogeneous sample to fulfill the purpose. Thus, participants of this study consisted of forty five language learners learning English in an institute.

The participants were divided into three groups. The textbook of the participants is Backpack that is published by Pearson Longman. A vocabulary test was employed as both the pre-test and the post-test of the study. This test is designed by the authors of the textbook, and it was extracted from the teacher's guide book. First, a pre-test was given to all of the participants. Simultaneously, all of the three groups learned some specific vocabularies during 8 weeks. The difference is that the vocabularies were taught by using different techniques. The vocabularies will be taught to the first group by using CAP. The same vocabularies were taught to the second group by using flash cards. And the third group learned the same vocabularies by using both of these two techniques; in other words, during the first 4 weeks, the vocabularies were taught by using CAP, and during the second 4 weeks the vocabularies were taught by using flash cards. Finally, a post-test was employed to compare the learning of the participants.

4. Result and discussion

The scores of pre-test were entered into the SPSS. It is worth mentioning that the scores of the pre-test and post-test are out of fifty. The result of the pre-test is provided in the following table.

Table 4.1. The analysis of the pre-test scores

Descriptives

Scores								
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
FC+CAP	15	18.67	5.602	1.446	15.56	21.77	11	29
FC	15	18.47	4.291	1.108	16.09	20.84	14	29
CAP	15	18.80	3.950	1.020	16.61	20.99	10	24
Total	45	18.64	4.563	.680	17.27	20.02	10	29

Table 4.1. table represents the descriptive statistics for the three groups regarding their pre-test scores. The mean of the scores are almost so close; they are 18.67, 18.47 and 18.80. It shows that the before applying the treatment, the three groups were quite similar to each other regarding the knowledge of vocabularies.

As mentioned before, when the treatment is done, all of the participants took the post-test. The aim of the post-test is to investigate the progress of the learners in order to discover which technique is more beneficial for the language learners.

ANOVA, the analysis of variance, was calculated between the scores of the post-test. ANOVA is employed to compare a specific variable among three or more unmatched groups. The following table provides simple summaries about the basic features of the data.

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics of the post-test scores

Descriptives

Scores								
--------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error			Minimum	Maximum
FC+CAP	15	37.67	5.287	1.365	34.74	40.59	29	48
FC	15	32.20	6.570	1.696	28.56	35.84	23	43
CAP	15	44.00	4.536	1.171	41.49	46.51	32	49
Total	45	37.96	7.277	1.085	35.77	40.14	23	49

The descriptives table provides some very useful descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation and 95% confidence intervals for the variable for each separate group (FC+CAP, FC and CAP), as well as when all groups are combined (Total). In other words, Table 4.2. indicates the variables being analyzed and the name of each variable is listed in the left column of the table (FC+CAP, FC and CAP). And N shows the sample size of each group, i.e. 15, and also the total sample size is 45.

The following table is the one that shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between the group means. The sum of squares and the mean squares of between groups and within groups are specified.

Table 4.3. ANOVA table

ANOVA

scores					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1046.178	2	523.089	17.114	.000
Within Groups	1283.733	42	30.565		
Total	2329.911	44			

We can see that the significance level is 0.00 ($p = .000$), which is below 0.05. And, therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in the post-test scores of the three groups. In other words, there is a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 42) = 17.114, p = .000$). This is great to know, but it is better to know which of the specific groups differed significantly. Therefore, we can find this out in the multiple comparisons table which contains the results of post-hoc tests.

Table 4.4. Multiple comparisons table

Multiple Comparisons

scores

Tukey HSD

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
FC+CAP	FC	5.467*	2.019	.026	.56	10.37
	CAP	-6.333*	2.019	.009	-11.24	-1.43
FC	FC+CAP	-5.467*	2.019	.026	-10.37	-.56
	CAP	-11.800*	2.019	.000	-16.70	-6.90
CAP	FC+CAP	6.333*	2.019	.009	1.43	11.24
	FC	11.800*	2.019	.000	6.90	16.70

Multiple Comparisons

scores

Tukey HSD

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
FC+CAP	FC	5.467*	2.019	.026	.56	10.37
	CAP	-6.333*	2.019	.009	-11.24	-1.43
FC	FC+CAP	-5.467*	2.019	.026	-10.37	-.56
	CAP	-11.800*	2.019	.000	-16.70	-6.90
CAP	FC+CAP	6.333*	2.019	.009	1.43	11.24
	FC	11.800*	2.019	.000	6.90	16.70

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the results so far, we know that there are significant differences between the groups as a whole. The table 4.4., multiple comparisons, shows which groups differed from each other. The Tukey post-hoc test is generally the preferred test for conducting post-hoc tests on a one-way ANOVA. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, if the sig is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference. We can see from the table above that there is a significant difference in teaching with FC and FC+ CAP ($p = 0.026$), as well as between CAP and FC+CAP ($p = 0.009$). Also, the difference between FC and CAP ($p = .000$) is significant. However, the sig value between FC and CAP is even more noticeable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the CAP group has made greater changes in their post-test scores.

5. Conclusion

"Foreign language learning is a challenging task, involving mastering a new sound system, phonological and syntactical forms, vocabulary, and sometimes a new writing system." (Ghabanchi and Anbarestani, 2008, p. 86) The important role of vocabulary knowledge in EFL learning has been confirmed. Therefore, many researchers try to find the most appropriate and the most useful technique for learning and teaching vocabulary.

Teachers can use a variety of techniques for teaching the target language. "These strategies can be used for teaching nearly all language aspects including the sound system, grammatical structures and vocabulary (language components) as well as teaching the four language skills and culture." (Al-Yaari, 2013, p. 245) The focus of the present study was on teaching and learning vocabulary which is an important sub-skill. In fact, one of the noticeable and inseparable parts of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary.

In light of the above-mentioned views, this research put computer assisted language learning under study in order to discover whether it can play an important role to improve the vocabulary competence of EFL learners who were at the elementary level of proficiency. More specifically, it investigated the effectiveness of two techniques (i.e., CAP and FC) to teach English vocabulary to elementary Iranian EFL learners. The results showed that the two techniques had the potential to highly encourage the EFL learners in learning English vocabulary. However, CAP proved to be more motivating and effective for the students. In addition, the performance of the group who learned vocabulary by using CAP was significantly different.

There are some recommended areas and possibilities for further research and future work indicated by present research. To make new questions, the effect of using computer could be further investigated on other skills and sub skills of language, that are reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and pronunciation. In other words, researchers can conduct a study in order to check whether computer assisted program, in comparison with other techniques, have specific impact on the learning of the students.

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THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE, ETHNIC IDENTITY, AND BILINGUAL IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between linguistic intelligence, ethnic identity, and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. To run the study one hundred students at the intermediate level in an English institute in Sanandaj, Iran with mastery in Kurdish as their mother tongue, Persian as their educational language at school, and English as the third language or better say a foreign language were selected to take part in the present study. An ex post facto research was designed in which the participants of the study received a valid test of reading comprehension (NELSON-Danny Reading Scale developed by Brown et al, 1993), the Linguistic Intelligence Questionnaire (Gardner, 1999), and the Ethnic Identity Measure (Roberts, et al. 1999) as the measurement devices of the study. The data gathered was put into SPSS version 21 and since the normality assumption was met, Pearson Correlation was run to find answers to the questions of the study, and the results were reported. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. Also, there is a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension, and lastly, there is a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' linguistic intelligence. The findings of the present study could be used in the research and practical work pertained to teaching English in the bilingual areas of Iran and other countries with similar status, ethno linguistics studies, and teaching English as a foreign language in different places.

Keywords: Linguistic Intelligence, Ethnic Identity, Reading Comprehension, Bilingual EFL Learners

Introduction

Linguistic intelligence (LI), as defined by Armstrong (2009), is the capacity to use words effectively, whether orally or in writing. This intelligence includes the ability to manipulate the syntax or structure of language, the phonology or sounds of language, the semantics or meaning of language, and the pragmatic dimensions or practical uses of language.

Nzai and Feng (2014) also proposed that increasing diversity in today's classrooms in the global world mandates teachers to be well prepared to effectively teach their students with different backgrounds. One key element to successful diversity education for many teachers is being able to relate to their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Researches in cultural competence (Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand, 2011; Campinha-Bacote, 2003; Soureshjani, 2011) suggest that only a few individuals on the earth are born with cultural competence; the rest of human beings should put considerable effort into developing it. This means each individual should assess his/her own biases and prejudices, develop cross-cultural skills, search for role models, and spend much quality time

interacting with people from culturally different backgrounds who share a passion for cultural competence development.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, Peal and Lambert (1962) concluded that bilingual children had a greater cognitive flexibility and a more diversified set of mental abilities than monolingual children. They found that bilingual children significantly outperformed monolinguals on factors such as cognitive flexibility, concept formation, picture completion and figure manipulation. Considering linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity, the researchers have tried to estimate the relationship between these two variables and the bilinguals studying English as a foreign language in terms of their reading comprehension ability.

As another important concept in the present research, identity development involves the process of defining oneself as a group member within a broader social context and also serves as the framework that provides individuals with a coherent sense of self (Grotevant, 1992). Researchers argue that identity formation is a critical developmental task faced during adolescence, the resolution of which serves as a guiding framework in adulthood (Josselson, 1994). Alternatively, Erikson's (1968) identity formation theory posits that identity development occurs through a process of exploration and commitment to important identity domains of a broader self-concept.

Social identity theory (SIT) proposes that individuals seek a positive social identity, a positive self-concept based on their membership through social comparisons between their own and other groups. They try to achieve 'positive distinctiveness for their own group in order to protect and maintain their self-esteem as group member (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Giles, 1981). Individuals self-conceptions of who they are, and how they relate to others, is greatly influenced by the interpersonal and intergroup context in which they evolve and in which social comparisons are made (Kessler, et al., 2000: 96-97). "Sub-national and ethnic identities are therefore the results of contacts with others, primarily characterized by their real or perceived affiliation to a more or less valued group defined along sub-national and ethnic lines" (Leets, Clément & Giles, 1986, p.13).

Regarding the significance attached to linguistic intelligence, bilingualism, and identity, it seems vital to consider these elements when it comes to language learning environments. Thus, the present study made an attempt to investigate the cumulative effect of these factors on the EFL learners' reading comprehension in a rich ethnic identity of Iranian context.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, many studies have been done regarding the relationship among linguistic intelligence or other intelligences respected with English proficiency (Zee et al., 2002; McMahon et al., 2004; Bastian et al., 2005; Shearer, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Mahdavy, 2008). Undoubtedly, linguistic intelligence has a crucial effect on language proficiency and many researchers have proved such a case. However, there seems to be a gap in the literature considering the relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Iran consists of many nations including Turkish, Kurdish, and etc. These nations are mostly bilingual .i.e. most of them benefit from two languages: Persian as their school language and their mother tongue. Thus, the present research will focus on investigating the relationship among linguistic intelligence, ethnic identity, and reading comprehension of bilingual language learners in Sanandaj (Kurdistan). To the knowledge of the present author, only one study has been carried out regarding the relationship between LI and reading comprehension (Rahimi et al., 2011); nevertheless, no studies thus far have investigated the relationship between ethnic identity and reading comprehension or LI and ethnic identity.

Research Questions

Researching the above-mentioned problems the following research questions will be posed:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?

RQ2: Is there any relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?

RQ3: Is there any relationship between linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity among bilingual Iranian EFL learners?

Research Hypotheses

The above mentioned research questions are the basis for the following null hypotheses:

RH0₁: There is no relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension.

RH0₂: There is no relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension.

RH0₃: There is no relationship between linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity among bilingual Iranian EFL learners.

Purpose of the Study

Considering the importance connected to linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity in the literature and achievement of language skills, the present research made an attempt to indicate any possible relationship among these variables and the bilingual EFL learners' reading comprehension skill. Thus, bilingual language learners from a specific ethnic identity (Kurdish) were used as the subjects for the present research to pave the way for drawing conclusions about ethnicity and reading comprehension. The relationship between LI and reading skill was also investigated to help recognize the degree of reading comprehension skill in other populations based on their LI grade. In addition, the relationship between LI and ethnic identity was also scrutinized to see whether any relationship exists between the two variables.

Significance of the Study

The recent emphasis on learner and learning-centered approaches in EFL/ESL justifies research on the impact of LI on learners' L2 proficiency. Another significance of the present study is the importance of reading skill in an EFL context. According to Chastain (1988), reading skill provides readers with the right amount of comprehensible input necessary for both written and oral communication. Reading skill is particularly very important in input-poor EFL contexts such as Iran, where there is not much (if any) contact with the native speakers of English and, thus, books, internet, and the like remain the most available source of exposure to English. Thus, the present study takes significance as it attempts to investigate the relationship among two vital factors (LI and Ethnic Identity) and reading comprehension of bilingual language learners.

Review of the Related Literature

Theoretically speaking, LI has been assumed to be the most important domain of intelligence contributing to reading comprehension performance because it deals with the ability to manipulate different components of language including syntax, phonology, and the semantics or meaning of language (Armstrong, 2003). From another point of view, the notion of ethnic identity has been overlooked in the literature of language learning and development. Thus, the present thesis deals with LI, reading comprehension, and ethnic identity and the relationship among them in order to draw broader conclusions regarding teaching reading skills to bilingual students with different levels of linguistic intelligence.

Linguistic Intelligence

According to Gardner (1993):

Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence. (p. 41)

Students who have linguistic intelligence show brilliant auditory abilities, they are usually fond of reading, writing, and playing word games. They also are good at remembering names, dates and places and they prefer doing word processing on a computer. They may have a bright, developed vocabulary and can speak fluently, accurately and phonetically (Teele, 2000).

Among the different domains of multiple intelligences, LI is assumed to be the most relevant to language learning. LI, as defined by Armstrong (2009), refers to:

The capacity to use words effectively, whether orally...or in writing.... This intelligence includes the ability to manipulate the syntax or structure of language, the phonology or sounds of language, the semantics or meaning of language, and the pragmatic dimensions or practical uses of language. (p. 6)

Göğebakan (2003) suggests some activities for linguistic intelligence lesson plans:

- Reading and writing about famous artists and art history.
- Writing a short fictional story about an artist or group of artists in the past, present or future.
- Interviewing students in pairs regarding their involvement and thoughts about a specific event, concert, production, exhibition, including who, what, when, why, where, and how was it produced.
- Writing a script or narrative for a program, speech, or host for a major arts event. (p. 21)

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension can be understood as the process through which the recognized words are transformed into a meaningful idea (Hoover & Gough, 1990). It is a complex process that requires the activation of numerous cognitive skills (Kintsch, 1998). There are also different depths of understanding (Perfetti et al., 2005). At the most basic level, reading comprehension may involve the picture that comes to mind when reading the word cat. Comprehension is the reason for reading; it encompasses the learning, growing, and evolution of ideas that occur as one reads.

Ethnic Identity

(Sub)-national and ethnic identities are in the core of social identifications (Erikson & Johnsson, 1999). A 'social identity' is "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain groups. These identities result social groups together with some emotional and value significance to hem of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). These identities therefore result from inter-group relations as do cognitive and affective representations of its dimensional constituents. More specifically, social identity theory (SIT) proposes that individuals seek a positive social identity, a positive self-concept based on their membership through social comparisons between their own and other groups. They try to achieve 'positive distinctiveness for their own group in order to protect and maintain their self-esteem as group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Giles, 1981). Individuals self-conceptions of who they are, and how they relate to others, is greatly influenced by the interpersonal and intergroup context in which they evolve and in which social comparisons are made (Kessler, et al., 2000, p. 96-97). (Sub)-national and ethnic identities are therefore the results of contacts with others, primarily characterized by their real or perceived affiliation to a more or less valued group defined along (sub)-national and ethnic lines (Leets et al., 1986). Ross (1979) states that:

Ethnicity has proven to be a very difficult concept to define with much precision. Indeed those who have approached the task have not been able to achieve a consensus. Most usages are both vague and ambiguous in their applications to empirical research. What some scholars consider to be examples of ethnicity, other would consider to be cases of such other variables as regionalism, religious sectarianism, class conflict, and even sheer opportunism. (p. 3)

In the work of Thompson (1989), ethnicity has been viewed as a biological, cultural, political, Psychological and social organization phenomenon, with a number of contrasting paradigmatic consequences. There is certainly not a unifying framework to study ethnicity over all disciplines. Even within the social sciences, there are different theories of ethnicity, each with their own assumptions and consequences for the measurement.

Research on Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity has been examined in relation to numerous outcome variables such as self-esteem (Phinney, 1991; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002), academic achievement (Arellano & Padilla, 1996), and individuals' ability to cope with discrimination (Chavira & Phinney, 1991; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Findings tend to be mixed, with some studies providing evidence of significant associations between these constructs and other studies.

In Arellano and Padilla's study (1996), the conceptual frameworks of "at-risk" and academic invulnerability were examined with 30 undergraduate Latino students enrolled in a highly selective university. Students were interviewed about their educational experiences to examine factors contributing to their academic success. Students were grouped (n= 10) based on educational attainment of parents: Group One-parents with 11 or fewer years of schooling; Group Two-at least one parent graduated from high school; and Group Three-at least one parent completed college. Interviews revealed that students in Group One and Two fit the pattern of "at risk" but also demonstrated that with supportive families and teachers they were invulnerable to the negative consequences of educational risk. Group Three students, because of the greater "cultural capital" of parents, reported different experiences in school. Unexpectedly, 73% of all students were identified in

elementary school as gifted, lending support to the importance of enriched school programs for Latinos.

In fact, scholars suggest that the divergent findings, which plague the literature on this topic, are in large part due to the variation in conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity (see Phinney, 1991, 1995; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002 for reviews).

Research on Linguistic Intelligence

Previous studies have reported the effect of multiple intelligences (MI) on learning, in general, and language learning, in particular (See for example, Zee et al., 2002; McMahon et al., 2004; Bastian et al., 2005; Shearer, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Mahdavy, 2008).

McMahon, et al. (2004) explored the effect of MI on reading achievement of 288 fourth grade students. The multiple intelligences scale they used was Teele Inventory of Multiple intelligences. This scale consisted of a number of subscales including linguistic, logical, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, spatial, and bodily kinesthetic intelligences. The results showed that only mathematical intelligences significantly and strongly affected reading performance of the participants; the other domains of intelligence, nonetheless, did not turn out to influence the students' reading comprehension.

Shearer (2006), investigated the MI of high school students with varying levels of reading skill, that is, high, mid, and low. The participants in the study were 215 ninth grade students from suburban U.S. high schools, who filled in Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS) and took a reading comprehension test. The students were divided into three groups of high, mid, and low with regard to their performance on the reading test. There were striking differences among the intelligences of these three groups of readers. The results indicated that the students at a high level of reading ability were personal achievement oriented, which signifies an intrapersonal aspect of intelligence, while those with a moderate level of reading ability seemed to be more 'socially focused', indicating an interpersonal aspect; and the participants at a low reading level were more pragmatic, practical and action-oriented, denoting the mathematical aspect of intelligence.

Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) explored the role of LI, psychometric intelligence, and emotional intelligence on the EFL learners' academic achievement. Students' academic achievement was determined based on their university GPAs. The result of the study showed a strong link between the students' academic achievement and several dimensions of emotional intelligence. The results, on the other hand, revealed that academic achievement was not associated with IQ, but it showed a strong correlation with verbal intelligence, a subsection of IQ.

Razmjoo (2008) studied the extent to which MI predicted the language proficiency level of 278 PhD candidates in Shiraz University, Iran. The results indicated no correlation between language proficiency and MI or any one of its subscales. The findings, in addition, suggested that MI and its components did not significantly predict language proficiency. Finally, no significant difference between males and females with respect to the relationship between intelligence and proficiency was reported.

Mahdavy (2008) examined the relationship between MI and listening performance of 117 Iranian EFL learners on the listening subtest of IELTS and TOEFL tests. The findings of the study showed a significant correlation between LI and listening proficiency of the participants, but no relationship was found between the other domains of MI and the participants' listening proficiency.

Rahimi et al. (2011) examined the impact of linguistic intelligence and emotional intelligence on the reading comprehension ability of the Iranian EFL learners. Data was gathered through two questionnaires and a reading test and analyzed through two-way ANOVA and Multiple Regression. The results revealed that the students with a high level of linguistic intelligence showed a higher reading ability than those with a lower level of linguistic intelligence. The results, however, showed no significant difference among the students with different degrees of emotional intelligence. Moreover, the results indicated that linguistic intelligence is a relatively strong predictor of reading performance, accounting for more than 40% of the variance observed in the students' performance on the reading comprehension test.

To sum up, majority of the studies reported above show a meaningful relationship between MI and academic achievement. To the best of the knowledge of the present researchers, no study has thus far been conducted on the effect of linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity on the reading performance of Iranian EFL learners.

Method

The present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship among linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity and bilingual EFL learners' reading comprehension. The two questionnaires of Revised (12-item) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (developed by Roberts, et al. 1999), and Linguistic Intelligence Questionnaire (developed by Gardner, 1999), were used to gather the data. Both of these questionnaires have been vastly used in researches done around the world and their validity and reliability have been confirmed. In addition, the NELSON test of reading comprehension, which is a valid and acceptable measurement device, was utilized as the test of reading comprehension ability.

Subsequently, the relationship between the data of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test were the basis for the analysis.

Participants

The participants of this study were 100 male and female students with the age range of 16 to 18 at the intermediate level in the institute who were asked to take part in the experiment based on their willingness. The main pool from which the sample was drawn included 150 male and female students of the Sena institute of Sanandaj. In addition, they were from Sanandaj with mastery in Kurdish as their mother tongue and Persian as their educational language at school. It means that they were learning English as the third language or better say a foreign language.

Instruments

The language learners, the participants of the study) received a valid test of reading comprehension (NELSON-Danny Reading Scale), the Linguistic Intelligence Questionnaire (Gardner, 1999), and the Ethnic Identity Measure (Roberts, et al. 1999) as the measurement devices of the study.

NELSON Reading Scale or Nelson-Denny Reading Test is a product developed by Brown, Fishco, and Hanna (1993) and includes 80 items using a multiple-choice format to assess vocabulary. It is a 1-minute reading rate exam and has 5 passages with 38 items using a multiple-choice format to assess reading comprehension. The test is able to check the 3 sub-scales of vocabulary, reading rate, and reading comprehension.

Linguistic Intelligence Questionnaire (Gardner, 1999), is the first section of the new model of multiple intelligences survey which includes 10 items which could be scored based on 0-1 scale or any score based on the research analysis needs (for easy calculation one might score each item by 10).

Ethnic Identity Measure (Roberts, et al. 1999), is named the Revised (12-item) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure and includes 12 items which are scored based on Likert scale to indicate how much the examinees agree or disagree with each statement. The scoring concludes that from (4) Strongly Agree (SA); (3) Agree (A); (2) Disagree (D), to (1) Strongly Disagree (SD), the items could be marked. The sum of the marked items could be representative of the final score of the examinees.

Procedure

After the sample process of sample selection, the learners received the reading comprehension test and the two questionnaires mentioned above simultaneously in a 90 minute allocated time. The data was collected and the Learners' performances were scored and analyzed through employing SPSS version 21 and the results were reported.

Design

The present research enjoyed an Ex post Facto Design. The reason is that, based on Hatch and Lazaraton (1991), there was no treatment involved in the study, nor was the study concerned with the learning process the participants might have gone through as a significant factor. No control was implemented over the effect of independent variables of the study (linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity) on the dependent variable (learners' reading comprehension). None of the variables of the study were manipulated to cause changes, either. What is of paramount importance then is the type and strength of the connection between variables of the study; therefore an Ex Post Facto Design is the appropriate design for the accomplishment of the purpose of the study (Field, 2009).

Data Analysis

Normality Assumption

To investigate the relationship among linguistic intelligence, ethnic identity and reading comprehension of bilingual Iranian EFL learners is the aim of this study. The data were analyzed through the Pearson correlation. Measures were taken to prove that the data enjoyed normal distributions. The ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were computed. Since the ratios were lower than the absolute value of 1.96 (Table 1), it was concluded that the data enjoyed normal distribution.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Tests of Normality Assumption

	N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Reading Comprehension	100	.061	.241	0.25	-.161	.478	-0.34
Linguistic IQ	100	-.316	.241	-1.31	.094	.478	0.20
Ethnic Identity	100	-.036	.241	-0.15	-.561	.478	-1.17

Research Question 1

Is there any relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?

There was a significant relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ($r(98) = .78, p < .05$) (Table 2). The first null-hypothesis **was rejected**.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation; Reading Comprehension with Linguistic IQ

		Linguistic IQ
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 2

Is there any relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?

There was a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ($r(98) = .87, p < .05$) (Table 3). The second null-hypothesis **was rejected**.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation; Reading Comprehension With Ethnic Identity

		Ethnic Identity
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3

Is there any relationship between linguistic intelligence and ethnic identity among bilingual Iranian EFL learners?

There was a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' linguistic intelligence ($r(98) = .79, p < .05$) (Table 4). The third null-hypothesis **was rejected**.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation; Linguistic IQ with Ethnic Identity

		Ethnic Identity
Linguistic IQ	Pearson Correlation	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

KR-21 Reliability Indices

The KR-21 reliability indices for the reading comprehension, linguistic IQ, and ethnic identity were .90, .88, and .82, respectively (Table 5).

Table 5: KR-21 Reliability Indices

	N	Mean	Variance	KR-21
Reading Comprehension	100	22.57	42.25	0.90
Linguistic IQ	100	8.77	5.24	0.88
Ethnic Identity	100	40.2	69.31	0.82

Construct Validity

A factor analysis was run to probe the underlying construct of the reading comprehension, linguistic IQ and ethnic identity. The three tests loaded on a single factor which accounted for 77.26 percent of the total variance (Table 4.6).

Table 6: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.630	87.666	87.666	2.630	87.666	87.666
2	.243	8.085	95.752			
3	.127	4.248	100.000			

Table 7 below displays the loadings of the three tests under the extracted factor.

Table 7: Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Ethnic Identity	.950
Reading Comprehension	.945
Linguistic IQ	.914

Results, Discussions, and Conclusions

Analysis of the results firstly, showed that there was a significant relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. Secondly, there was a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension, and thirdly, there was a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' linguistic intelligence.

The first finding of the study is in line with results of the previous research on the ground of the effect of multiple intelligences (MI) on learning, in general, and language learning, in particular (See for example, Zee et al., 2002; McMahon et al., 2004; Bastian et al., 2005; Shearer, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Mahdavy, 2008). Shearer (2006) also investigated the MI of high school students with varying levels of reading skill, that is, high, mid, and low. Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) explored a strong link between the students' academic achievement and several dimensions of emotional intelligence. The results, on the other hand, revealed that academic achievement was not associated with IQ, but it showed a strong correlation with verbal intelligence, a subsection of IQ. Razmjoo (2008) indicated no correlation between language proficiency and MI or any one of its subscales. On the other hand, Mahdavy (2008) examined the relationship between MI and listening performance of Iranian EFL learners on the listening subtest of IELTS and TOEFL tests and found a significant correlation between LI and listening proficiency of the participants, but no relationship was found between the other domains of MI and the participants' listening proficiency. Rahimi et al. (2011) in their examination of the impact of linguistic intelligence and emotional intelligence on the reading comprehension ability of the Iranian EFL learners found that there was no significant difference among the students with different degrees of emotional intelligence.

The second finding of the present study is also supported by the researches done before: in the area of ethnic identity and self-esteem (Phinney, 1991; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002), with academic

achievement (Arellano & Padilla, 1996), and with individuals' ability to cope with discrimination (Chavira & Phinney, 1991; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). As Rampton (2014) indicates there is high correlation between the familiar cultural factors and the accepted identities with second language development. Also Chen, et al. (2013) in their meta-analysis study concerning the role of dialectical self and bicultural identity integration in psychological adjustment found that "Five studies converged to show that psychological adjustment was positively related to Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), but negatively related to the dialectical self, while in three studies, dialecticism mediated the effect of BII on psychological adjustment among bicultural individuals" (p.61). In fact, scholars suggest that the divergent findings, which in to some extent plague the literature on this topic, are in large part due to the variation in conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1991, 1995; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002 for reviews).

The third finding of the study is also in line with some of the researches done previously: Nzai and Feng (2014) found that there is high correlation between ethnic identity and bilingual English learners' linguistic intelligence in the EFL contexts. Conversely, Chen, et al. (2013) found that ethnic identity had appositive correlation with psychological adjustment while linguistic intelligence (dialectical self) had a negative correlation with psychological adjustment bicultural individuals. Previous studies reveal "the deleterious effects of tolerance for contradiction on well-being and differentiate biculturalism patterns of immigration-based and globalization-based acculturation" Chen, et al., 2013, p. 61).

The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between linguistic intelligence, ethnic identity, and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between linguistic intelligence and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. Also, there is a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension, and lastly, there is a significant relationship between ethnic identity and bilingual Iranian EFL learners' linguistic intelligence. The findings of the present study could be used in the research and practical work pertained to teaching English in the bilingual areas of Iran and other countries with similar status, ethno linguistics studies, and teaching English as a foreign language in different places.

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THE EVALUATION OF TOP NOTCH SERIES FOR INTENSIVE LANGUAGE COURSE FROM IMAM ALI TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Coursebooks are integral elements in teaching-learning processes. Evaluation of coursebooks is also of great importance as it conducted to a better recognition of the nature of a particular teaching/learning situation. This study aims at evaluating Top Notch coursebook from both Iranian EFL learners' and teachers' perspectives. The participants of the study were selected from Imam Ali University's students and teachers (foreign Language center) in which Top Notch series were taught as the core material for 6-month intensive course. Sixty students and 15 teachers participated in this study. The intermediate level of Top Notch was evaluated by both students and teachers based on administering written questionnaires adapted from Demir & Ertas's (2014) checklist. In order to triangulate the collected data, 30 percent of the teachers and 15 percent of the students were interviewed by researcher. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers and students were approximately satisfied with all parts of the book involving content, vocabulary, skill, methodology, pronunciation, etc. Some of the teachers believed that the grammatical points of Top Notch are not appropriate for incidental learning and it doesn't have enough practice to consolidate them in learners' mind. In terms of skills, some students mentioned that using different accent in listening comprehension causes comprehension problems for them. This study can be helpful for EFL teachers and syllabus designers who are working in English language institutes for getting more information about the practicality and applicability of Top Notch series.

Key words: coursebook, checklist, evaluation, Top Notch series

1. Introduction

Coursebooks are integral elements in teaching-learning processes. They somehow dictate what is taught, in what order, how as well as what learners learn. Yet, whether they are an aid or a hurdle to teaching and learning has created remarkable controversies among applied linguists and ELT practitioners.

Some researchers (Allwright, 1981; Harwood, 2005; Thornbury & Meddings, 2001) have, however, questioned the actual role of textbooks in ELT classes. They contend that there is a big gap between learners' needs, styles and features and the materials prepared commercially for EFL and there has been an increase in demand for English courses due to the global status of English, technological advancements and globalization. Furthermore, creating a well-designed and marketable product that takes into account global and local facts of contexts is a difficult challenge.

Recently, some of English-language teaching books on the market have grown dramatically and choosing a good coursebook an apparently is a demanding task. However, in spite of its great importance, materials evaluation is a new trend in the process of language teaching. It does not have a long history. Tomlinson (2001) contends that materials development was not important enough until the 1990s when books on this field started to be published. Materials evaluation is of significant importance since it leads to a much better recognizing the nature of a specific teaching-learning context. Moreover, analyses and evaluations of happenings within the realm of teaching/learning

scenario inform the teacher with more comprehensive information about the essence of the exploited coursebooks or materials.

Every year teachers select coursebooks to implement in their courses and learners pay remarkable amount of money to buy them. When a coursebook has been chosen and purchased, there is then a force to use it even if it turns out to be not highly appropriate for a specific purpose or context. Therefore, it is worth devoting some time regarding in a systematic way the quality of the coursebook. For many teachers the evaluation of coursebooks is more significant than designing courses because their teaching condition forces them to work from a coursebook. Therefore, evaluating coursebooks in order to see whether they are suitable is of crucial significance.

According to Sheldon (1988), we need to evaluate textbooks for two reasons; first, the evaluation will aid the teacher or program developer in making decisions on choosing the appropriate textbook. In addition, evaluation of the merits and demerits of a textbook will familiarize the teacher with its probable weaknesses and strengths. This will enable teachers to make appropriate modifications to the material in their future instruction.

Thus, the present study is an attempt to address the issues mentioned above by determining the overall pedagogical value and appropriateness of the Top Notch coursebook from both Iranian EFL learners' and teachers' perspectives.

2. Review of the related literature

2.1. EFL Coursebooks

The long-running argument on the role of coursebooks in a language course has not reached an agreement yet. Some researchers accept using and supporting the textbooks. Richards (2001) states that instructional materials involving textbooks play the major role in most language programs. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) claim that teaching-learning context is not acceptable without its specific textbook. Likewise, Riazi (2003) argues that textbooks have the secondary role, surpassed only by the teacher in language classes and the teacher should know how to implement their materials and how fruitful they can be. Ur (1996) also contends that textbooks provide a clear skeleton. Sheldon (1988) deduces from evidences that they provide the visible heart of any ELT program. It clarifies what is upcoming point and learners know the future plan. McGrath (2002) believes that a textbook is profitable since it founds the direction, content, and to a certain degree how the lesson is to be taught. He also claims that teachers' images show their opinions and beliefs toward textbooks which will affect on the textbook use by them. The proponents of using textbook believe that without textbook a learner is out of focus and teacher-dependent. They emphasize the especially significance of textbooks in establishing security, guidance, and support, especially for inexperience teachers.

The other group, presenting counter arguments, claim that regarding students' different needs, interests and learning styles, a specific textbook cannot account for all of these differences. Topics in the textbooks may not be relevant and stimulating to all learners. It confines and chocks teachers' creativity. Sequence and structure of a textbook may not be reasonable and fruitful for all conditions. Textbooks have their own philosophy, and naturally they cannot guarantee for a mixture of levels, different types of learning styles, and different categories of learning strategies that often exist in the class.

The opponents of using textbooks regard them chocking and demotivating for teachers and learners. Prabhu (1989) proposes that regarding the fact that teaching must be with learners' current knowledge, coursebooks will not be efficient because they do not accomplish this goal. He continues that it can be more useful for learners if teachers do not concentrate on coursebooks but classify their courses by drawing on a mixture of source books such as conversation books, listening materials, reading books, and teacher-made materials. Allwright (1981) claims that textbooks can remove learners from negotiating the curriculum design process. Researchers such as Florent and Walter (1989) criticized textbooks for their implicit cultural differences. These issues underline the importance of having a malleable approach to the exploitation of a coursebook and selecting a coursebook which allows for more flexibility.

These challenges may be more problematic considering the global textbooks because these books are produced for a wide range of learners. Especially, they are written both for novice and experienced teachers (Bell & Gower, 1998). Global textbooks' producers commonly write for both monolingual and multilingual classes. They also write for adult learners. This wide range creates some problems.

For instance, students who use these textbooks may be faced with topics which are culturally inappropriate or uninteresting to them. A number of studies propose that most current global and local ELT textbooks are published for commercial purposes and are not produced based on the current language acquisition and development principles.

Totally, it seems that despite of some problems with textbooks, they are still the integral elements in the educational settings. Even with the improvement of new technologies that makes it possible to produce higher quality teacher-made materials, demand for textbooks has dramatically grown, and new series and textbooks are produced by the publishing industry each year. Even in some contexts, the borders between textbooks and technologies are becoming slowly blurred. In whatever way, textbooks still play a crucial role in the course of language teaching and learning, no matter how the methodologies of language teaching and learning alter. Thus, it is well worth assessing them because decisions related to coursebook choice will impact on teachers, students, and the overall classroom situation.

In Iran, like many other countries in the Middle East, schools implement materials based on the syllabus and curriculum developed by the ministry of education and under the supervision of this organization. Global coursebooks such as Interchange, Cutting Edge, Total English, American English File and Topnotch are extensively utilized in language institutes in Iran. The book under investigation in this study is Topnotch.

2.2. Coursebook Evaluation

Fundamentally, evaluation is done to determine the extent to which a program or intervention is effective. It is the process of purposeful compiling of information to make a logical decision which is analyzed and reported to stakeholders or related principals.

The term evaluation has been utilized to describe a variety of processes in the field of applied linguistics. Lynch (1996) states that evaluation is "the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions" (p. 2). Brown (1989) proposes a rather better definition of evaluation. He defines it as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved" (p.223). Harmer (2001) regards a distinction between evaluation and assessment. He states that "the assessment of a coursebook is an out-of-class judgment as to how well a new book will perform in class. On the other hand, coursebook evaluation is a judgment on how well a book has performed in fact" (p. 301).

Carter and Nunan (2001) define materials evaluation as the process of assessing the value of materials. Cunningsworth (1995) believes that all of the persons involved in the evaluation or selection process have to remind that "materials evaluation is a complex matter, as there are many variables that affect the success or failure of coursebooks when they are in use" (p.5). Tomlinson (2001) argues that textbook evaluation, on the other hand, is an applied linguistic matter in which teachers, material developers, administrators and supervisors can make sound decision regarding the effective of the materials for the people utilizing them in a especial context. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) believe that textbook evaluation can help teachers in order to go beyond impressionistic and immediate assessments and obtain fruitful, appropriate, systematic, and contextual comprehension of the general essence of a material.

Evaluation is administered to fulfill various functions (Weir and Roberts, 1994). A summative evaluation is done in order to see if a program has accomplished its goals, checking, for example, whether or not a certain proportion of students have obtained a specialized level of language proficiency. Such evaluation usually concentrates on product and clarity. On the other hand, formative evaluation relates to how far a program is on track to obtain its goals. For instance, how teachers utilize training in methodology in a new curriculum. The objective of this kind of evaluation is gathering and analyzing information that will develop the curriculum. Finally, illuminative evaluation is done to explore how different dimensions of a program work or are being implemented. Here, improvement is the main concern. Of course, there is not clear boundary between these focuses and the complementary and overlapping nature of them is slowly recognized.

There are many reasons for assessing textbooks. Littlejohn (1998) believed materials analysis and evaluation can enable us to see inside values the materials and to take more control over their different parts. Sheldon (1988) contends that we have to evaluate textbooks for two reasons. First, the

evaluation will help the teacher or program developer in making decisions on choosing the suitable textbook. In addition, evaluation of the pros and cons of a textbook will familiarize the teacher with its possible weaknesses and strengths. Sheldon (1988) has suggested several other descriptions for textbook evaluation. He offers that the adoption of an ELT textbook often consists of a critical educational decision which entails remarkable financial, professional investment. Therefore, an accurate evaluation enables the educational institution or organization to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market and select the most suitable one for their context.

Generally, material evaluation aids curriculum designers and material developers to regard key issues while developing language courses. Furthermore, evaluation studies are of particular importance in reassessing the deficient points in the existing materials and developing the quality of the materials. In the evaluation process, comments and suggestions of teachers should be regarded on the ground that they are the direct users of coursebooks and usually have good comments about coursebook usage and classroom dynamics.

2.3. Coursebook Evaluation Studies

Some studies have been conducted on coursebook evaluation which indicates the great importance of coursebooks in language teaching and learning. Some of these studies have tried to suggest the criteria for coursebook evaluation. Williams (1983), Kearsy and Turner (1999), and Altman, Ericksen, and Pena-Shaff (2006) have proposed some criteria. Though there are some differences in these criteria, most scholars have considered the criteria such as aims, layout, design, content, subject, language, practical considerations, activities, and skills in their model. Other researchers have evaluated a coursebook or some coursebooks in comparison with each other. Some of these studies are discussed shortly here.

Ranalli(2002),using Cunningsworth's four guidelines, assessed upper-intermediate New Headway taught at the Foreign Language Institute of Yunsei University in Seoul, Korea. He indicated that the textbook supports to a PPP approach to learning and units of the book provide a semi-authentic context for practices and the target language patterns. Kayapinar (2009) investigated two textbook packages including Opportunities and New English File. After analyzing 134 teachers' survey results, he concluded that the teachers had not a general positive attitude toward them.

Litz (2005) studied English Firsthand 2 implemented in all beginner EFL classes in one of the universities of Suwon, South Korea to check its value for the intended language program. He concluded that the textbook was stimulating enough for most of English language teachers and learners. He also found that the textbook was totally communicative in that it followed an activity approach towards teaching and learning.

Dominguez (2003) assessed the representation of gender in examples, conversations, and occupations in both texts and examples of New Interchange Intro. She found that the textbook is a useful source for the teachers as it regards both cultural and multiracial contexts. She also found that the textbook has been successful in regarding learners' settlement and integration needs, particularly at beginner levels, and preparing a balance in describing the two genders. Tok (2010) investigated the weaknesses and strengths of English language textbook "Spot On" in which taught at primary schools in Turkey. His results showed that the negative attributes of the textbook are highly more than its positive characteristics.

A number of comparison studies in the field of textbook evaluation have also been conducted. Vellenga (2004) made a comparison between EFL and ESL textbooks. The findings indicated that the textbooks don't have meta-linguistic and explicit meta-pragmatic information. The results also showed EFL texts included more pragmatic information although the amount of pragmatic information was not enough in all texts. In Turkey, Hamiloglu and Karliova (2009) evaluated five selected English language textbooks concentrating on vocabulary selection and teaching techniques they implemented. By adopting content analysis method, they concluded that the assessed coursebooks integrated lexis into their syllabuses and they used isolate headings and sub-headings such as vocabulary, word formation, and word building to concentrate on vocabulary proficiency.

In Iran, this topic has been studied by a number of researchers recently. Jahangard (2007) in his investigation of the high school English textbooks has contended that there is a lack of connection between the presented vocabulary items. He proposes that using colorful pictures of people and real environment can improve the attraction of the books. He explained the need for deeper, more comprehensive, and impartial studies in this area. Sahragard, Rahimi and Zaremoayyedi (2009)

examined Interchange series, using from Littlejohn's detailed framework (1998). They concluded that the learners were not the starters of the tasks. Furthermore, Azizfar, Koosha, and Lotfi (2010), assessing Iranian high school English textbooks, mentioned that the materials developers have just concentrates on the mechanical practices. They believed the textbooks are established on substitution and repetition drills, and students are asked to produce simple sentences without giving enough opportunity to practice meaningfully the language they are learning.

Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) utilized Bloom's taxonomy to study English textbooks taught at three high schools and pre-university level. They showed that the higher-order learning goals were highly included in the pre-university textbook under investigation. Alemi and Isavi (2012) assessed the specifications in the use of meta-discourse (MD) markers in two commonly used EFL textbooks in Iran, namely, Topnotch and ILI series by using Hyland's (2004) model of interactional meta-discourse. The descriptive analysis of the use of meta-discourse types revealed that all categories of interactional meta-discourse are utilized in both textbooks. However, among the different categories of interactional meta-discourse, self-mentions had the highest frequency in the Topnotch series and involvement markers were more frequent in the ILI series.

A review of the literature indicates that most evaluation checklists have common characteristics. For instance, Skierso's (1991) checklist consists of features relating to bibliographical data, objectives and goals, subject matter, vocabulary and structures, practices and activities, and layout and physical makeup. These characteristics are mostly consistent with those in Demir & Ertas's (2014) suggested eclectic checklist which comprises 56 items under four basic sections: Subjects & Contents (10 items), Skills & Sub-skills (25 items), Layout & Physical make-up (7 items), Practical Considerations (14 items). Clarity was one of the first and for most considerations in gathering the items. Loaded words were refuted and items were "written in simple sentences rather than compound or complex sentences" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 41). Tomlinson (2003) offers refusing large, ambiguous, and dogmatic questions that prone to different interpretations by different evaluators. For instance, one of the items in Byrd's (2001) checklist is: "the coursebook fits the pedagogical and SLA philosophy of the program/course" (p. 427). Such items, according to Mukundan et al. (2011) "may be easily discernible for an expert in the area; in whatever way, it will not be clear enough for an end-user with a low expertise" (p.23). The other consideration in designing the current checklist was the matter of setting. Cunningsworth (1995) states that since different criteria will use in different circumstances, it is best for practitioners to recognize their own priorities and design their own evaluation checklists. In addition, Sheldon (1988) remarked that "any culturally restricted, global list of criteria can never really apply in most local environments, without considerable modification" (p. 242). Thus, the suggested checklist was designed to be easily modifiable based on the context where a given coursebook is to be implemented. This was made possible by not adding narrow context-specific items. The issue of length (the number of items) is the other challenge in developing checklists.

This study aimed to investigate the practicality and effectiveness of Top Notch series for the 6-month intensive course that is held in Imam Ali University (foreign Language center) from teachers' and learner's perspectives.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were selected from Imam Ali University's students and teachers (foreign Language center) in which Top Notch series were taught there as the core material for 6-month intensive course. 60 students and 15 teachers participated in this study. All of the participants were male. The range of teachers' experience regarding familiarity and teaching the coursebook was between 2-3 years the students' experience of studying the course book was 5 months in which they studied this coursebook everyday about 4 hours.

3.2. Instruments

The instruments used in this study were students' and teachers' checklists adopted Demir & Ertas's (2014). Another instrument that used for triangulating the data was structured interview.

3.2.1. Check lists

The checklist used in the present study was developed mainly from Demir & Ertas's (2014) suggested checklist after piloting it to meet the objectives of this study. The checklist used in the study comprises 56 items under four basic sections: Subjects & Contents (10 items), Skills & Sub-skills (25 items), Layout & Physical make-up (7 items), Practical Considerations (14 items). It was used to show

participants' opinions considering the four coursebooks used in the study. A four-point multiple-choice Likert scale format, ranging 1-4, was employed to indicate participants' level of agreement with a list of statements. Each statement was weighted equally (strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, and strongly agree=4).

Students and teachers completed the same version of checklist, to allow for comparison across groups, though the teachers' version consisted of some additional items (items 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) of the section of practical considerations. One of the benefits of employing a single questionnaire was refusing linguistic and cultural biases, and also obtaining results which were as accurate as possible. Questionnaire had an open-ended section where participants were given the opportunity to write their own comments or suggestions considering the coursebook. Ultimately, the researcher reviewed the coursebook thoroughly to provide a descriptive analysis of the categories.

In addition, students' checklist was included by Persian translation of the statements for removing any ambiguities for students in comprehending the statements of the questionnaire. In order to ensure the validity of the checklist's translation, the researcher requested a translation expert to translate the questionnaire into Persian. The Persian translations were translated again into English by two experts. The comparison of these two translated checklists with the original one revealed no remarkable difference; thus, it was concluded that the Persian translation of the checklist was valid.

3.2.2. Structured interviews

Due to triangulating the data interview was held. The interview was structured interview in which every question was pre-determined and was administrated for 30 percent of the teachers and 15 percent of the students who have taken part in this study. It consisted of 30 questions that all of them were in line with the questions and issues of questionnaire. It was held in two sessions.

3.3. Pilot study

In order to measure how reliable the implementation of the checklist is, the researchers administered the checklist to the pilot group of 25 students and 10 teachers. Cronbach's Alpha was utilized for the computation of the internal consistency of the checklist. The reliability index for the present study's checklist was found to be 0.91, for students' questionnaire and 0.82 for teachers' questionnaire, both are considered high reliabilities.

In order to ensure the content and face validity of the checklist, the checklists was reviewed by three experts. Each proved the appropriateness of the checklist considering the general goal of evaluating coursebooks. It is worth noting that the researchers took benefit of the students' and the teachers' comments and suggestions about the questionnaire and applied some brief changes in the final version.

3.4. Procedure

This study aimed at evaluation of the most frequently used foreign language coursebook in Iran, namely Top Notch. The data collection occurred in Imam Ali University (foreign Language center). The coursebook, assessed based on the evaluation checklist, was the intermediate level of Top Notch. The textbook was assessed by both students and teachers based on administering written questionnaire. The researchers requested center's manager for permission to administer the research instruments in the selected classes in cooperation with class teachers. The questionnaire was administered and gathered in one session. The researchers themselves were present in administration session for clarifying and explaining any possible ambiguities for students and teachers. Before administering the questionnaire, the research was explained in detail to the participants in the study in order to guarantee their collaboration. All the participants were given an oral description of goals and procedures of the questionnaire. They were assured that the results would be kept confidential. They had enough time to read the questionnaire items and answer them. For strengthening the collected data, 30 percent of the teachers and 15 percent of the students attended to an interview session. The researchers' final opinions and overall evaluation of the coursebooks were made after analyzing the collected data. Having finished the data collection, one sample t-test as well as independent-samples t-test was utilized to determine the significance of the results.

4. Results

In this part, all the administered questionnaires from both teachers' and students' perspectives were analyzed and their reports were presented.

Q: How is Top Notch Series viewed from language teachers and students' perspectives?

The above question was answered through applying one-sample t-test for each group. For this purpose, a test value (number of items of a subscale $\times 3$ [agree]) was determined by the researcher such that if the difference between the mean of scores given by the participants to each subscale of the checklist and the test value was significant, that aspect of the book is considered appropriate (positive difference) or inappropriate (negative difference) from the participants' perspectives.

Table 1: Results of one-sample t-test on the students' evaluation of the book

Variable	Mean	SD	Test value	T	df	Sig
Subjects and contents	33.30	4.08	30	6.25	59	0.000
Skills and subskills	87.28	7.70	75	12.34		0.000
Layout and physical make-up	21.33	2.96	21	0.87		0.387
Practical considerations	16.41	1.99	15	5.50		0.000
Overall impression	158.33	12.14	141	11.05		0.000

Table 1 indicates that the variable of subjects and contents with a mean value of 33.30 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=6.25$, $df=59$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it could be argued that the students agree that the subjects and contents of the book are appropriate. The variable of skills and subskills with a mean value of 87.28 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=12.34$, $df=59$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it is deduced that the skills and subskills of the book including the four basic skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking as well as grammar and pronunciation are appropriate from the students' perspective. The variable of layout and physical make-up with a mean value of 21.33 is higher than the test value. The difference is not significant at the 95% confidence level ($t=0.87$, $df=59$, $p>0.05$). Therefore it can be argued that the students' perspective on the layout and physical make-up of the book is not positive, or, in other words, the book is not physically well-made and it needs much more attention regarding the aspects containing pictures, photos, layout configuration, printing quality, detailed overview etc. The variable of practical considerations with a mean value of 16.41 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at the 95% confidence level ($t=5.50$, $df=59$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it can be argued that the students' perspective on the practical considerations of the book including accessibility, affordability, supplementary material, supporting on-line material and self-assessment is positive. Finally, the students' overall impression has a mean value of 160.38 which is above the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=11.05$, $df=59$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it is concluded that they agree that the book is appropriate in terms of the whole aspects of evaluation.

To assess the teachers' perspective on the book, the same procedure was followed. The difference between the checklist version delivered to the teachers and that delivered to the students was 9 additional items that were specifically designed to assess the teachers' professional viewpoints. These items included the followings:

- The coursebook is up-to-date (e.g. published within the past 10 years).
- The book addresses different learning styles and strategies.
- The activities and exercises introduce the main principles of CLT.
- The activities can be exploited fully and embrace various methodologies in ELT.
- The type/s of syllabus design used in the book is/are appropriate for learners.
- The coursebook can easily be integrated into technology, thereby allowing for individual study outside the school.
- The coursebook fits curriculum/goals.
- The objectives are specified explicitly in the coursebook.
- The coursebook is designed by taking into account the learners' socially and historically English-free status.

This indicates that the test value of the variable of practical considerations and the whole checklist would be 42 and 168 respectively.

Table 2: Results of one-sample t-test on the teachers' evaluation of the book

Variable	Mean	SD	Test value	T	df	Sig
Subjects and contents	32.46	4.22	30	2.26	14	0.040
Skills and subskills	85.66	7.58	75	5.44		0.000
Layout and physical make-up	24.46	2.87	21	4.67		0.000
Practical considerations	43.66	2.69	42	2.39		0.031
Overall impression	186.26	12.30	168	5.75		0.000

Table 2 indicates that the variable of subjects and contents with a mean value of 32.46 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=2.26$, $df=14$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it could be argued that teachers agree that the subjects and contents of the book are suitable in terms of the items of the evaluation. The variable of skills and subskills with a mean value of 85.66 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=5.44$, $df=14$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it is deduced that regarding the skills and subskills including the four basic skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking as well as grammar and pronunciation the book is considered appropriate from the teachers' viewpoint. The variable of layout and physical make-up with a mean value of 24.46 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at the 95% confidence level ($t=4.67$, $df=14$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it is argued that the teachers' perspective on the layout and physical make-up of the book is positive, or, in other words, the book is physically well-made and it needs much more attention regarding the aspects containing pictures, photos, layout configuration, printing quality, detailed overview etc. from the perspective of the teachers. The variable of practical considerations with a mean value of 43.66 is higher than the test value. The difference is significant at the 95% confidence level ($t=2.39$, $df=14$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it can be argued that teachers believe that the practical considerations of the book including accessibility, affordability, supplementary material, supporting on-line material and self-assessment are positive. In conclusion, the teachers' overall impression has a mean value of 186.26 which is above the test value. The difference is significant at 95% confidence level ($t=5.75$, $df=14$, $p<0.05$). Therefore it is firmly stated that the teachers consider the book appropriate in terms of the whole aspects of evaluation.

To compare the groups' perspectives on the book, an independent-samples t-test was conducted the results of which are represented in Table 3. It should be noted that regarding the comparison, the section of *practical consideration* for the teachers was limited to the shared 5 items:

Table 3: Results of independent-samples t-test on the difference between teachers and students' evaluation of the book

Variable	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Subjects and contents	-.702	73	.485
Skills and subskills	-.729		.468
Layout and physical make-up	3.686		.000
Practical considerations	1.756		.083
Overall impression	-.076		.940

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the evaluation scores for teachers and students. According to the results presented in Table 3, for the variable of subjects and contents, there was no significant difference in scores for teachers ($M=32.46$, $SD=4.22$) and students [$M=33.30$, $SD=4.08$; $t(73)= -.702$, $p=.485$]. Regarding the variable of Skills and subskills, also the results indicated that there was no significant difference in scores for teachers ($M=85.66$, $SD=7.58$) and students [$M=87.28$, $SD=7.70$; $t(73)= -.729$, $p=.468$]. Also, for the third variable of the study, i.e. Layout and physical make-up, the same procedure was conducted and the results revealed that there was a significant difference in scores for teachers ($M=24.46$, $SD=2.87$) and students [$M=21.33$, $SD=2.96$; $t(73)= 3.686$, $p=.000$]. This indicates that the teachers' perspective on the book was more positive in terms of the physical aspects of the book and they considered the book as being physically well-made.

As for the variable of practical considerations, no significant difference was observed in scores for teachers ($M=15.46$, $SD=1.24$) and students [$M=16.41$, $SD=1.99$; $t(73)= -1.756$, $p=.083$]. And finally, regarding the variable of overall impression, also, no significant difference was found in scores for teachers ($M=158.06$, $SD=12.21$) and students [$M=158.33$, $SD=12.14$; $t(73)= -.076$, $p=.940$].

4.1. Analysis of the Interviews

In order to strengthen the collected data, the researchers held an interview session for 30 percent of the teachers and 15 percent of the students who have taken part in this study. The interview was structured interview in which every question was predetermined and consisted of 30 questions that all of them were in line with the questions and issues of questionnaire. It was held in two sessions. In the first session, 5 teachers and in the second session 8 students were interviewed. The results of these interviews were used in extracting strengths and weaknesses of the coursebooks. In addition, a short report of the interviewees' result is presented below.

In the case of Top Notch, the teachers and students are approximately pleased to all parts of the book involving content, vocabulary, skill, methodology, pronunciation, etc. Some of the teachers believed that the grammatical points of Top Notch are not appropriate for incidental learning and it doesn't have enough practice to consolidate them in learners' mind. In terms of skills, some the students mentioned using different accent in listening comprehension causes comprehension problems for them. The results of the interview supported the findings of the data which collected by questionnaires in which most of the student and teachers were satisfied with Topnotch series regarding all the categories included in the questionnaires.

5. Discussion

Textbooks play a pivotal role in any educational context and it seems quite axiomatic that selecting a particular textbook for a particular group of learners can be a difficult job to handle. In addition, evaluation of textbook and other materials is the inevitable and central part of the teaching and learning process. By considering these issues, the researchers of this study aimed to gain Imam Ali EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives about Top Notch series.

The first criterion evaluated by the teachers and students of textbooks was subjects and contents. The second one was skills and sub- skills in which skill consisted of four main skills and sub-skills included vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Regarding pronunciation, the completeness and appropriateness of presentation and its practice are of great importance in EFL textbooks. Taken into account the presentation of vocabulary, the vocabulary load should match the intended level of the learners. The vocabulary items sequence should be founded on a systematic gradation. Recycling is another important factor in vocabulary teaching. The formerly learned vocabulary need to be revised at appropriate intervals.

Learner's language needs and levels should be the major criteria in the selection and presentation of grammatical structures in textbooks. Using appropriate language, gradual increase of the complexity of structures, and logical sequence of the sentences and paragraphs are of great importance. It is also necessary to investigate the balance between the structural and meaningful presentations.

Regarding all categories, teachers as well as students had nearly similar ideas. However, some differences could be found.

Considering the subjects and content, students and teachers agreed that the subjects and content of the Top notch series were appropriate and suitable. The findings regarding subjects and content from teachers' and students perspective Top Notch are in line with the results of Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, and Mohammadi (2013) who assessed two series of ELT coursebook: Interchange (3rd edition) and Top Notch (2nd edition).

Regarding skills and sub-skills category, teachers and students agreed that four skills consist of reading, listening, speaking and writing and sub skills including grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary are appropriate and suitable. Such findings are consistent with Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, and Mohammadi's (2013) results. They found out that most students highly agree that the language used in the textbooks is authentic and appropriate.

In the case of the layout and physical make-up of the book, teachers highly agreed that the layout and physical make-up of the book in Top Notch are reasonably well produced and interesting. Despite of teachers' perspective, the students did not agree that the layout and physical make-up of the book are

appropriate. It is against the findings of Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, and Mohammadi (2013) who found out that nearly most students were of the belief that the layout and design of Top Notch textbooks is appropriate and clear and the textbooks are organized effectively. Having been compatible with this study's results from teachers' perspective, EslamiRasekh et al. (2010) investigated that the most lively, colorful, and authentic photographs and pictures are seen in Top Notch.

Regarding practical consideration, both students and teachers agreed that the practical considerations of the book including accessibility, affordability, supplementary material, supporting on-line material and self-assessment are appropriate. It is in line with the findings of Azadsarv & Tahriri (2014) in which teachers agreed that the supplementary material such as posters and flash cards, etc. accompanying Top Notch is attractive and suitable.

In the case of methodology, teachers believed that the methodology, the activities and exercises introduce the main principles of CLT. The findings regarding methodology in Top Notch are compatible with the results of Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, and Mohammadi (2013) who investigated that teachers agree with the opinion that in Top Notch, the activities and exercises introduce the main principles of CLT.

At last the overall impression of the student and teachers about Top notch series indicated that both of them agreed that this book is appropriate and suitable. In the case of Top Notch, the results of the present study is in line with the findings of Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, and Mohammadi (2013) who found out that the students felt that the coursebook is appropriate and does not portray any negative stereotypes in this series. The results are also consistent with the findings of EslamiRasekh et al. (2010). They concluded that Top Notch is appropriate in different situations in Iran setting.

6. Conclusion

Selecting a coursebook is a problematic and delicate task for both program designers and teachers. Thus, it is worth dedicating much time and energy to assess the available textbooks in order to select the most appropriate one for the students. This study aimed to explore the teachers' and learners' attitude toward a common EFL textbook in Iran namely Topnotch. The findings of this study show that both of the teachers and students of Imam Ali University (Language center) were satisfied with Top notch as the core coursebook for the 6 months intensive English language course they agreed most of the elements of this textbook are appropriate and suitable for this course. Findings of this study may propose fruitful suggestions to the authors of the textbooks as well as those are decision-maker in educational administrations. EFL teachers, syllabus designers, curriculum planner, materials developers, and the learners interested in learning EFL can take advantage of the study. Teachers must be well aware of strengths and weaknesses of the coursebook they teach. It is essential to regard which coursebook may best uphold language learners in diverse instructional contexts.

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A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSE PATTERNS ACROSS GENDER IN PERSIAN AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Compliments are positive speech acts which are usually welcomed by the interlocutors. People generally use compliment exchanges to maintain solidarity and friendship in their social interactions. Apart from the linguistic variations and social status, cultural differences play an important role in responding to compliments. This study intended to extract and categorize the types of compliment responses (CRs) in Persian and English. It also tried to investigate the effect of cross-gender variations in realization of compliment response patterns. To this end, a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was adapted and designed to elicit the data from 50 male and female participants of Persian speakers. The results, then, were compared with the results of Herbert's (1990) study on English native speakers' compliment response patterns. The findings revealed that Persian speakers' general tendency is to express their agreement in response to a compliment and its acceptance. The results also evidenced the effect of gender on compliment responses. Females generally accepted the compliment by appreciating the complimenter; hence establishing friendship and rapport; while male preferred use of set of formulaic expressions and strategies to avoid self-praise and express their modesty. Findings of the study contribute to our knowledge of cross-cultural studies, raising language learners' awareness of similarities and differences between languages regarding use of compliment speech acts.

Keywords: Compliment, Compliment responses (CRs), Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

1. Introduction

Communication is a social activity which requires active participation of the parties involved. As Hymes (1972) mentions, in order to have an effective communication having knowledge of the rules of speaking is necessary. These can be the rules of pragmatics and different speech acts. Speech act is regarded as an utterance which has a performative function. There are different types of speech acts such as: request, invitation, apology, complain, compliment and so on.

Compliment is one of the main discursive strategies that interlocutors use to negotiate meaning and build on mutual rapport in their communications. As Sadeghi and Zarei (2013) indicate, "in the realm of speech acts, compliment responses are a part of efficient communication without which one may face a blind alley which stops or eradicates the whole event of interaction and communication" (P. 31). It is generally conceived that Compliments "grease the social wheels" and facilitate social interactions (Wolfson, 1984).

Needless to say that analysis of compliment responses is of highly importance, since knowledge of the speech acts is believed to be indispensable to effective communication. Moreover, failure to grasp the interlocutors' intention can lead to conflict, uncomfortable interactions and serious misunderstanding. As Motaghi-Tabari and Beuzeville (2012) assert "communicative interactions are highly influenced by cultural values" (p. 22). And lack of the knowledge of these social and cultural values, which may differ among various nations, result in intercultural misconceptions. As Yousefvand, Yousofi and Abasi (2014) mention "Wolfson (1983) has stated that compliments differ cross-culturally not only in the way they are structured but also in their distribution, their frequency of occurrence, and the function they serve. The same complications would apply to compliment responses" (p. 138).

In addition, the importance of studying speech acts is highly demanding in teaching languages. Communicating with people in a language other than speakers' L1, requires discourse and pragmatic awareness, as well as the knowledge of semantic, syntax and phonology. This awareness is well achieved by analyzing the languages themselves. One reliable source of attaining these types of data is through studying the native speakers' language behavior.

To date, a large body of research has focused on the speech act of compliment in American English (Herbert 1989, 1990; Herbert & Straight 1989; Holmes 1986, 1988; Wolfson & Manes 1980) and almost in Persian (Beeman, 1986; Sharifian, 2005; Yousefvand, 2010; Yousefvand, Yousofi & Abasi, 2014). But few studies were carried out in the field of cross-cultural studies to investigate the underlying structure, as well as the possible cultural, discourse and pragmatic similarities and differences among languages with English and Persian in particular. As Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi (2004) asserted, having the knowledge of language use, i.e., being aware of rules of social and pragmatic differences in use of languages, is necessarily demanding to avoid the pragmatic failure.

Being a component of language pragmatics, compliments need to be investigated from a more detailed and comprehensive perspective. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to compare the use of compliment response patterns among Persian speakers with those used by English native speakers of Herbert's (1990) study to reveal the similarities and differences of these cultures regarding their use of compliment responses. In addition, the present study will investigate the cross-gender variations in range and types of strategies that Persian native speakers use in responding to compliments they receive. Therefore, following research questions guided the present study:

1. What are the frequently used types of strategies among Persian and English native speakers in responding to compliments?
2. Are there any similarities or differences in responding to compliments across Persian and English languages?
3. Does gender difference affect the compliment response patterns among Persian native speakers?

2. Review of the Related Literature

From a socio-cultural perspective, compliment is considered as an important speech act. Holmes (1988) identifies compliments as "positively affective speech acts, the most obvious function they serve is to oil the social wheels, paying attention to positive face and wants; thus increasing or consolidating solidarity between people" (P. 462). In other words, compliments are generally used in an attempt to establish rapport and solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. However, according to Hobbs (2003) compliment is a "speech act which explicitly or implicitly bestows credit upon the addressee for some possession, skill, characteristic, or the like, that is positively evaluated by the speaker and addressee" (p.249). This definition implies that speech act of compliments can be realized implicitly or indirectly; thus they have the potential of being confusing and difficult to interpret. In order to have a successful communication and avoid sociolinguistics failure, it is of crucial importance to identify receiving compliments and respond to them appropriately.

One of the major themes of studies in field of compliments is compliment responses. So far, many models of politeness and taxonomies of compliment response patterns have been introduced. Pomerantz (1978) studied compliment responses from conversation analytic perspective in American English context and found that the recipient either agree or accept the compliment; whereas the addressee tends to avoid or minimize self-praise. Further she came to classify responses to compliments as Acceptance, Rejection and Self-praise Avoidance. In addition, Holmes (1986) defines three main categories for compliment responses: (a) accept; (b) reject; and (c) deflect or evade.

Another important model of politeness was introduced by Herbert (1989, 1990). He was one of the pioneers of this field of study who conducted a large-scale study over three years on American English compliment response patterns. The corpus of his study was 1,062 compliment responses collected in three years at the state university of New York. Analyzing the data, he proposed three dimensional frameworks with twelve subcategories:

Table 1: Herbert's (1986) CRs Taxonomy

Response type	Example
A. Agreement	
I. Acceptances	
1. Appreciation Token	Thanks, thank you; [smile]
2. Comment Acceptance	Thanks, it's my favorite too.
3. Praise Upgrade	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
II. Comment History	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
III. Transfers	
1. Reassignment	My brother gave it to me.
2. Return	So's yours.
B. Non-agreement	
I. Scale Down	It's really quite old.
II. Question	Do you really think so?
III. Non-acceptances	
1. Disagreement	I hate it.
2. Qualification	It's all right, but Len's is nicer.
IV. No Acknowledgement	[silence]
C. Other Interpretations	
I. Request	You wanna borrow this one too?

The results of his study revealed that English and South African speakers tended to accept a compliment more than their American counterparts. He mentioned two main reasons to explain this discrepancy: "[firstly,] that the patterned use of language is culturally variable and [secondly, that] these patterns may be linked to such larger aspects of socio-cultural organization as religion, politics and ecology" (p. 82).

As Yuan (2001) asserts, through studying compliment responses, one can increase his/her "understanding of people's culture, social values, social organization, and the function and meaning of language use in a community" (p. 273). Many studies devoted to cross-cultural analysis of compliment response patterns, especially with the focus on American English. Lorenzo-Dus (2001) conducted a cross-cultural and cross-gender analysis of compliment responses of British and Spanish male and female undergraduates. Drawing on Herbert's (1989, 1990) taxonomy, she found similarities as well as differences among the four groups of participants. It was observed that as opposed to Spanish females, their male counterparts tended to upgrade compliments ironically- a type of response that was not observed among British speakers.

In the words of Tang and Zhang (2009), "any universal CR model will fail, because different cultures have different sets of protocols" (p. 325). Using a DCT, designed based on four main situations of appearance, ability, character and possession, they compared the Compliment response patterns of Chinese with Australians and found that Chinese participants tend to use more Evade and Reject strategies followed by fewer Accept strategies than the Australian participants did. The results of the study also showed that Australian were more interested to respond to the compliments, since they used more combination strategies than the Chinese used.

In an attempt to elicit the frequently used strategies of responding to compliments in Persian, Yosefvand (2010) studied a corpus of 540 compliment/response sequences. The findings of the study revealed the general tendency of Persian speakers in use of agreement, as a way of expressing their

modesty, highly embedded in their culture. In addition, the study confirmed the significant effect of culture on responding to the compliments in Iran context.

Moreover, Sadeghi and Zarei (2013) investigated the use of compliments in Persian and English among Iranian EFL learners. In order to extract the compliment response patterns of 50 participants, a Discourse Completion Test was administered among them. The results of the study showed that Iranian EFL learners used three main strategies as a response to the received compliments: accept, reject and evade. Surprisingly, they tended to use the same range of strategies across English and Persian.

Considering the role of gender differences in receiving compliments, Herbert (1990) studied sex-based differences in the form of English compliments. He found that female generally tended to accept compliment especially made by male, whereas compliments by women were treated with responses other than acceptance by men.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) argued that females tend to use compliments in order to have an effective communication and establish solidarity in their interaction with others. Whereas males considers compliments as a speech act that emphasizes one's authority to evaluate the others.

Heidari, Rezazadeh and Eslami Rasekh (2009) examined compliment response patterns among male and female teenage EFL learners. A written Discourse completion task, consisted of four situational settings of appearance, character, ability and possession was used to collect data from sixty elementary Iranian EFL learners. The researchers found that female participants frequently use more Evade and Reject strategies than their male counterparts, i.e., "females express appreciation for a compliment less and denigrate themselves more" (p. 18).

In line with previous research, Yousefvand (2012) considered the role of gender differences in realization of compliment speech act patterns among Persian speakers. The results of her study indicated the effect of gender on responding to the compliments; using a set of formulaic expressions and scaling down strategies, men tended to reject compliments; while females drew on acceptance or surprise to received compliments.

The present study is mainly patterned after Yousefvand (2010) study. The study aims at analysis of compliment response patterns and addresses similarities and differences in male and female Persian and English native speakers' compliment response behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 50 BA undergraduate students. Sampling was based on non-randomized design, and available samples took the DCT. They were Persian native speakers, 25 males and 25 females, ranging from 19 to 26 in age, majoring in English Literature, selected from Razi University in Kermanshah, Iran.

3.2. Instruments

A Persian Discourse Completion Test (DCT), adapted (from Heidari, Rezazadeh, & Eslami Rasekh, 2009; Sadeghi & Zarei, 2013) and designed by researchers, was used to elicit the required data. This questionnaire consisted of 16 situations, each one describing various real life situations, fall into three main situational settings: appearance, possession, ability and /or accomplishment. The questions were open-ended so that they could be answered without any limitations (Appendix B).

Considering classification of CRs, Herbert's (1986, 1990) taxonomy was employed. This classification categorizes the CR strategies into three main acts: Agreement, Non-agreement, and Other interpretations, with each strategy having further subdivided strategies.

3.3. Procedure

Before conducting the main experiment, the DCT questionnaire went through 2 pilot phases. In the first phase, it was validated by 6 MA students, majoring in Applied Linguistics. In the second phase, the Persian version of the validated questionnaire was administered among 25 male and female BA students, majoring in English literature from Razi University, who had similar characteristics to the target sample of the study. Analyzing the data in this phase, the researchers found that there is a need for more situations. Thus, the questionnaire was modified and the number of the DCT situations was added to 16. After the pilot phase, the revised questionnaire was administered among the participants. To avoid their meta-cognitive awareness, the participants were not informed about the

exact purpose of the study. They were also asked to put themselves in each compliment situation and write their realistic responses to the received compliment within 20 minutes.

3.4. Data analysis

In this study, thematic analysis was used for manually encoding the participant responses to compliments in DCTs. Boyatzis (1998) points out that thematic analysis is a method in qualitative research used for uncovering patterns and themes in a particular phenomenon. The researchers in this study adopted the data-driven approach to find out about emerging key themes through scrutinizing the CRs. The corpus of compliment responses upon which the analysis of present study rests consists of 800 examples. All the CRs were coded and categorized using Herbert's (1986) taxonomy (Table1). This study required one more category, namely, *formulaic expression* which was adopted following the study of Yousefvand (2010) for the Persian compliment responses. Furthermore, due to the observation of an additional strategy in Persian data, the No-Acknowledgement strategy, proposed by Herbert (1989), was divided into 2 main subcategories, including *verbal* and *non-verbal offending responses* to account for the newly emerged data and create the results that are more detailed and tangible. The non-verbal offending responses include scowl and grimace; and verbal offending responses include use of offending terms and phrases which might arise due to the complimenter's intention such as expression of envy and even flattery. These interpretations of compliments depend on interlocutors' characteristics, their relationship, degree of familiarity, and the particular context in which the communication takes place.

In order to achieve high degree of reliability in this research, two raters carried out the process of coding the data independently. The reliability index was calculated, accounted for 95% of the categorized data. Then the 5% remaining value for agreement achieved through discussion and consultation with each other.

To qualitatively analyze the data, the descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage values were used. Because of limited number of participants in this study, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results of data analysis to the whole English and Persian community speakers.

4. Results

The following 15 categories emerged out of thematic analysis of CR data which are exemplified as follows. The English translations are provided in quotation marks following Persian compliment responses.

1. **Appreciation token:** A verbal acceptance of a compliment, acceptance not being semantically fitted to the specifics of that compliment.

e.g.,.../Mamoon/
"Thanks, thank you"

2. **Comment acceptance:** The addressee accepts the complimentary force by means of a response semantically fitted to the compliment.

e.g.,... /Manam range abi ro kheili dust daram/
"Blue is my favorite color, too."

3. **Praise upgrade:** The addressee accepts the compliment and asserts that the compliment force is insufficient.

e.g., .../Are, man hamishe khoshtipam/
"Yes, I'm always handsome"

4. **Comment history:** The addressee, although agreeing with the complimentary force, does not accept the praise personally; rather, he or she impersonalizes the complimentary force by giving (maybe irrelevant) impersonal details.

e.g.,... /Are khaharam az Dubai avorde/
"Yes, my sister brought this from Dubai"

5. **Reassignment:** The addressee agrees with the compliment, but the complimentary force is transferred to some third person or to the object complimented itself.

e.g.,... /Entekhabe madarame/
"This is my mother's taste"

6. **Return:** The praise is shifted to the addresser/complimenter.

e.g.,.../Esme shoma ham kheili ghashange/
"You have a beautiful name, too"

7. **Scale down:** The force of the compliment is minimized or scaled down by the addressee.
e.g.,... /*kheili amamadegisho nadashtam*/
"I was not much ready for that"
8. **Question:** The addressee might want an expansion or repetition of the original compliment or question the sincerity of the compliment.
e.g.,... /*Jedi, Vaghean?*/
"Really?"
9. **Disagreement:** The addressee directly disagrees with addresser's assertion.
e.g.,... /*Na aslan khub nabud*/
"No, it was not good at all"
10. **Qualification:** The addressee may choose not to accept the full complimentary force offered by qualifying that praise, usually by employing *but*, *yet*, etc.
e.g.,... /*Are, vali fekr mikonam kheiliam farghi nadaran*/
"Yes, but I think that doesn't make much difference"
11. **No acknowledgement:** The addressee gives no indication of having heard the compliment; that is, he or she employs the conversational turn to do something other than responding to the compliment offered, i.e., shifts the topic.
e.g., ...silence
12. **Nonverbal offending response:** The addressee does not use language in response to the compliment, rather uses a kind of facial expression to show his/her discontent.
e.g., ...frowning
13. **Verbal offending response:** In order to show his/her dissatisfaction, the addressee uses offending language in response to the compliment.
e.g.,... /*Be shoma marbut nist*/; /*Kheili bad salighein*/; /*Khob boro bekhar badbakht*/
"None of your business"; "Your taste is awful"; "Go and buy one for yourself, poor fellow"
14. **Request interpretation:** The addressee interprets the compliment as a request rather than a simple compliment.
e.g.,... /*Mikhay bedamesh be to?*/
"You wanna borrow it?"
15. **Formulaic expression:** Addressee shows his or her modesty by using a set of prefabricated utterances.
e.g.,... /*Cheshmatun ghashang mibine*/... /*Nazare lotfetune*/
"Beauty is in the eyes of beholders" "That's very kind of you"

Using frequency and percentage values, the collected data was analyzed and the results are comprehensively cross-tabulated and presented as follows:

Table 2: Compliment Response Patterns among Persian Native Speakers

Response Types	Frequency	Percentage
A. Agreement		
I. Acceptances		
1. Appreciation Token	157	19.62
2. Comment Acceptance	34	4.25
3. Praise Upgrade	71	8.87
Subtotal	262	32.75
II. Comment History	32	4.0
III. Transfer		
1. Reassignment	12	1.5
2. Return	31	3.87
Subtotal	43	5.5
Subtotal	338	42.25
B. Non-agreement		
I. Scale Down		
II. Question	12	1.5
	48	6.0

III. Non-acceptance		
1. Disagreement	6	.75
2. Qualification	12	1.5
IV. No Acknowledgment		
1. Silence	51	6.37
2. Offending Behavior		
2.1. Verbal response	23	2.87
2.2. Nonverbal response	12	1.5
Subtotal	164	20.5
C. Other Interpretations		
I. Request	18	2.25
II. Formulaic Expression	280	35.0
Subtotal	298	37.25
Total	800	100

As Table 2 shows, Persian native speakers tended to respond to the compliments in this order: Agreement, Other Interpretations, and Non-agreement. Among the three categories, "Agreement" responses occurred most frequently, accounting for 42.25% of all the responses. In this category there are three main subcategories, including: "Acceptance", "Transfer", and "Comment history" response types, which respectively made up 32.75%, 5.5%, and 4% of all the responses.

The second category with highest frequency of occurrence was "Other Interpretations" composing 37.25% of all the responses. The subcategories of this level are: "Formulaic expressions" with 35%, and "Request" with 2.25% of all the responses.

The third category in order of the CRs was "Non-Agreement" which accounted for 20.5% of all the responses, the subcategories of which are: Scale down (1.5%), Question (6%), Non-acceptance (2.25%), and No-acknowledgement (10.74%).

As the results indicate, each category of responses does not carry equal weight. Among the three main categories, the most frequently used type of responses was that of Agreement category. Therefore, it can be conclude that Persian native speakers generally tend to agree in compliment exchanges. Surprisingly, according to the results, the most frequent types of responses at micro level were of Formulaic expressions, followed by Acceptance. This reveals the Persian speakers' modesty which is highly embedded in their culture.

As this study is concerned with American English CRs and as Table 3 shows (Appendix A), American native speakers tended to respond to the compliments in this order: Agreement, Non-agreement, and Other Interpretations. Among the three main categories, Agreement responses were the most frequently used type which accounted for 66% of all the responses, followed by Non-agreement with 31.2 % and finally, Other Interpretations type of responses with 2.9% of all the responses in the overall compliment exchanges.

The findings of this study and the ones reported in Table 3 highlights the similarity of Persian native speakers and American English speakers in frequently using agreement type of responses in their compliment exchanges. On the other hand, the most significant difference in distribution of compliment responses between the two groups, is in the subcategory of formulaic expression which was absent in American English data. Persian native speakers tended to use a set of formulaic expressions such as "That's very nice of you", "Your eyes see everything beautiful", "and I'm at your service", " preceded or followed by appreciation tokens such as "thanks", "thank you", which accounted for one-thirds of total responses.

Another important finding of Persian data which worth mentioning is a kind of insulting behavior observed in responding to the compliments especially those made by male strangers. These kinds of responses which occurred due to the addressees' interpretation of the compliment producers' intentions carrying verbal harassment, flattery, and being ill-cultured accounted for 4.37 % of all the responses which was absent in American data. These responses were identified as having no acknowledgment for the received compliment, hence fell in the category of non-agreement and classified as being either verbal, including use of insulting terms and expression or being nonverbal.

Table 4: Compliment Response Patterns by Gender among Persian Native Speakers

Response type	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
A. Agreement				
I. Acceptances				
1. Appreciation Token	96	24.0	61	15.25
2. Comment Acceptance	17	4.25	16	4.0
3. Praise Upgrade	34	8.5	37	9.25
Subtotal	147	36.75	114	28.5
II. Comment History	10	2.5	22	5.5
III. Transfer				
1. Reassignment	6	1.5	6	1.5
2. Return	19	4.75	14	3.5
Subtotal	25	6.25	20	5.0
Subtotal	182	45.5	156	39.0
B. Non-agreement				
I. Scale Down	4	1.0	8	2.0
II. Question	23	5.75	25	6.25
III. Non-acceptance				
1. Disagreement	1	.25	5	1.25
2. Qualification	5	1.25	7	1.75
IV. No Acknowledgment				
1. Silence	30	7.5	21	5.25
2. Offending behavior				
2.1. Verbal response	16	4.0	7	1.75
2.2. Nonverbal response	12	3.0	0	-
Subtotal	91	22.75	73	18.25
C. Other Interpretations				
I. Request	11	2.75	7	1.75
II. Formulaic Expression				
Subtotal	116	29.0	164	41.0
Total	127	31.75	171	42.75
	400	100	400	100

As Table 4 shows, the order of compliment responses at macro level is slightly different between male and female Persian native speakers. Females tend to respond to the compliments using Agreement (45.5%), Other Interpretations (31.75), and Non-agreement (22.75) types of strategies; while their male counterparts incorporated Other Interpretations (42.75%), Agreement (39.0%), and Non-agreement (18.25%) types of responses in the compliment exchanges. According to these findings, men tended to show their modesty by incorporating formulaic expressions (41.0%); whereas women were interested in general verbal acceptance of the compliments (45.5 %). One more finding is that female participants' use of Offending Behavior (28 out of 400, or 7.0%) was more than male participants (7 out of 400, or 1.75%).

5. Discussion

This study had two main purposes: First, it tried to find out the possible similarities and differences between English and Persian native speakers' use of compliment responses. Second, it specifically aimed to examine the compliment response patterns across gender within Persian culture. The answers to the research questions are discussed below:

Research Question (1): What are the most frequently used strategies among Persian and English native speakers in responding to compliments?

In order to answer this question, the data were analyzed statistically, using frequency and percentage values at macro and micro levels of CRs for each group of participants. The general tendency of the Persian native speakers is to follow the order of Agreement, Other interpretations, and Non-agreement as preferred strategies at macro level in responding to the compliments they receive. In Persian responses, Agreement category comprised 42.25% of the responses. In this category, the most frequently used type of strategy was Acceptance, accounted for 32.75% of all the CRs. This implies that Persian native speakers tend to accept the compliments and agree with the addressee. The next most frequently used strategy by Persian speaking participants was Other Interpretations, accounted for 37.25% of all the responses, i.e., nearly one-thirds of the total responses. At the micro level, Persian speakers preferred to use Formulaic Expressions which contained 35.0% of responses. Use of this set of formulaic expressions and comments, shows the Persian speakers' inclination toward modesty and self-praise avoidance which is in line with Yousefvand (2010) study, who also found that use of formulaic expressions is one of the main CR strategies.

In use of Non-agreement category, with 20.5% of responses, Persian participants tended to incorporate No-acknowledgement strategy. In fact, the addressees not only had no acknowledgment for being complimented, but also showed offending behavior in response (4.37%) or gave no indication of having heard the compliment, thus leaving the compliment without any response (6.37%).

On the other hand, according to Herbert (1990), American English speakers followed the order of Agreement, Non-agreement, and Other interpretations. In American responses, Agreement category contained 66% of the responses. In this category, the most frequently used types of strategies were Acceptance and Comment History with 36.4% and 19.3% of all the responses. The second category is Non-agreement which contained 31.2% of all the CRs and shows that American participants frequently used Non-acceptance strategies with 15% of all the responses. In this case, participants did not fully accept the compliment by qualifying the praise (10%) or directly disagreed with the complimenter's assertion (5%). The least commonly used strategy among the American English speakers was the use of Other interpretations, which exclusively included requests. This implies that the addressee treated the compliment as merely being a request which accounted for 2.9% of total responses.

Research Question (2): Are there any similarities or differences in responding to compliments across Persian and English languages?

In responding to the compliments there are some similarities as well as differences among Persian and American English speakers. The similar characteristic of the two groups is a general interest to express their agreement in response to the received compliment. Although the frequency of its occurrence was not exactly the same- for American 66% and for Persian 42.25% of total CRs- it was the most commonly preferred type of strategy to use. This was also observed at micro level of CRs, where the both groups used Appreciation Token to express their agreement and accept the complimenter's assertion happily.

There are some general differences that need to be expressed. In use of Agreement strategies, two main differences were observed. One is use of Praise Upgrade (8.87%) by Persian participants which was more than what their American counterparts used (.4%). The most significant difference between the two groups' CRs, are the use of Formulaic Expressions and Offending Behavior by Persian speakers which was absent in American data. Persian native speakers generally tended to use Formulaic Expression in their compliment exchanges, so that it comprised one-thirds of their responses. This indicates the fact that, when complimented by others, many Persian speakers generally tend to use an automatic expression to show their modesty and avoid self-praise; in Persian culture it is regarded as *shekasteh-nafsi* (Sharifian, 2005). This schema prompts the speakers to scale down compliments, downplay their talents, skills, achievements, and etc. (Yousefvand, 2010). The results of the study support the findings of Yousefvand (2010; 2012) which indicates use of particular types of formulaic expressions which are culture-specific and different from those that might be used by American English speakers. In addition, instead of directly rejecting the compliments, Persian speakers make use of the formulaic expressions to make a comment to show their modesty, thus reduce the tension and embarrassment or avoid self-praise. Some of these widely used Formulaic Expressions are:

-Ghabele shoma ro nadare: "It is not worth mentioning"

- Nazare lotfe shomast: "That's very kind of you"
- Vazifeast: "It's all my duty"
- Khahesh mikonam: "You're welcome"
- Chesmatun ghashang mibine: "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholders"

This fact can also be induced from the results of Non-agreement category. At the micro level of this category, the main difference lies in use of non-acceptance strategies. American English speakers' non-acceptance responses (15%) were more than their Persian native speakers (2.25%). The results show that American English speakers tend to respond to the compliment force directly by disagreeing (5%) or by qualifying the compliment (10%), while the Persian speakers rarely express their disagreement (.75%) or use qualification strategies (1.5%). In case of Formulaic expression, one more finding worth mentioning is that these types of expressions usually were preceded or followed by an appreciation token (e.g., *Are, Merci, Mamnun, "yes", "thanks", "thank you"*) or a question (e.g., *Vaghean, Jedi?" really?"*).

Another type of strategy which was only used by Persian speakers was the use of offending behavior especially made by female participants being complimented in response to male strangers. This finding can be attributed to Iranian female characteristics, interpreting a compliment being made by a male stranger as carrying intentions other than speaker's courtesy, kindness, and desire to express admiration or even praise. Although it is generally believed that compliments function as expression of solidarity, positive admiration and politeness, they may act as expression of envy, verbal harassment or even flattery (Nkwain, 2011). As Yousefvand et al. (2014) assert these types of interpretations usually depend on the interlocutors' characteristics, degree of familiarity, and the specific context in which the compliment exchanges occur. As an illustration, when a female is complimented by a male, depending on the degree of familiarity her response might be different; being complimented by a familiar male she might use different types of Agreement strategies, but when she is complimented by a male stranger, she might ignore the complimenter by being silent, or make use of offending expressions (e.g., *Be shoma rabti nadare, "It's not up to you", Che bad salighe, "what an awful taste you have" etc.*), and even in rare cases she might accept it reluctantly.

Another outstanding feature of Persian CRs was use of terms and expressions that express their hope and desire for future, as well as use of small prayers in combination of other types of strategies. This is also another characteristic of Persian speakers which is highly embedded in their culture, since they have strong ties with their religion and faithfully believe that they will be blessed by God's mercy.

Some of these expressions and terms are:

- Lotfe Khoda bude: "It was all nothing but God's mercy"
- Khoda ro shokr: "Thank God"
- Khaste Khoda bude: "It was all God's willing"
- Ensha Allah...: "God willing"

Research Question 3: Does gender difference affect the compliment response patterns among Persian native speakers?

The answer to the question is positive. Concerning compliment response patterns, we observed some differences between men and women. Four main differences will be discussed as follows. While women tended to follow the order of Agreement, Other interpretations, and Non-agreement responses; men used Other Interpretations, Agreement, and Non-agreement categories of CRs respectively. Approximately half of the female responses (45.5%) were devoted to Agreement category of CRs. Female Persian speakers' responses show a general tendency to accept the compliment by appreciating the complimenter's statement; whereas male Persian speakers made use of formulaic expressions far more often than their female counterparts used (41% to 29%). In line with Yousefvand (2010) findings, this preference is apparent irrespective of the compliment situation, i.e., no matter what the subject of the compliment is, men prefer to use formulaic expressions in their compliment exchanges. Moreover, use of these kinds of expressions as the compliment response behavior indicates men's inclination toward modesty. This manner is usually employed to avoid self-praise and decrease the complimentary force (Yousefvand, 2010).

Analyzing the results of Non-agreement category, another interesting point was found. Although the use of other CR strategies was more or less the same, female participants when complimented by an unknown male, preferred to either accept the compliment reluctantly, or generally did not acknowledge the unknown complimenter by remaining silent or show their discontent in an

offending manner. Use of these kinds of offending responses (e.g., *Be shoma aslan marbut nist...* "It's none of your business") was more obvious in situations that women were complimented on their appearance or ability. As Yousefvand (2010) indicates use of this offending behavior can be justified by the fact that in Iranian culture, "compliments from men are generally not accepted unless the man is a member of the family. However, if they happen, the appropriate response from the female would be to simply ignore the man" (p. 107).

6. Conclusion

Speech act of compliment is one of the discursive strategies that speakers employ to negotiate meaning and establish friendship in their communications. As Mustapha (2011) emphasizes studies with focus on compliment responses not only disclose the compliment response strategies but also reflect information about cultural values and social norms. The results of the study support the argument that modesty as a crucial component of Persian culture plays an important role in compliment responding (Beeman, 1986; Sharifiyan, 2005; Yousefvand, 2012). The findings of the study contribute to the fact that Formulaic Expression and Appreciation Token were the two main commonly used response types that Persian speakers used in their compliment exchanges. However the results of the study also revealed the significant effect of culture and gender on compliment responding. Although, men preferred use of formulaic expression as their first compliment response type, women had a general tendency to use appreciation token. The study also found that depending on the context, degree of familiarity, interlocutors' intentions and relationship, a compliment may be interpreted as an expression of positive admiration, praise, expression of envy or humiliation of the other party of the interlocution. Depending on the kind of interpretation, the compliment receivers will have different reactions; however compliments are often employed to maintain solidarity, intimacy and friendship between the interlocutors. Generally speaking, these observations highlight the dynamic nature of language as well as the impact of cultural norms on speakers' choice of language.

7. Implications of the Study

Regarding the pedagogical implications, the findings of the study support the main argument that language and culture are interrelated and they should not be thought separately. Raising language learners' awareness of discursial and socio-pragmatic features of language can be done through direct instruction of pragmatic information. Teaching politeness rules and strategies are as necessary as teaching linguistic rules and form of the target language. In addition, if the language learners are consciously aware of the similarities and differences between their L1 and L2, they can reduce the negative pragmatic transfer. Research of this type, with focus on speech act of compliment, provide a useful tool for teachers to raise the language learners' knowledge of politeness patterns, but also similarities and differences of the source and target language.

8. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the small sample of the study and non-randomized sampling procedure, the results may not be generalized to the whole community of speakers.

Further studies can be done incorporating larger samples of participants, using randomized sampling. Similar studies can be done adding more variables into account, such as *literacy* or *educational background*; i.e., comparing use of CR strategies among literate and illiterate participants; *age*, comparing use of CRs among young and old participants; or the issue of *power* and *social statutes*, e.g., use of CRs among students and teacher, University students and professors; and *social distance*, including friends, strangers, and acquaintances.

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Appendix A:

Table 3: Compliment Response Patterns in English (Herbert, 1990, P.211, as cited in Yousefvand, 2010)

Response types	American		South African	
	No.	%	No.	%
A. Agreement				
I. Acceptances				
1. Appreciation Token	312	29.4	162	32.9
2. Comment Acceptance	70	6.6	213	43.2
3. Praise Upgrade	4	.4	1	.2
II. Non-acceptance				
1. Comment History	205	19.3	24	4.9
2. Reassignment	32	3.0	23	4.7
3. Return	77	7.3	12	2.4
B. Non-agreement				
1. Scale Down	48	4.5	31	6.3
2. Question	70	6.6	12	2.4
3. Disagreement	53	5.0	9	1.8
4. Qualification	100	10.0	0	0
5. No Acknowledgment	54	5.1	1	.2
C. Other Interpretations				
1. Request	31	2.9	4	.8
Total	1.062	100.1	492	99.8

Appendix B:

پرسشنامه

انجام در را ما آن تکمیل با لطفاً است گردیده تهیه زبان شناسی جامعه موضوعات از یکی بررسی و مطالعه منظور به این پرسشنامه
 سپاسگزاریم صمیمانه شما همکاری از فرمایید. پیشاپیش یاری تحقیق این

..... ☐ مذکر ☐ میزان تحصیلات: جنسیت: مونث

کدام شما مادری زبان صورت، این غیر در است؟ فارسی شما مادری زبان آیا
 یک هر در که است شده تشریح موقعیت زیر شانزده است؟

به جواب در که را آنچه کنید تامل آن روی زیاد که آن بدون لطفاً کند می تمجید و تعریف شما از موضوعی مورد در شخصی آنها از
 گفت بنویسید خواهید زیاد خیلی احتمال به گوینده شخص تمجید و تعریف

از یکی مهمانی، در روید می مهمانی به و پوشید می را لباسهایتان بهترین از یکی نیز شما اند داده ترتیب مهمانی یک دوستانتان: اول موقعیت
 خوشگل/خوشتیپ شدی "واقعاً میاد! تو به لباس این چقدر گوید: "وای می شما دوستان به

..... پاسخ شما:

.....
 شما کند مرتب را اتاقش وسایل تا کنید کمک او به که کند می خواهش شما از او است کرده کشی اسباب بازی به دوستانتان از یکی: دوم موقعیت
 خیلی نکته، درد گوید: "دست می دوستان خدا حافظی هنگام. شود مرتب چیز همه تا کشید می زحمت او منزل در ساعت چندین می پذیرید و هم
 لطف کردی"

..... پاسخ شما:

بعضی تا گیرد می شما از را اید آن کرده عوض را همراهتان تلفن که شود می متوجه دوستان. اید خریده جدیدی همراه تلفن اخیراً: سوم موقعیت عالیهِ! واقعاً نداره. را امکانات این من ست! تلفن پیشرفته گوید: "خیلی می شما به سپس و کند امتحان را امکاناتش از شما پاسخ:....."

هم اکنون کنفرانس خود را در کلاس به پایان رسانده اید، یکی از همکلاسی هایتان نزد شما می آید و می گوید: "عالی بود، من: چهارم موقعیت خیلی لذت بردم"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت پنجم: دوستان خود را به صرف چای و کیک که خودتان پخته اید دعوت کرده اید، بعد از پذیرایی به شما می گویند: "کیک خیلی خوشمزه بود."

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت ششم: در حال خرید دامن/پیراهن تازه ای، مرد جوان غریبه ای به شما میگوید: "خیلی بهتون میاد"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت هفتم: در حال خرید دامن/پیراهن تازه ای، زن جوان غریبه ای به شما میگوید "خیلی بهتون میاد"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت هشتم: دوستان خود را به خانه دعوت کرده اید، یکی از دوستانتان چشمش به ساعتی که روی دیوار نصب کرده اید می افتد و می گوید: "من عاشق این ساعت شدم، چقد به این سالن میاد"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت نهم: روز اولی است که پیراهن/لباسی را به تن کرده اید، یکی از همکارانتان به شما می گوید: "چقد این لباس آبی برازنده شماست، رنگ آبی خیلی به شما میاد"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت دهم: بدنبال پیدا کردن جای پارک برای اتومبیل خود هستید که تنها یک جای خالی پیدا و راحتی پارک دویل می کنید. موقع پیاده شدن از اتومبیل، خانم غریبه ای می گوید: "باریکلا، عجب دست فرمانی!"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت یازدهم: بدنبال پیدا کردن جای پارک برای اتومبیل خود هستید که تنها یک جای خالی پیدا و راحتی پارک دویل می کنید. موقع پیاده شدن از اتومبیل، مرد غریبه ای می گوید: "باریکلا، عجب دست فرمانی!"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت دوازدهم: در یک رقابت ورزشی سخت نفر اول می شوید. دوستانتان بسیار خوشحال هستند و به خاطر برد در این مسابقه به شما تبریک می گویند. یکی از آنها با دیدن جایزه شما می گوید: "کارت عالی بود، واقعاً این جایزه حقت بود."

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت سیزدهم: به تازگی با یک دوست آشنا می شوید وقتی که خود را به اومعرفی می کنید می گوید: "اسمت خیلی قشنگه!"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت چهاردهم: "تولد یکی از دوستانتان است و برای او هدیه ای می خرید. دوستان که از هدیه شما بسیار خوشحال شده از شما تشکر می کند و می گوید: "ممنون، هدیه ات خیلی قشنگه!"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت پانزدهم: در یک مغازه عینک فروشی، در حال خرید عینک هستید. هنگامیکه یکی از عینک ها را روی چشم خود امتحان می کنید، مرد غریبه ای که او هم در حال خرید عینک هست به شما می گوید: "خیلی بهتون میاد، خوشگل تر/خوش تیپ تر شدین"

شما پاسخ:.....

موقعیت شانزدهم: در یک مغازه عینک فروشی، در حال خرید عینک هستید. هنگامیکه یکی از عینک ها را روی چشم خود امتحان می کنید، خانم غریبه ای که او هم در حال خرید عینک هست به شما می گوید: "خیلی بهتون میاد، خوشگل تر/خوش تیپ تر شدین"

شما پاسخ:.....

THE EFFECT OF TEXT RECONSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the effect of text reconstruction on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing performance. For this purpose 125 learners of English at a language institute participated in this study. Having being homogenized by an Oxford placement test (OPT), 60 learners were selected and they were randomly assigned into two groups of 30, control and experimental. Then both groups sat for a pre-test, which was a writing test. The purpose of this test was to measure the learners' initial subject knowledge of writing ability. Afterwards, the experimental group received treatment based on text reconstruction. However, the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way of teaching. The treatment procedure took 10 sessions. Finally, at the end of the course both groups sat for the post test writing. Then the statistical analysis was run through independent samples t-test. It was explored from the study that learners' writing improves more when they are provided with text reconstruction. However, this study provides a significant contribution in curriculum innovation and policy with respect to the learners' writing development.

Key words: Text Reconstruction, Writing

Introduction

In various guises, reconstruction task has a long tradition in ELT methodology. Since This task type foreground meaning, it fit well into a task-based model of instruction, and because the starting point in this cases is whole text, it use is consistent with a discourse-oriented view of language. However, its potential for focusing learners' attention on form (that is, *noticing* both what is present in input and absent in output) has received little attention. This article rehabilitates technique that exploits both the meaning-driven and form-focused potential of this task type.

This study will also be significant from two points of view, the pedagogical and practical points. From pedagogical point of view it has implication for language teachers and university professors to incorporate such instruction in their teaching curriculum. And from practical point of view it can be of help for material designers while selecting and presenting materials.

Definition of key terms

- **Text reconstruction:** Levenston (1978) proposed the idea of reconstruction and mentioned that the reconstructed version of a sentence is "what a native speaker of the target language would have said to express a certain meaning in a certain context" (in Myers, 1997, p. 2).

- **Writing:** is a complex meta-cognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skills, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes (Graham, 1997).

Kay (2003) observes that writing is a highly complex process involving multiple brain mechanisms and specific abilities. The act of writing requires the writer to formulate ideas, organize and sequence

points in logical order, select vocabulary, check for grammatical correctness, spell words correctly, punctuate, and write legibly. It requires the simultaneous and sequential integration of attention, language, long-term memory and working memory, motor skills, higher-order thinking, and meta-cognition.

The process usually termed 'transcription' involves converting the thoughts the writer wants to express into written language, correctly arranged and sequenced on the page (Graham & Harris, 2000b).

Traditional approaches to writing

Writing proficiency develops over time. It begins as a kind of free association of ideas that a reader may find difficult to follow. From this come a growing knowledge of stylistic conventions and more sophisticated uses of processes for planning, evaluating, and revising.

Development continues with compositions marked by awareness of an audience and writing as a more unified and productive craft. Finally at the most advanced stage, writing becomes a personal tool for transforming one's own experiences and knowledge (Bereiter, 1980).

As they become more proficient writers, students move gradually from "knowledge-telling" to "knowledge-transformation" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, pp.5-6). Knowledge telling is most typical of less proficient writers and involves writing content that could in principle also be conveyed orally. Knowledge-transformation is more complex; the writing process is used as a way to extend ideas and reasoning and as a vehicle for the development of knowledge, philosophical ideas, and personal awareness.

Effective writing instruction acknowledges that the smooth deployment of the higher-level writing strategies needed to plan, generate and revise text depends on easy use of lower-level skills such as handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and access to appropriate vocabulary. It will be harder for students to utilize strategies to write a coherent summary or persuasive essay if they are not fluent in the lower-level skills. At the same time, students who have difficulty with either lower-level writing skills or higher-level writing strategies will find it difficult to write to learn.

In-depth research performed with proficient adult writers has revealed important information about the mental activity that underlies the act of writing (Flower, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graham, 2006). This work has shaped the design of contemporary writing instruction—for example, the starting point for reconstruction activities is the teachers' text (or, at least, a text provided by the teacher) which the learner first reads (or listen to) and then reconstructs. The reconstructed version is then available for 'matching' with the original.

In reconstruction a text, learners will deploy their available linguistic competence, which (depending of course, on the choice of text) is likely to fall short of the target model. This process alone, it is argued (e.g. by Marton 1988), in forcing attention on form activates bottom-up processes that, in comprehension, and communicative activities, are not necessarily engaged. Moreover, the extra effort involved may itself trigger noticing. 'the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems; it may bring to their L2 (Swain and Lapkin 1995: 373).

But the real benefit may be in the matching: the comparison by learners of their version with the model provides them with positive evidence of yet-to-be-acquired language features, and this process of noticing, theoretically at least, converts input to intake, and serves to restructure the learners' developing linguistic competence.

Many tried-and-true classroom activities fall within this generic type. For example, copying (an innovative use for copying for cognitive comparison purposes is described by Porte 1995); memorization and recitation of texts; dictation; 'rhetorical transformation' (see Widdowson 1978); translation and re-translation (see, for example, Edge 1986) and Storyboard-type computer games (see Brett 1994 for a discussion these games).

Linguistic heterogeneity may be a priority in all of these activities, and this can be achieved simply through the use of authentic texts. On the other hand, it need be, the dice can be linguistically loaded to meet the needs of a traditional, form-driven syllabus: a targeted item can be deliberately embedded in the text, on the assumption that the learners are ready for it.

Method

Participants

This study followed a quasi-experimental-design. An OPT test was administered to a population of 125 students from which 60 participants were selected. The test is intended to homogenize the research population on the basis of the result of the OPT. The subjects were divided in two groups: experimental group (N=30) and control group (N=30). Both groups took a pretest. The pretest of the study was consisted of two topics, which subjects were supposed to write about. The control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way of teaching writing. The experimental group received the treatment during 10 sessions. At the end both groups participated for the posttest which was again two topics to write about a composition.

Materials

The following materials were employed throughout the course of this study. An OPT test was used for the purpose of homogenizing the proficiency of the learners. Another type of the test, which was used for the purpose of the study, was writing test. This type of test was used as a pre-test to measure the learners' initial subject knowledge in two groups. And finally the same writing test was used as a post-test based on which the efficacy of text reconstruction was determined.

Procedure

The participants of the study were 125 students from a language institute in Rasht. Having being homogenized by an OPT test, 60 students were randomly selected and divided into two groups, experimental and control group. Both groups sat for the pre test of writing which was two topics in which students were supposed to write a composition. The purpose of such a test was to take the subjects' initial knowledge of writing ability. Then the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way of teaching writing that is the teacher just gave them a topic of composition to write each session and no further explanation about how to write a composition.

However, the experimental group received treatment based on text reconstruction.

During the treatment period which lasted for 10 sessions, each week one short text which consisted of some cohesive devices were read twice to the students by the teacher at normal speed. Students took notes while listening and discussed the topic of the text after listening to be sure that they comprehended the text completely in terms of content and vocabulary. Then they started working in pairs to reconstruct the original text. They negotiated and shared their notes and then wrote their own texts. They did not receive any information related to the text from the teacher. After about ten minutes they delivered their texts to the teacher. In order to give a feedback to the students, teacher did not correct any mistakes in their writings, either content-based mistakes or form-based ones. Mistakes were just highlighted by the teacher and the texts along with the original one were given back to students so that they were able to compare them and by using the clues provided by the teacher, they could correct their mistakes. This way, students were informed about their lack or misuse of the cohesive devices indirectly. The focus of the feedbacks was mainly on cohesive devices. Finally at the end of the treatment the subjects sat for a post test of writing which was again two topics for which subjects were supposed to write a composition about. The purpose of post-test was to measure the subjects' ability on the specific treatment program. The students' writing was scored based on the number of compulsory conjunctions they were supposed to use to write.

Results

The current study was to investigate the effect of text reconstruction on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing performance. Released data from tests were calculated through ANCOVAs for elaborating the manipulation of the program, which was done by implementation of different teaching method and offering new material as treatment in experimental group. Also an Independent Sample T-test was used to show the degree of differences that would believe exists between control and experimental group. After analyzing the descriptive statistics of students' writing performance scores on pretests and posttests, two statistical computations of the data including descriptive and inferential analysis were carried out.

Descriptive Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics is the discipline of quantitatively describing the main features of a collection of data. It aims to summarize a sample, rather than use the data to learn about the population that the sample of data is thought to represent. Actually it deals with analyzing, describing and interpreting

the data obtained from the participants. The measures used to describe the data set are measures of central tendency and measures of variability or dispersion. Measures of central tendency include the mean, median and mode, while measures of variability include the standard deviation, the minimum and maximum variables. Descriptive analysis of the obtained data of the current study, which has been calculated by SPSS is presented below.

Table 4.1. Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation of Pretests for Control and Experimental Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pretests	Control	30	10.5333	4.51613	20.395
	Experimental	30	10.6667	5.28716	27.954

Table (4.1) shows the descriptive analysis of the pretest scores of the control and the experimental group on writing performance variable. Each group includes 30 participants (N=30) without any missing value (that means all selected subjects were present in the investigation). In this table, it is clearly observable that the mean scores for both groups are close to each other, which have meaning. The meaning for closeness in two groups mean scores indicates that both control and experimental group were at the same level of explicit knowledge in writing performance before administrating any treatment and providing them any material.

Table 4.2. Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation of Posttests for Control and Experimental Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Posttests	Control	30	11.0667	5.00299	25.030
	Experimental	30	14.5333	4.86885	23.706

Also, the descriptive analysis for the posttest scores of the control and the experimental group is shown in table (4.2). As it is shown in this table, all the students in both control and experimental groups similar to table (4.1) are present. The mean for posttest scores of experimental group is 14.53 as compared to the mean of posttest scores of the control, which is 11.06. It is crystal clear that these two groups are different in overall mean; it implies that both groups of the study are at a different level of writing performance after the treatment process.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Analysis for the Pretest and the Posttest of Experimental Group of the Study

Group	Tests	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Experimental	Pre	30	10.6667	5.28716	27.954
	Post	30	14.5333	4.86885	23.706

Table (4.3) shows the pretest mean for experimental group, which is 10.66, as compared to the mean of same group posttest which is 14.53. As for the standard deviations obtained for the experimental group, there seems to be more variability among the pretest scores than the scores in the posttest. Similarly, the descriptive analysis for the pretest and the posttest of control group of the study has been shown in table (4.4).

Table 4.4. Descriptive Analysis for the Pretest and the Posttest of Control Group of the Study

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Control	Pre	30	10.5333	4.51613	20.395
	Post	30	11.0667	5.00299	25.030

According to this table, the mean for pretest of control group is 10.53 while the mean for its posttest score is 11.06.

-Inferential Analysis of the Data

Inferential statistics is concerned with making predictions or inferences about a population from observations and analysis of a sample. That is, researcher can take the results of an analysis using a sample and generalize it to a larger population that the sample represents. This section focused on inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study that was calculated using SPSS, in which an Independent Sample T test was selected for calculating the t value and also ANCOVA (general linear model/ Univariate) for calculating the covariance.

Table 4.5. Independent Samples Test of the Study between 2 Posttests

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Upper
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Equal variances assumed		.040	.843	-2.720	58	.009	-3.46667	1.27457	-6.01799
Equal variances not assumed				-2.720	57.957	.009	-3.46667	1.27457	-6.01803

In order to show and understand whether the statistical difference is occurred between two groups after treatment, there was a need to use an Independent Samples Test. The Independent Samples Test is a kind of parametric test, which results in rejecting or supporting the hypothesis of the study. As it is shown in table (4.5) the t-value is calculated between the posttests of both control and experimental groups. The observed t value shows to be -2.72 and the degree of freedom shows to be 57. Whether the level of significance equals to .843 the interpretation of data for rejecting or supporting the hypothesis of the study is possible.

The second type of inferential analysis of the data of the study is related to the degree of relationship between the pretest and posttest of writing performance as a variable in both control and experimental group. In the case of calculating and showing the progress of groups from pretests to posttests, two ANCOVAs were used.

Table 4.6. ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) between Pretest and Posttest of Control Group

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.506 ^a	1	5.506	.214	.647
Intercept	660.864	1	660.864	25.687	.000
PreCo/PostCo	5.506	1	5.506	.214	.647
Error	720.361	28	25.727		
Total	4400.000	30			
Corrected Total	725.867	29			

a. R Squared = .008 (Adjusted R Squared = -.028)

Table 4.6 shows the covariates to be 0.214, which is the calculated value between the two sets of pretest and posttest scores in the control group using SPSS.

Table 4.7. ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) between Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	40.561 ^a	1	40.561	1.756	.196
Intercept	849.580	1	849.580	36.772	.000
PreEx/PostEx	40.561	1	40.561	1.756	.196
Error	646.905	28	23.104		

Total	7024.000	30
Corrected Total	687.467	29
a. R Squared = .059 (Adjusted R Squared = .025)		

Also according to table (4.7) the obtained covariance value for experimental group is equal to 1.756. This table reveals that the progress in experimental group has occurred while table (4.6) indicated that the control group has not any progress. This means that the degree of statistical distance between the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group is representative of the differences between the means in these two sets of scores.

Table 4.8. The Covariance for the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

	Between pre and post tests of the control group	Between pre and post tests of the experimental group
Covariance	.214	1.756

In order to show the differences in a tangible way, Table (4.8) summarized the obtained covariance for the pretest and the posttest scores of the control and experimental group.

So, The result of T-test as shown in table 4.5 implies that the observed t value is -2.720 in which the critical t value determined on the basis of considering the 2-tailed significance level of 0.05 is 2.000. Thus, the observed t was higher than the critical t and led to reject of null hypothesis of the study. So the null hypothesis as "Text reconstruction does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing performance." was rejected

Also according to the analysis of covariance illustrated in table (4.8) covariance value (1.756) is more than 1. Another evidence to justify the reject of the hypothesis was the value of level of significance calculated by SPSS that shows the value 0.843. Scientifically, the variability in the two sets of tests was significantly different.

This chapter embodied all data analysis gained from SPSS software which all shown in successive tables, and the statistical procedures and the related analysis of the findings were elaborated in details. Based on the results of the study, the research question and hypothesis were discussed and in results and hypothesis testing section, the research hypothesis was rejected. The results proved that in experimental group, there was a significant difference from pretest to posttest scores that led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Discussion and conclusion

According to the findings, the answer to the research question, "Does Text reconstruction have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing performance? is "yes" and the null hypothesis, "Text reconstruction does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing performance " is therefore, rejected.

It was also concluded that after observing the results, using text reconstruction in classroom setting in EFL situation like Iran will be beneficial. The learners in the experimental group are taught different steps improving the writing ability. In this study, the analysis showed that learners in the experimental group achieved higher score in writing and a considerable increase in construction of composition. In an EFL situation like Iran students do not have enough opportunity to be exposed to English writing. In addition, they have little experience of writing beyond the sentence level, and so they tend to lack confidence especially when they are in a basic level class Students in EFL situations need to acquire linguistic knowledge, such as grammar and vocabulary, to write exactly what they want to say. Understanding of linguistic forms and their functions is the foundation of writing to achieve specific purposes in their future. They should also know how a text is organized in an accepted way in a society. The text reconstruction deals with these requirements for students in EFL situations. It does not neglect linguistic knowledge as a foundation of writing for students who have little linguistic competence. It stresses learning rhetorical patterns of different steps of organizing writing in socially accepted ways, which helps students achieve the purpose of writing. Therefore, in a text reconstruction writing class, the teacher starts with building learners' knowledge by concentrating on the purpose of the text, the context where the writing occurs, and the elements that make people accept a certain kind of writing for what it is intended to be. After building this

knowledge, students move to reconstructing the model text and prepare for independent writing by practicing reconstruction steps with the help of the teacher. The findings will be useful for both applied linguists and teachers to note the role of text reconstruction in classroom setting (as syllabus) to achieve the ability of learning writing skill.

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THE EFFECT OF DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' TEXT INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of deictic expression on Iranian EFL learners' text interpretation. There were 60 Iranian EFL learners, in this study. they were selected based on their scores in an OPT. And then divided into. Two groups, experimental and control ones. After the homogeneity of the groups were established, a reading pre test was given to them. The study examined the effect of deictic expressions instruction on EFL Learners' text interpretation. 4 sessions deictic expressions were taught to the Experimental group as a treatment but the control group received no treatment. After the intervention a post test was given to the learners. The Paired sample t- test was calculated for the control group pre test and post test and also for the experimental group pre- test and post- test. According to the results, the effectiveness of the treatment Was significant. This study suggests that deictic expressions instruction can be a valuable alternative in teaching learners how to approach a text.

Key words: adverb of place, adverb of time, deictic expression, subject and subject pronouns, text interpretation.

Introduction

The term deixis refers to a class of linguistic expressions that are used to indicate elements of the situational and/or discourse context, including the speech participants and the time and location of the current speech event (cf. Bühler 1934; Frei 1944; Lyons 1977, 1979; Fillmore 1982, 1997; Levinson 1983, 2004). English has a wide variety of expressions that are commonly analyzed as deictics: personal pronouns such as *I* and *you*, spatial adverbs such as *here* and *there*, demonstratives such as *this* and *that*, temporal adverbs such as *now*, *then*, *today*, *ago*, and *recently*, motion verbs such as *come* and *go*, and tense morphemes such as the future auxiliary *will* and the past tense suffix *-ed* (cf. Lyons 1977; Fillmore 1997). In addition, grammatical constructions such as the imperative and the vocative are often characterized as deictics (cf. Levinson 1983).

Deictic expressions raise important issues for semantic theory. In (formal) semantics, deictic expressions (also called *indexical*; cf. Peirce 1955) are defined as linguistic signs with "direct reference" (Kaplan 1989: 483). In contrast to content words, deictic expressions do not evoke a concept of some entity, but establish a direct referential link between world and language. Since the interpretation of deixis is immediately determined by aspects of the speech situation, deictic expressions require a particular treatment in semantic theory (Kaplan 1989).

In the literature, deictic expressions are commonly distinguished from deictic uses (Nunberg 1998; Levinson 2004). Deictic expressions are linguistic elements "with built-in contextual parameters" that must be specified by aspects of the situational or discourse context (Levinson 2004: 14). Other

linguistic elements can be used deictically if they are combined with a genuine deictic or some other referential means. For example, a noun

such as *tree* may refer to a concrete entity in the situational context if it is accompanied by a demonstrative that relates the concept of tree to a concrete entity in the surrounding situation (cf. *that tree*). Alternatively, content words can be grounded in the speech situation by nonlinguistic means such as gesture, eye-gaze, or the presentation of an object. In general, as Levinson (2004) has pointed out, just about any nominal expression can be used deictically if it is accompanied by a communicative device that indicates a direct referential link between language and context.

All languages have a way of encoding person, distinguishing between the roles participants play in the speech event. It is often taken for granted that at the heart of person encoding is the universal distinction between the speaker, the addressee, and all others. In many languages, the encoding of speech-event roles *sensu stricto* is combined with the encoding of other, related categories- such as number, gender, clusivity, degree of politeness and formality, proximity, etc. (, e.g., Siewierska .2004; Cysouw 2009,2011 on person and number; Filimonova. 2005 on clusivity; Hale 1966 on generation level; Jacquesson 2001 on genre, inter alia).

In recent years, many studies on deixis have been conducted from the linguistic point of view (Bühler 1934; Fillmore 1971b, 1975, 1997; Lyons 1968, 1977b; Levinson 1983; Anderson and Keenan 1985; and Diessel 1999, among others). The present study focuses on the impact of deictic expressions on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' text interpretation. But text interpretation must be considered in the area of functional grammar. Then here the most important issue is the functional grammar.

Functional grammar, a grammar model developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s, while still new to most EFL teachers, has aroused great interest for researchers. In spite of controversies about its application into classroom teaching, (e.g. too many concepts and terms) functional grammar is gaining popularity in schools and is helpful for EFL students to achieve success. In the field of language teaching, functional grammar has more applications to speaking and writing. The main reason is that functional grammar serves the communicative purpose of EFL students' learning the English language and provides an opportunity for EFL students to recognize the linguistic features of the language, which they need to learn for success at school (Schleppegrell, 2004).

According to Crystal (1980,p.193) **functional grammar**: A linguistic theory which was devised in the 1970s as an alternative to the abstract, formalized view of language presented by transformational grammar, and relying instead on a pragmatic view of language as social interaction. The approach focuses on the rules which govern verbal interaction, seen as a form of co-operative activity, and on the rules (of syntax, semantics and phonology) which govern the linguistic expressions that are used as instruments of this activity. In this approach, a predicate is taken to be the basic element of a 'predication'; it is listed in the lexicon in the form of a 'predicate frame', specified for the number of arguments it takes (agent, goal, etc.). From predicate frames, 'nuclear predications' are formed by inserting appropriate terms into the argument positions. 'Full predications' are formed from nuclear predications through the use of satellites (e.g. manner, locative).functional application/composition Syntactic functions (interpreted semantically) and pragmatic functions are then assigned to elements of predication, and expressed in sentences through the use of 'expression rules' (which deal with such matters as case, agreement, order and intonation).

In this paper I try to examine the relationship between knowing deitic expressions and text interpretation ability among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. I intend to determine whether or not knowing the different kinds of deitic expressions help learners to interpret the different types of text better. In the other words this paper tries to find out passage interpretation will be improved by having knowledge about deictic expressions such as time or place or even the participants of an event.

Review of Literature

Functional grammar, based on systemic linguistics, emphasizes the way spoken and written language operates in different social situations. In particular, it is very useful in showing how texts work beyond the level of the sentence, how different texts are structured, and how language varies to suit the purpose of the users. It takes on a descriptive approach and focuses on groups of words that function to make meanings. In his classic book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday (1994) points out that functional grammar is so- called because its conceptual framework is a functional one rather than a formal one. It is functional in three distinct senses: in its interpretation (1) of texts, (2) of

the system, and (3) of the elements of linguistic structures. In the first sense, functional grammar is designed to account for how the language is used. Every text (everything that is said or written) unfolds in some context of use. Over tens of thousands of generations of constant use, language has shaped into a system which can satisfy human needs. Therefore, "A functional grammar is essentially a 'natural' grammar, in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used" (Halliday, 1994, p. xiii). In the second sense, the fundamental components of meaning in language are functional components. According to the analysis of Halliday, all languages are organized around two kinds of meanings, the 'ideational' (to understand the environment), and the 'interpersonal' (to act on the others in it). Combined with these two is a third component, the 'textual', which breathes relevance into the other two. These three components are called Meta functions in the terminology of FG theory. In the third sense, each element in a language is explained by reference to its function in the total linguistic system. Accordingly, "a functional grammar is one that construes all the units of a language – its clauses, phrases and so on. In other words, each part is interpreted as functional with respect to the whole" (Halliday, 1994, p. xiv).

Based on Halliday's model, Thompson (1996) explains the three met functions of functional grammar in an informal way as follows: 1) we use language to talk about our experience of the world, including the world in our minds, to describe events and states and the entities involved in them. 2) We also use language to interact with other people, to establish and maintain relation with them, to influence their behavior, to express our own viewpoint on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs. 3) Finally, in using language, we organize our messages in ways which indicate how they fit in with the other messages around them and with the wider context in which we are talking or writing. Similarly, Martin, Matthiessen and Painter (1997) define functional grammar as a way of looking at grammar in terms of how grammar is used. In the field of linguistics, formal grammar, which is an alternative to functional grammar, is concerned with the ways our genes constrain the shape of our grammar, and thus constrain what a person can and cannot say. Contrastively functional grammar is not genetically oriented to our neurophysiology in this way. Rather, it focuses on the development of grammatical systems as a means for people to interact with each other – functional grammar sees grammar as shaped by, and as playing a significant role in shaping, the way we get on with our lives. Its orientation is social, in other words, rather than biological (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997, p. 1). Therefore, functional grammar, based on cultural and social contexts, is very useful for describing and evaluating how language can be used to write and speak more appropriately and effectively. Using functional grammar can help us to read more carefully and critically.

As a new model of grammar, functional grammar is quite different from traditional grammar. Functional grammar focuses on the way language is put together so that meaning is communicated for particular purposes,

and looks at a language as a system of meaning, while traditional grammar is concerned with the ways words are organized within sentences and looks at a language as a set of rules. In other words, functional grammar is different from traditional grammar in that it focuses on language as a meaning-making resource rather than as a set of rules (Schleppegrell, 2004). Also, functional grammar provides us with tools for describing how language is used in varying, real-life contexts, and for understanding why a text is the way it is (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997).

It respects speakers' rights to make up their own minds about how they choose to talk, and it makes speakers explicitly aware of the choices they have available.

On the other hand, traditional grammar is a prescriptive one, telling you what you can and cannot say and provides rules for correcting what are often referred to as grammatical errors. In addition, functional grammar is concerned with how the various bits of language in a text work together as part of a larger system in order to construct meaning, while traditional grammar is concerned with identifying the functions of words and word groups within sentences, without demonstrating how they contribute to the overall meaning in a text. At the same time, functional grammar is concerned with how language is used in a range of cultural and social contexts, while traditional grammar is mainly concerned with how to use language correctly in writing and speech.

In analyzing sentence and word, Halliday (1994) points out that traditional grammar stops at the sentence and there is a sense in which this does form an upper bound. However, for functional grammar, in terms of rank, there is no fixed upper limit. It treats the clause as the basic unit, while traditional grammar regards the sentence as the basic unit.

Besides the above analyzed differences between functional grammar and traditional grammar, there are still great differences between them, including the areas they cover, and terminology they use. However, the fundamental difference is that functional grammar is a meaning-based, descriptive one, and traditional grammar is a form-based, prescriptive one. In the field of language teaching and learning, their purposes and applications are thus quite different. In education, as in most professional fields, teaching methodologies are hot subjects of debate that take their place on the center stage.

Moreover, another researcher insists that educators should “trash tradition” and take out grammar lessons altogether (Schuster, nd, p. 518 cited in Taber 2006). Another advocates that, “Students [must learn to] identify the eight parts of speech and learn the rules for their use” (Manning 1994, cited in Taber 2006).

Nunan (cited in Taber, 2008) opposes this fact, saying that, “It is simply not the case that language learners acquire target items perfectly, one at a time” (p.101). There is rising confirmation that teaching systemic functional grammar can be advantageously applied to natural language processing (Couchman & Whitelaw, 2003; Munro, 2003). Furthermore, literature points to an interaction between systemic functional linguistics and natural language generation (Matthiessen and Bateman, 1991).

Functional grammar, a grammar model developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s, while still new to most EFL teachers, has aroused great interest for researchers. In spite of controversies about its application into classroom teaching, (e.g. too many concepts and terms) functional grammar is gaining popularity in schools and is helpful for EFL students to achieve success. In the field of language teaching, functional grammar has more applications to speaking and writing. The main reason is that functional grammar serves the communicative purpose of EFL students’ learning of the English language and provides the opportunity for EFL students to recognize the linguistic features of the language, which they need to learn for success at school (Schleppegrell, 2004).

Based on Halliday’s model, Thompson (1996) explains the three met functions of functional grammar in an informal way as follows: 1) we use language to talk about our experience of the world, including the world in our minds, to describe events and states and the entities involved in them. 2) We also use language to interact with other people, to establish and maintain relation with them, to influence their behavior, to express our own viewpoint on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs. 3) Finally, in using language, we organize our messages in ways which indicate how they fit in with the other messages around them and with the wider context in which we are talking or writing.

Similarly, Martin, Matthiessen and Painter (1997) define functional grammar as a way of looking at grammar in terms of how grammar is used. In the field of linguistics, formal grammar, which is an alternative to functional grammar, is concerned with the ways our genes constrain the shape of our grammar, and thus constrain what a person can and cannot say. Contrastively. Functional grammar is not genetically oriented to our neurophysiology in this way. Rather, it focuses on the development of grammatical systems as a means for people to interact with each other – functional grammar sees grammar as shaped by, and as playing a significant role in shaping, the way we get on with our lives. Its orientation is social, in other words, rather than biological (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997, p. 1). Therefore, functional grammar, based on cultural and social contexts, is very useful for describing and evaluating how language can be used to write and speak more appropriately and effectively. Using functional grammar can help us to read more carefully and critically. Functional grammar refers to an approach to language with reference to the roles of functions played by language (or rather functions given by human beings to language in their lives as social beings). The notion of functional approach to language (or rather functional grammar) is interpreted as covering three related meanings, namely functional in terms of human needs, functional with reference to use of language and functional in terms of constituent relations. Firstly functional study to language is based on the principle that language is structured in response to the needs of people as social beings. Language in use of text, that is everything is said or written, form in context which is often referred as social context. In other words, the structure of language is motivated by needs of the society where the language is used.

Secondly, functional approach refers to the concept that human beings use the language in order to fulfill three functions known as meta functions namely (1) to represent, (2) to exchange and (3) to organize experience. Technically these Meta functions are termed as ideational, interpersonal and textual functions respectively. The ideational Meta functions divides into experiential function, where the language is used to describe experience and logical function, where the language is used to relate

experience. As function equal meaning, it is said that language convey four kinds of meaning, namely experiential, logical, interpersonal and textual meanings. Thus, the grammar of language center on and are described with reference the four meta functions or meanings. This implies that the grammar or rather lexico grammar of one language is constituted by experiential, logical, interpersonal and textual (lexico) grammar. Thirdly, functional approach implies that each element or unit of language in any level is explained by reference to its function in total linguistic system. In the sense, clause, phrases, words, morphemes, and so on are interpreted as functional with respect to the whole. In other words, a unit does something or functions in a bigger unit above it in which it is an element and finally the function of each unit is eventually determined by the function of language use (Saragih, 2002:5). The use of language is contextually dependent. This is to say that a text forms in contexts. Therefore, it is determined or shaped by the context. On the other hand, the text determines or shaped its contexts. This is technically understood as the text construes context. In systemic theory the context consists of context of situation (register), culture (genre), and ideology (Martin, 1992:579).

Objectives of the study

This study is aimed to investigate the effect of deictic expressions on the ability of learners' in text interpretation. The main purpose of this study is to provide answers to the following question:

Do deictic expressions have an effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners reading comprehension?

Hypothesis

H0: Using deictic expression does not have an effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners reading comprehension.

Method

This study followed a quasi- experimental design. The participants of the current study were 60 Iranian EFL learners who were selected from Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran. First an OPT was administered and then the mean and standard deviation were calculated. Then the students were divided into two groups, 30 students in the experimental group and 30 in the control group. After that, we will administer a pretest of text interpretation to both of them and then we will have a treatment. In the experimental group, the treatment consists of text interpretation plus deixis expression while in the control group; the treatment consists of text interpretation without deixis expressions. Then before going to the next step the data of the study will be analyzed by using paired sample t-test. Finally we compared the mean score of two groups in multiple comparison table to see whether it was effective to use functional grammar in text interpretation or not?

Participants:

The participants who took part in this study included 60 intermediate level EFL students from Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran. They were 20 years old on average and their mother tongue was Persian. Since, they were familiar with the concept of reading comprehension questions; however, the purpose of the study was explained to them. After that they were given an OPT and then 30 of them were randomly assigned to a control group and 30 to an experimental group. For each group there a teacher was assigned who ran the program and the researcher only monitored the procedure.

Procedures:

As the purpose of the study, was to investigate the relationship between the deictic expressions and text interpretation. The participants were given a reading comprehension test with 7 questions to answer in 20 minutes. The reading passages in both pretest and post test were collected from reading through interaction book at intermediate level that contained different kinds of deictic expressions. After pre test there was 4 weeks intervention and in these four weeks the researcher thought different kind of deictic expressions to the experimental group then the post test administered to both of groups. At the end of the test, the papers were collected and the data went for statistical analysis.

Data analysis:

The data gathered from the current study were analyzed via paired sample t-test between the score of control and experimental group. Table 1 shows a comparison between scores of pre test and post test for experimental group.

Results

Table 1. The comparison of scores of pre test and post test for experimental group:
Paired Samples Statistics

Group		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group Pair 1	pre test score	16.5667	30	1.26446	.23086
	post test score	19.6667	30	.86436	.15781

Table 1 shows the scores of pre test and post test for experimental group. It presents the mean, standard deviation and standard error mean of scores before training is equal to 16.56, 1.26 and 0.23 respectively. Also the mean, standard deviation and standard error deviation after training is equal to 19.66, 0.86 and 0.15 respectively.

Table 2 shows a comparison between scores of pre test and post test for control group

Table2. The comparison of scores of pre test and post test for control group:
Paired Samples Statistics

Group		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control group Pair 1	pre test score	14.0000	30	2.24377	.40965
	post test score	14.4500	30	2.17490	.39708

Table 2 shows, the scores of pre test and post test for control group. It presents the mean , standard deviation and standard error mean of scores before training is equal to 14 ,2.24and 0.40 , respectively . Also the mean, standard deviation and standard error deviation of post test of the control group are14.45, 2.17 and 0.39, respectively.

Table3: the comparison of all of the scores with each other

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental group (pre)	control group (pre)	2.56667*	.44927	.000	1.2921	3.8412
	Experimental group(post)	-3.10000*	.44927	.000	-4.3746	-1.8254
	control group(post)	2.11667*	.44927	.000	.8421	3.3912
control group (pre)	Experimental group(pre)	-2.56667*	.44927	.000	-3.8412	-1.2921
	Experimental group(post)	-5.66667*	.44927	.000	-6.9412	-4.3921
	control group(post)	-.45000	.44927	.800	-1.7246	.8246
Experimental group(post)	Experimental group(pre)	3.10000*	.44927	.000	1.8254	4.3746
	control group (pre)	5.66667*	.44927	.000	4.3921	6.9412
	control group(post)	5.21667*	.44927	.000	3.9421	6.4912
control group(post)	Experimental group(pre)	-2.11667*	.44927	.000	-3.3912	-.8421
	control group (pre)	.45000	.44927	.800	-.8246	1.7246
	Experimental group(post)	-5.21667*	.44927	.000	-6.4912	-3.9421

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
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	Experimental group(post)	-3.10000*	.44927	.000	-4.3746	-1.8254
	control group(post)	2.11667*	.44927	.000	.8421	3.3912
control group (pre)	Experimental group (pre)	-2.56667*	.44927	.000	-3.8412	-1.2921
	Experimental group(post)	-5.66667*	.44927	.000	-6.9412	-4.3921
	control group(post)	-.45000	.44927	.800	-1.7246	.8246
Experimental group(post)	Experimental group (pre)	3.10000*	.44927	.000	1.8254	4.3746
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	control group (pre)	.45000	.44927	.800	-.8246	1.7246
	Experimental group(post)	-5.21667*	.44927	.000	-6.4912	-3.9421

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As table3 shows, there is significant difference between the mean score of pre test in the experimental group and that of the pre test in the control group (greater than 2.56) and a significant difference between the mean score of post test in experimental group (about 3.1) and that of post test in the control group (greater than 2.11). The sig of comparison test for these groups is equal to 0 and it is lower than 0.05, indicating a significant difference among them. It is also lower than 0.05 and so there is meaningful difference between the mean score of experimental group post test and the mean score of control group post test (greater than 5.2)

Recommendation

It is clear that, nowadays, most of the methods applied in the English language teaching class room are equipped with reading comprehension. Therefore it is implicated that the teachers are supposed to be trained to supply learners with the aspect of reading comprehension in EFL classroom. As the finding of the present study implies, after 4 week treatment sessions, the experimental group had a statistically significant development over the control group performance. Therefore it can be more demanding for the subsequent classroom activities. A limited period of teaching methodology is not enough for a language skill to be enhanced. Therefore, to achieve better result, the training period needs to be extended and then applied for the next step indifferent levels of ELT. Studies in past and this study suggest that the way is now directed and there a lot of guidance for the development of future studies in this area in different shapes and by more investigating future studies can be in the realm of risk, confidence, age, learners mother tongue, socio-linguistics, matching with native speaker and so on. And in other studies the issue of gender can be considered. By the matter of fact and considering these considerable differences we can find the effect of deictic expressions on text interpretation so there is need to plan pedagogical decision for students, they need to practice more and the residence with native speakers of English and strength of concern for text interpretation which lead to be accepted in the reading comprehension. In the studies of word role -based factor influencing the text interpretation there are a lot of studying areas that they can help to understand new knowledge to interpret the text and to produce new theories.

Conclusion

The result and finding of this study don't completely support the claim that deictic expressions effect the text interpretation, but in some aspect the influence of teaching deictic expressions on student's

text interpretation are obvious and undeniable and they cannot be ignored. The findings of this study showed that the experimental group, which to be taught deictic expressions outperformed better in interpreting and comprehending the text. Even though the relationship between deictic expressions instruction and text interpretation has caught the attention of linguists and educators to minuscule, few experimental studies have been done on this subject. The result of this study will enhance the quantity of learners' mental interaction, and it can also invent a new way how to interpret the text without using equipment such as dictionaries, CDs, flash cards, etc. It also increases the learners' information about the role of the words and the use of the learners' schemata. It can also shed a light on translation to make the pre-service translators know the importance of deictic expressions in figuring out the meaning and conveying the meaning in the translated script better. Knowing deictic expressions can help the learners to get information about person, time and place that the event occurred in the text, hence teaching deictic expressions can increase the learners' awareness of the existence of deictic expressions and importance of them. Henceforward the practitioners, the teachers will pay double attention to teaching deictic expressions and try to draw the learners' attention to them and help to interpret and comprehend text better. This study, also points that the text interpretation for control and experimental group is of significance difference and are almost the different experimental group outperform control group in interpretation of the text by learning deictic expressions and it is significantly noticeable to result in complete superiority of experimental group over control group that confirm learning deictic expressions is of enough significance concerning the text interpretation.

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LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE SERVICE OF LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS IN HONG KONG

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ABSTRACT:

The English teaching field in Hong Kong has undergone numerous paradigm shifts in methodology. Besides the paradigm shift in this context from traditional teaching methods to task-based approach, issues such as lack of resources, insufficient long-term teacher training, entrenched teacher attitudes, lack of ownership of change have been seen to impact negatively on the prospects for change. Uncontextualized grammar exercises, dictations and spelling tests are also still largely used in the classroom and the fact that they emphasize a quiet and ordered classroom is an obstacle to implementation of several teaching methods such as TBLT which needs an active and live class.

Key words: Communicative language teaching , Task based language teaching, Learners centeredness

1

1. Introduction

Hong Kong has always been observing the traditions of the western nations, with regard to ELT methodology. The English teaching field in Hong Kong has experienced several paradigm shifts in methodology since the 1950s, from the grammar-translation method in the 1950s, to the Direct Method in the 1960s, to the oral-structural approach (or the audio-lingual method) in the 1970s, to the communicative approach in the 1980s and the 1990s, and to the task-based approach since 1999 (Littlewood, 2004; Poon, 2008b).

Besides the paradigm shift in the context of Hong Kong from traditional teaching methods to task-based approach, a new trend also existed in the context that did not favor the same popularity like task-based approaches but remained a precious practice with the changing era. It was CLT (Communicative language teaching) approach which could find its place in Hong Kong as well.

CLT was introduced into Hong Kong as an educational reform that aimed to change the traditional Chinese learning approach, which is typically described as "memorizing what is understood" and "understanding through memorization" (Gu, 2003, pp. 74-75).

Yuan (2013) mentioned that the CLT (Communicative language teaching) approach in recent years has become an attractive term to cover a variety of developments in syllabus design and in the methodology of foreign language teaching. CLT was introduced to China in the early 1970s and in Hong Kong in the early 1980s. The need for the approach stemmed from the unsatisfactory traditional grammar-oriented method (Bao & Sun, 2010) and it resulted in the inferior speaking ability of the learners. Bao and Sun (2010) referred to Celce-Murcia's arguments that several shortcomings were observed in the traditional practice. 1) Classes were taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language; 2) Long elaborate explanations of the complexities of grammar were given; 3) Grammar provided the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focused on the form

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and inflection of words; 4) Often the only drills were exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue. 5) Little or no attention is given to pronunciation. Similarly in the context of China and Hong Kong, the same problem was observed. For years, English teaching has been criticized for lacking innovative methodology. Biggs (1996, pp. 53-54) pointed out that many westerners believe Chinese learners prefer the surface approach to learning, in other words they take advantage of pure repetition and memorization without understanding the real meaning. For the purpose of educational reform, as early as 1980s, the syllabus for English courses started to partially shift its emphasis to communicative use of the target language. While the learner was required to have some knowledge of the basic structure of the language, meaningful use of what has been learned must also be built into the teaching (Lu & Ng, 2013).

However, the popularization of CLT faced great frustration at the beginning. Just a few teachers attempted to incorporate the new teaching approach in the classroom, but quickly got familiar with it and yielded to tradition (Shen Ping, 2010). Yunan (2013) referred to the fact that the progress and resistance to Communicative Language Teaching in China and in Hong Kong is related to the skepticism of educators, researchers, and practitioners to whether CLT is really superior to the traditional analytical approach. The common belief in Hong Kong was that what CLT summarizes is the natural path one takes when learning a first language. This follows the one and same way a baby learns his mother tongue. In this way, the baby slowly comes to realize inductively the rules of stringing single words into phrases and then putting phrases into sentences. Such a process of internalization is easy and comfortable for the learners as a baby's mind is like a blank slate, like a paper, which is loaded with nothing but what he receives from linguistic input.

Commonsense knowledge and common experience indicate that it is unrealistic and even impossible for most L2 learners, particularly adult learners, to erect this path to learn a second language. This is not only because of the existence of their L1 in mind, which is almost unavoidable and plays a certain role, either interfering or facilitating, when one processes L2 input, but also because of some other factors like learning motivation, linguistic environment, manners of people giving input and time constraint (Lu & Ng, 2013). Any classroom setting cannot resemble to an environment as natural and pressure-free as the one in which a young child learns his mother tongue. L2 learners are usually conscious of the time. Hong Kong is such a case, where learners try to master the target language through school education within specified time rather than through using the language naturally and inevitably in daily life. For this reason learners have limited time to learn the target language.

Moreover, CLT is recognized with its tolerance of errors. Fluency always overrides accuracy. "Errors of form are tolerated during fluency-based activities and are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 132). In theory, learning a language is mainly for the purpose of verbal communication through the use of the language; therefore, tolerance of errors can facilitate temporary and trial use of the target language for communication and is good for learners' practice of skills. However, CLT is against to the commonly held paradigms in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong English is needed for academic studies and examinations. Because of this reality, the ability of producing correct English is of great importance and accuracy takes top priority. It can never be overemphasized that these examinations are critical and vital to Hong Kong students, because the students' performance in the examinations will directly and immediately affect their chance of gaining a good job after graduation. Also for this reason tolerance of errors does not contribute to the students' improvement of accuracy (Lu & Ng, 2013).

However, in Hong Kong, low degree of accuracy is often criticized by society as a typical weakness of Hong Kong general students' English proficiency. Errors are often used as clear proof for the deteriorating competence of using English. Not only do students often make errors when they use English to express themselves, but also some teachers are not capable of providing error correction effectively and explanation of errors clearly. Furthermore, oral productive competence is strongly emphasized over or at the expense of writing competence, which requires a more comprehensive and strong knowledge about linguistic forms. It is usual that when students have oral practice or carry out tasks, errors cannot be easily caught. Even if they are felt, they cannot be remembered completely or are forgotten finally.

Lu and Ng (2013) contend that emphasis on global meaning rather than specific meaning is another factor which is unfavorable to Hong Kong students' learning of English. According to CLT, communication is considered to be successful once the learners understand the content of the message (Brown, 2007). In consequence, learning is regarded as satisfactory as long as learners'

overall understanding proves correct and tolerable. However, the small semantic differences which are usually expressed through various linguistic forms may distract the learners' attention and comprehension. This is proved by many Hong Kong students' weak ability of interpreting individual sentences and distinguishing the adjacency of meaning. When learners consider themselves as capable individuals to understand the general meaning, they will tend to ignore the complex segments of language which are new or unfamiliar to them due to the low frequency of appearance or culture-specific methods of structuring information.

Since memorization is believed not to be a good way of ameliorating the learner's competence of using the target language effectively in communication, CLT has been used in the hope that it can improve the teaching of English and lead Hong Kong learners to a good command of the language, which consequently help to keep Hong Kong as an international city.

It was believed that some principles of CLT were generally true and constructive to Hong Kong. However, the most important factor for CLT was how to localize it in Hong Kong context so that it integrates with the culture-governed learning strategies of Hong Kong students as well as the realities of Hong Kong. As a former British colony, Hong Kong used to delocalize things including language education (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007).

Many more examples of the incongruity of CLT with the Confucian tradition of China led to the failure of the approach and gave birth to task-based language teaching. Although as a reaction to the traditional approaches, CLT remained a popular practice in Hong Kong.

Task-based language learning gained many advocates in China and Hong Kong in recent years. Task-based learning was formally introduced through the Targets and Target Related Assessment (TTRA) scheme in 1990, which subsequently evolved into the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) in 1993. The TOC task-based framework was then modified and incorporated into the Syllabus for English Language. The current curriculum guide for the English Language subject in Hong Kong schools was delineated based on wide consultations with important stake-holders in 1999-2000 and has empowered the concept of task-based learning as the core conceptual framework for the curriculum.

However, task-based learning in Hong Kong is essentially a top-down practice which is strongly influenced by curriculum developments in the UK and Australia (Carless, 1999). The newly upcoming approach has always been controversial in schools because it challenged traditional conceptions of good teaching and learning. The concept of tasks with an authentic purpose and context, requiring extensive student interaction and experimentation was in contrast with the long established pedagogic practices and community attitudes which emphasized the amalgamation of academic knowledge and skills within strong subject boundaries (Adamson & Davidson, 2003).

Adamson & Davidson (2003) explain that target oriented curriculum (TOC) was made up of three main conceptual elements: targets, tasks and task-based assessment. Targets were classified into three different dimensions: interpersonal, knowledge and experience. This classification had a stark contrast to the previous syllabus which had emphasized on the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, the usual way the subject was categorized for teaching purposes in the school. Furthermore, instead of a set program of discrete linguistic items or skills, the TOC syllabus revolved round tasks which were designed to alleviate the needs of individual learners. The target and task-based approach was developed to encourage a learner-centered, process-oriented constructivist view of learning, designed by the five cross-curricular principles of learning developed by TOC: problem-solving, reasoning, inquiring, communicating and conceptualizing.

The main characteristics of tasks in TOC context were the following characteristics: a purpose beyond the demonstration of knowledge or practice of discrete skills, a context (that is, realistic uses of the subject inside and beyond the classroom), a process of talking, thinking and doing by pupils, demanding the integration of knowledge, strategy and skill, and a product that was more than just language. Adamson & Davidson (2003) believe that TOC was not the offshoot of communicative approaches which were promulgated during 1980s. Likewise, Chan (2002) believed that no research on language teaching and learning in the local context was done before TOC was developed.

The amount of this pedagogic shift was embodied by the place of dictation in Hong Kong primary schools. In the English language syllabus for primary schools in 1981, dictation was hardly mentioned as a valuable activity. Yet dictation is strengthened in Hong Kong schools, since it was a routine practice which was a common practice among many generations to help teachers show they have fulfilled their duties (Chiang, 2002, cited in Adamson & Davidson, 2003). The importance of dictation in the context of Hong Kong was up to the level that in primary schools dictation was part of the

scheme of work, contributing to learners' formal results and recorded on their school report cards as an independent element (Chiang, 2002, cited in Adamson & Davidson, 2003).

In the current primary English syllabus, teachers are advised to make use of different genres in teaching dictation lessons and a number of interactive task-like activities are recommended such as focus spelling, missing punctuation, and picture dictation and educational officials try to discourage the overuse of dictation (Adamson & Davidson, 2003).

In TOC, it is assumed that if textbooks are needed, they will be organized around holistic communicative acts (based on the pupils' need, interests and ability) that function as the vehicle for pupils to learn. Activities focusing on the mastery of discrete language items would play a supportive role, rather than the central position they had in the previous system of pedagogy.

The system of education in Hong Kong is consisted of three-year junior secondary education, three-year senior secondary education, and four-year university education. With regards to the new era for paradigm shift in Hong Kong education, the stark change was seen mainly in the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum. The curriculum was designed to provide greater flexibility for Hong Kong schools to be at service for individual learners' miscellaneous interests, needs and capabilities. The English language education component of the NSS curriculum is based on a constructivist view of learning. Its main intentions are:

- the development of specific learning targets to provide a clear direction for learning;
- the use of learning tasks to promote 'learning by doing' and to involve students in 'three interrelated strands which define the general purposes of learning English'
- the need of catering for individual learner differences so as to adapt teaching and learning to different student abilities and learning styles;
- the promotion of learner independence and lifelong learning so that students can become more actively involved in constructing knowledge and skills in classroom activities and in their own time;
- the use of task-based learning as an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment;
- a greater emphasis on school-based assessment rather than one-off assessment based on public exams.
- the first-ever incorporation of an elective part (25%) of modules to allow for more flexibility for both schools and students to choose their desired topics (e.g. poems and songs, popular culture, sports communication, social issues) with which to learn English more creatively (Wong, 2009, p. 6)

Wong (2009) asserted that for the elective part published by the government, students are supposed to learn English through simulated situations such as drama and workplace communication which aim to engage their interest in learning English and putting what they have learned into practice. While the elective part allocates only a quarter of the final mark, it may make the public examination less daunting and more predictable for students. It is used as a basis for accessing students' writing and oral skills. In the writing section, essay questions are prepared with reference to the knowledge and skills taught/learned in the elective component. Part of students' English proficiency is also assessed (by their schools) on the basis of their performance in individual presentations and group interactions pertinent to the elective module. Moreover, the elective section has the merit of being both informative and entertaining. It consists of eight modules broadly categorized into language arts (drama, short stories, poems and songs, popular culture) and non-language arts (sports communication, debating, social issues, workplace communication).

Furthermore, it has the purpose to prepare a balanced and flexible curriculum to respond to learners' different needs, interests and abilities. Chan (1997) contents that while teaching materials generated by poems and drama are abundant songs which are traditionally less recognized as a formal means of teaching English in secondary school contexts, they have first been officially introduced into the English syllabus in Hong Kong.

Wong (2009) mentioned that for materials for NSS, Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4 – 6) was prepared by Education Bureau of Hong Kong. The schemes explains how an effective task-based lesson can be run, specifying a teaching focus, submitting time allocation (number of lessons required), describing target knowledge skills to be learned, and most importantly, devising tasks to involve students actively in the learning process. Other learning and teaching resources in support of the schemes are

also available online including handouts, presentation or group discussion feedback forms, examples of projects or sub-tasks, and video clips on using documentaries (e.g. Chinese white dolphins) in language teaching.

All in all, in this big shift all were responsible for the new improvement. Among them the role of stake-holders and especially teachers were paramount. Therefore, for a fundamental change in the situation, the first step was that teachers had to experience training that would promote their theoretical awareness as well as their linguistic abilities (Yu, 2012).

2. Learner-centered approaches

Learner-centeredness is a situation in which learner is actively involved in her own learning processes (Nunan & Lamb, 2001). Here learners needs and wants as well as their social dynamics, being a group rather than a class (Brown, 2001) are of primary importance. Methods such as communicative language teaching and counselling learning are example of learner centred methods (Brown, 2007). Unlike the language centred method, where the focus is on drills, here, except the early stages, language teaching can make some use of drilling techniques, but only in moderation. In these methods, learners are provided with opportunities to practice pre-selected, pre-sequenced linguistic structures and communicative notions/functions through meaningful activities. It is assumed that if the learners pay attention to form while taking into account the function, they will ultimately become proficient in the target language and will be able to use accurately and appropriately whenever needed outside the class. As in language-centred method, here too, learning is more intentional than incidental.

Learner-centred methods are also regarded linear and additive, despite the cyclical and analytical nature of communicative syllabuses. The only difference of learner-centred method with that of language centred method is that in learner-centred method what is accumulated is not only linguistic structures, but it also contains notions and functions. It is believed, according to learner-centred pedagogists that each notion/function category must be matched with one or more linguistic forms and must be presented and explained to the learners in an orderly fashion. According to Brown (2001; 2007) if the teachers offer choices to the students, even at the beginning levels, it would help them to develop a sense of ownership of their learning and thereby add to their intrinsic motivation. Shuell (1986, p.429) cited in So et al. (n. d) asserted that the constructivist view of learning places emphasis on the learner in the creation of knowledge. If students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner, then the teacher's pivotal task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in their achieving those outcomes. Furthermore, he mentions that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does. In other words, it is the learner who constructs knowledge, not the teacher who conveys it. For reaching to this end which is the engagement of the students activities should contain one or more of the following:

- an appropriate motivational context;
- a high degree of learner activity;
- interaction with others, both peers and teachers;
- a well-structured knowledge-base (Biggs, 1991)

Yuan (2013) described the student-cantered class in an eloquent manner. He propounded that student-centeredness is based on a simple fact: the one who speaks more in class. The students speak more than 50% of the class time – therefore it's a student-cantered class. Ideally, it would be better, if the teacher speaks less than one student in class. For example in an English language class of 25 students, the teacher talks less than 4 % of the class time, it will be the ultimate student-cantered class and the best representation of the student-cantered method, but it is very hard to achieve. In a nutshell, he summarised his concept of student-centeredness in the following Table.

Table 1. Foreign Teachers' Features

Subject and Aspect of classroom teaching	Foreign teacher
Teacher's role in class	Teacher as a coach, partner, designer
Student's role in class	Students are participants, thinkers, speakers
Study range	Culture, practical application of the learned
Emphasis on	Personal understanding, skills
Learning through	Active participation
Teachers pay attention to	Content, application
Teachers' input	Students have enough chances to express themselves, they participate in class well
Teacher's goal	Teacher tries to give chances to each student to speak
Teaching method	Teachers use various approaches and techniques

Moreover, he concluded that in college where students are not good at test-taking and the classes are mixed-ability groups with a mixture of active (minority) and passive (majority) learners, teacher should apply a miscellaneous methods (student-centered and CLT) in the English language class. CLT and student-centeredness can be combined well with each other in communication-based courses in EFL teaching.

Furthermore, Tudor (1996) asserted that the knowledge and personal qualities that learner involvement requires cannot be taken for granted, and need to be developed over time. A learner-centered approach needs to include an element of awareness development, which is designed to help learners extend their understanding of language learning and develop their ability to play an active and self-directive role in their language study.

Therefore, in order to help learners develop this ability of accepting responsibilities for their own learning and work toward the goal of becoming autonomous learners, the concept of learner training was developed. Tudor (1996, p.37) defines this new concept as:

Learner training could be defined as the process by which learners are helped to deepen their understanding of the nature of language learning, and to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to pursue their learning goals in an informed and self- directive manner.

As indicated in the quotation above, the role of teachers in this new learning experience is to help students develop the necessary skills for becoming independent learners and this can be achieved by providing learners with opportunities to practice language for communicative purposes. Therefore, teachers using such (communicative) methods are, consciously or not, involved in helping their students to learn how to learn.

From the above comments it can be concluded that CLT can promote a learner-centered methodology not only because the design of such programs is based on real-life needs and the communicative goals of the student but also because the practice of communicative methods plays a significant role in learner training.

3. Literature on learner-based approaches in Hong Kong

'Student-focused' education has been one of the principles adopted by the Education Commission (EC) in formulating the proposals for Education Reform in Hong Kong. The EC believes that learning should be focused upon students' personal development and that school reform should have the purpose to give more space and flexibility for students to be masters of their own learning (So et al., n.d). Likewise, the authors asserted that conveying knowledge is no longer the main function of education in Hong Kong. The role of education should be to develop imagination, creativity, intellectual development, problem-solving ability, and critical thinking skills in the students.

In the context of Hong Kong, with regards to some recent approaches which focus on the learner wants and needs, several studies were carried out. The two most recent approaches in ELT in Hong Kong are task-based approach and communicative approach. For example, in context of Hong Kong, Carless (2004) conducted two studies in task-based approach, one investigating how this approach was implemented in three primary schools (Carless, 2004), and the other in 11 secondary schools (Carless, 2007). His noticeable finding was that the task-based approach could be problematic if applied directly without adaptation to the local context. He proposed a weak version of task-based teaching. Likewise, Poon (2004a) explored a new method of teaching writing in primary school, which she coined as the Integrative-Narrative Method. The theoretical underpinning of this method is communicative approach, and it advocates the use of children's literature and the integrated skill approach to the teaching of writing. In addition to the level of approach, there are a few studies exploring some innovative methods of teaching English language at the procedural level, for example, using films which all stem in the use of communicative approaches in teaching English (Chapple & Curtis, 2000).

So et al. (n.d) considered problem-based learning (PBL) as a student-centered learning approach in which students are encouraged to participate in the learning process. Three groups of students studying the Technical Teacher Certificate Course formed the subjects of the research project. An authentic contextual problem was presented to the students, with the teachers acting as facilitators during the whole of the learning process. Student feedback indicating their attitudes was elicited after the first cycle of implementing PBL. The first week of the PBL process was the most crucial one. It was important that students fully understand both what PBL was as well as the roles of lecturers and students in the learning process. The second phase of the project was administered with reference to the comments from staff and students made after the completion of the first cycle. Follow-up interviews were conducted to report on the needs of the students in the learning process. This study reinforced the belief that getting students to be involved and to take charge of their own learning was fundamental to ensuring quality learning and teaching. The authors suggested PBL as one of the methods of teaching and learning in all the new programs.

In another study, Tong et al. (2000) analysed the nature, role and organisation of learner-centred activities in three sets of textbooks designed to support target oriented curriculum (TOC) primary English. They categorised the activity (task, exercise-task or exercise), identified its relationship to the TOC learning targets, and analyzed the macro-structure of the textbook and the frequency of certain tasks. They found no major differences from non-TOC previously applied text books. The textbook was the center with a variety of resources available, such as work-books, wall-pictures and audio-cassette tapes. There was little evidence of innovation in the range of resources, and as their detailed content analysis found, no major shift towards task-based learning. The role of tasks was really an ancillary means to language practice, rather than functioning as the central organizing unit of the syllabus. Many activities were exercise-tasks in the form of language games or contrived and artificial activities, such as asking pupils to count the number of objects in their school bag, or drawing a captioned picture demonstrating how people use their five senses.

In the interview with the publishers, they identified a number of difficulties in resourcing TOC, including lack of experience and expertise in developing task-based materials, unclear, even contradictory expectations, and a concern about experiencing an expensive investment by supporting a reform rather than meeting market expectations. Publishers observed and followed what teachers felt were good elements of pre-TOC series and added new material. They also responded to teachers' feedback, though they felt some teachers' conceptual understanding of TOC was still opaque. The published resources were still based around textbooks as that was more economical and durable, as well as complying with the attributed position traditionally linked with the books in Chinese society. Along with the use of new approaches in Hong Kong, Smith (2003) describes some attempts by undergraduate and postgraduate students to transcribe song lyrics on a voluntary 15-hour summer course English through songs established by the University of Hong Kong's English center. The same course was also submitted to serving secondary teachers via the university's extramural program. Evaluation comments from the participants are mixed: while students were generally surprised by the idea that their English could be improved in an enjoyable and entertaining way, many teachers viewed songs and their lyrics as 'a kind of light relief' from the exam-oriented syllabus and therefore could never be 'a serious tool for enhancing language acquisition without supplementary grammar

exercises' (Smith, p. 115). However, Smith has consistently demonstrated the benefits of using songs in the classroom.

All examples of misinterpreted lyrics refer to the fact that basic English phonology is not fully mastered by the advanced learners of English. Cantonese-speaking learners always have problems with word endings due to L1 transfer; Cantonese endings are totally constrained, which include only vowels, nasals or single unreleased stops. Furthermore, in addition, students were reported to have difficulty in understanding lyrics which include the idiomatic phrases. However, Smith persisted that those areas can then be handled according to the specific needs of the learners; for instance, specific listening exercises and production tasks can be used to improve on such problems.

Mak et al. (2007) also carried out a study in which, the implementing of task-based learning for pupils was helpful. The project involved a class of 39 secondary students who produced as the final task outcome their own story books and after that read their stories to nearby primary school pupils. Teachers essentially took a non-interventionist approach to directing students' ideas and correcting students' actual stories; however, they informed the learners of unclear and incoherent storylines and correct minor grammar and spelling errors. This is clearly in contrast with traditional approaches to teaching and evaluating of writing in most Hong Kong ELT classrooms where teachers primarily focus on grammar rather than content and the intended audience tends to be the teacher only (Lee, 1998). In the evaluation, the researchers concluded that the secondary school students' creativity is substantially improved by the activity, while their interest and attention during English lessons increased numerously.

4. Conclusion

With respect to the Hong Kong context, Carless (1999, p. 240) states that 'issues such as lack of resources, insufficient long-term teacher training, entrenched teacher attitudes, lack of ownership of change have been seen to impact negatively on the prospects for change'. However, a major problem about task-based teaching in Hong Kong is that teachers generally do not have a clear understanding of the nature of tasks and the theoretical and practical aspects of doing tasks (Morris et al., 1996). In the new approach of task-based teaching, teachers are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but facilitators of independent learning; learners are no longer passive recipients of information but active participants in the process of erecting knowledge and skills.

Tong et al. (2000) also find that uncontextualized grammar exercises, dictations and spelling tests are still largely used in the classroom. Existing educational norms in Hong Kong are in contrast with these roles required by the learner-centred, communicative teaching approach (Carless, 1999; Lee, 2004). Littlewood (1999, p. 71) states that teachers who have internalized stereotypical notions of learners might be less sensitive to the needs of individual students in these types of contexts. For some teachers, to permit students to work in pairs or groups is to lose control of classroom management. Primary English teachers are also worried about the classroom management problems provided by the practice of tasks.

The traditional local school culture has always emphasized that a classroom should be quiet and in nice order. According to Carless (2005), this traditional culture serves as an obstacle to the implementation of practicing tasks in Hong Kong primary schools as teachers face tensions between preserving good class behavior and doing tasks. During tasks, students would most probably make noise and move around and teachers are worried that they will be interpreted as not competent and authoritative if their classes have such a setting. Carless (2002) mentions that both wide varieties in ability and large class size may lead to more noise and chaotic conditions in class.

In order to overcome this limitation, a possible solution lies in small-class teaching. Small classes appear to be an optimum prerequisite for task-based approaches to learning a subject. In these classes, the greatest attraction offered would lead to teachers' ease of monitoring learner performance during tasks; they can ensure that target language rather than mother tongue is produced and learning goals are met (Wong, 2009).

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THE IMPACT OF SPEECH RATE ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of speech rate on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. For this purpose 60 learners of English at a language institute participated in this study. Having being homogenized by an Oxford placement test (OPT), 44 female learners were selected and they were randomly assigned into two groups of 22, control and experimental. The age of the subjects ranged from 14 to 18 years old. Then both groups sat for a pre-test, which was a listening comprehension test. The purpose of this test was to measure the learners' initial subject knowledge of listening comprehension ability. Afterwards, the experimental group received treatment based on speech rate. However, the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way of teaching. The treatment procedure took 7 sessions. Finally, at the end of the course both groups sat for the posttest of listening comprehension. Then the statistical analysis was run through T-test and one way ANCOVA. It was explored from the study that learners' listening comprehension improves more when they are provided with speech rate. However, this study provides a significant contribution in curriculum innovation and policy with respect to the learners' listening comprehension development.

Key words: Listening Comprehension, Speech Rate, EFL.

Introduction

According to researchers have stated that Listening is the essential skills for developing second language acquisition (SLA). Although second language learners notice the listening as the most difficult language but is a highly complex problem-solving skill that requires connecting meaning to the stream of speech sounds that is influenced by various factors. A listener have to form a different tasks for comprehending speech in second language. According to Lewkowicz (1981) the listener uses not only his knowledge of the language in the form of speaking but also have a knowledge of the outside world and how it relates to the subject, as well as interpretation of what is said so far, in order to comprehend the message. According to Chastain (1988, p.195) that "the reduction in speech can be accomplished primarily by speaking in phrases and lengthening the pauses between phrases". According to (Carrier, 1999; Derwing and Munro, 1997; Tauroza and Allison, 1990; Zhao, 1997) Speed of speech is one of the key factors affecting listening comprehension in second language learners. According to Zhao (1997, p.62) "in order to better understand how speech rate is related to listening comprehension, researchers should consider students as unique individuals, who operate with different perceptions and internal references" Researchers considered speech rate to be one of the key factors that influence on listening comprehension of college academic lectures. Griffiths (1990) said that a question about which rates of speech most facilitate comprehension of L2 learners with different levels of L2 proficiency. Basically, speech rate, as one of the main factors, has caused one of the major difficulties in evaluating listening comprehension. Slow rate of speech is generally believed to be usually easier to comprehend than natural speech rate; this gives the students enough time to

process the stream of information at a slower rate of delivery. Although speech rate can cover only a small proportion among the above-mentioned variables, it seems to play one of the major controlling roles in listening comprehension that formed the main initiative for the development of this research.

Definition of key terms

Listening Comprehension: Similar to the reading comprehension processes, LC is theoretically defined as an inferential process in which a listener is assumed to “associate an available auditory input with his/her existing background knowledge to access the intended meaning” Listening comprehension is more than just hearing what is said; rather, it is a child’s ability to understand the meaning of the words he hears and to relate to them in some way. Since comprehension during listening is dependent upon more than just the introduction of visual referents presented in a culturally neutral hybrid format, other factors such as velocity, and “field” figure strongly in students’ aural comprehension fluency. When children hear a story, for instance, good listening comprehension enables them to understand it, remember it, discuss it, and even retell it in their own words. This is an important skill to develop even at an early age, because good listeners grow up to become good communicators.

Speech rate: The speed of input delivery - termed technically as speech rate - is one of the acoustic-temporal characteristics of the aural text. In the rate specialist literature, SR was classified as either belonging to the speaker’s characteristics (Ishler, 2010) or to the text features (Rubin, 1994) depending on the mode of the language delivery. Given that the standardized “normal,” “fast,” and “slow” SR ranges reported by Tauroza and Allison (1990) may be ungeneralizable to the IGCSE setting targeted, being highly context-bound, the SR range considered as the “normal” in this study fell between 124-150 WPM. This range represents the speeds preset by The Cambridge International Exams. Editing the aural texts included in this study by inserting 3-second empty pauses reduced the SR range to 120-136 WPM, whereas adopting the deliberate articulation yielded a slower SR range of 70-124 WPM. These two SR ranges represent the “slow” SRs in the current study.

Traditional approaches to writing

Huei chun (2001) investigated the effects of syntactic modification and speech rate on EFL listening comprehension. That study were 168 college students in Taiwan. He had four versions of the listening passage on syntactic modification (unmodified/paraphrase/simple sentence/mixed), plus two different speech rates (average/ slow) for each syntactic version, there were altogether eight versions of the listening passage. Subjects were assigned to one of the eight experimental groups according to the results of a randomized complete block design. After listening to the passage, subjects completed a cloze test. The results confirm the significant role played by speech modification in L2 listening comprehension.

Hayati (2010) investigated the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners on. He stated that One group had exposure to natural speech rate and the other to slow speech rate of listening materials. After thirteen academic sessions, That study showed that, whether natural or slow, could improve EFL learners listening comprehension; however, natural speech rate could demonstrate.

Kawashima Hideyo (2010) studied about the Effects of English Spoken Hints on the Listening Comprehension of the Japanese Learner of English in Nihon University, Graduate School of Social and Cultural. Accordingly, if instructors want to provide hints orally, they will need to do so in L2 yet at present little is known about the effect of such hints. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of providing the Japanese learner with English spoken hints on the listening exercise; if English spoken hints positively affect the listening comprehension, what characters were composed of the hint. The findings of this study will give us better understanding of the effect of advanced hints on the listening comprehension and will especially be beneficial to language instructors who want to provide advanced hints in oral English in the listening class. greater improvements than slow speech rate in EFL learners’ listening comprehension.

Zhao (1997, p.62) “in order to better understand how speech rate is related to listening comprehension, researchers should consider students as unique individuals, who operate with different perceptions and internal references”. Many linguists, researchers and teachers around the world contended that listening comprehension affected by many factors like unfamiliar lexis, speech rate and background knowledge. They said that listening comprehension and speech rate related

together and as speech rate increases, listening comprehension decreases. According to Stenly (1978) the different effect of speech rate on listening comprehension.

Method

Participants

In the present research the participants were chosen from 44 female students studying English at first grade high school students in Rasht a city in the north of Iran . The average age of the participants were 14 to 18 years old. Having being homogenize by an OPT test, they were assigned into two groups, control and experimental. There were 22 females group one who had exposure to natural speech rate and other group who had exposure to slow speech rate. Finally both groups sat for the post test of listening comprehension in order to assess the effectiveness of the specific treatment program.

Materials

Proficiency test of oxford placement test (Edwards 2007) was administered to 60 EFL subjects. Multiple-choice test of 50 items was designed for intermediate EFL learners from high school students in Rasht then the subjects in both groups were screened and equated as far as their proficiency levels were concerned . A pre-test of listening comprehension was administered to subject in order to measure their initial subject knowledge . The listening test include 20 multiple choice items after interval of two weeks the same test(post test) was administered to the same subject after treatment .It is worth nothing that group one was exposed to natural speech rate selection of first grade of high school book and let's go included world celebrities, news, sports, environmental issues which was presented by the language teacher. Group two was exposed to slow speech rate materials special English news, interviewParticipants were permitted to check the video or audio.

Procedure

A 50 -item language proficiency test of oxford placement test (Edwards 2007) was administered to 60 EFL subjects. Then having being homogenized by an OPT test they were divided into two groups, experimental and control. It should be noted that each group includes 22. Then both groups participated for a pre test of listening. The purpose of such a test was to measure the participants' initial subject knowledge of listening comprehension ability.. The listening pre test included 20 multiple choice items designed for intermediate EFL learners for both pre test and post test. Then the experimental group received treatment based on slow speech rate while the control group received no treatment and approached the same existing method of teaching listening (normal). During the task treatment participants listened to the text with slow speech rate and answered to the listening questions. This treatment inserted a three-second pause at the end of each idea unit in three texts, using a computer sound. Editing was also applied in the same way to the repetition of the texts. The choice of the pause length is based on Blau's(1991) and Ishler's(2010) recommendations concerning the reasonable duration of longer than normal pauses. Pauses that are longer than three seconds were reported to have caused the listeners to lose track and to feel bored. The whole project took for seven sessions once a week, each session for 45 minutes. Finally the post test of listening comprehension was administered to both groups to assess and explore the significant effect of slow speech rate on the specific treatment program.

Results

The performance of group one (natural speech rate) on pretest and posttest produced a difference between their scores according to treatment of the experimental group received based on slow (special) speech rate while the control group received no treatment and approached the normal speech rate. Figur(1) indicates there is linear relationship between pre and posttest. Because regression lines are parallel. It means the relation between both groups is alike. The degree of correlation between dependent variables is indicated in table 4.1.

Table(1) below show ,there are meaningful correlations between pre and post test. So, conducting ANCOVA is reasonable. The descriptive analysis of pre and post test and results of T-TEST in experimental group and control group is indicated in table 4.2 and 4.3.

Table(2). As table indicates there is difference between mean of control group and mean of experimental group in pre-test and post test, which is meaningful ($F(1,28)=15/287$, $p=0/001$).Table

(3)show, there is difference between mean of control group and mean of experimental group in pre-test and post test, which is meaningful. It means there is a difference between results of pre and post tests in control and experimental group.

Table (4) indicates adjusted means of listening comprehension in post test. It means the effect of pre test is eliminated. These means indicate that mean in experimental group is higher than mean in control group. Listening comprehension covariance with elimination of mutual effect in both control and experimental group is indicated in table 4.5.

Table (5) indicates the degree of "F" is statistically meaningful ($F(1,77) = 679/678$, $P = .000$, $Eta = .962$) that indicates in terms of listening comprehension there are meaningful difference between experimental and control group. So, we can claim that slow speech rate affect students' listening comprehension. Additional information can be obtained from graph 4.2. in this graph twofold levels of control and experimental variables are in horizontal axis and depended variables of posttest are in vertical axis. Figure (2) indicates that there is a significant difference between listening comprehension in experimental group and listening comprehension in control group. Graph perfectly indicates that participants in experimental group, have higher listening comprehension ability after post test comparing to control group with lower ability.

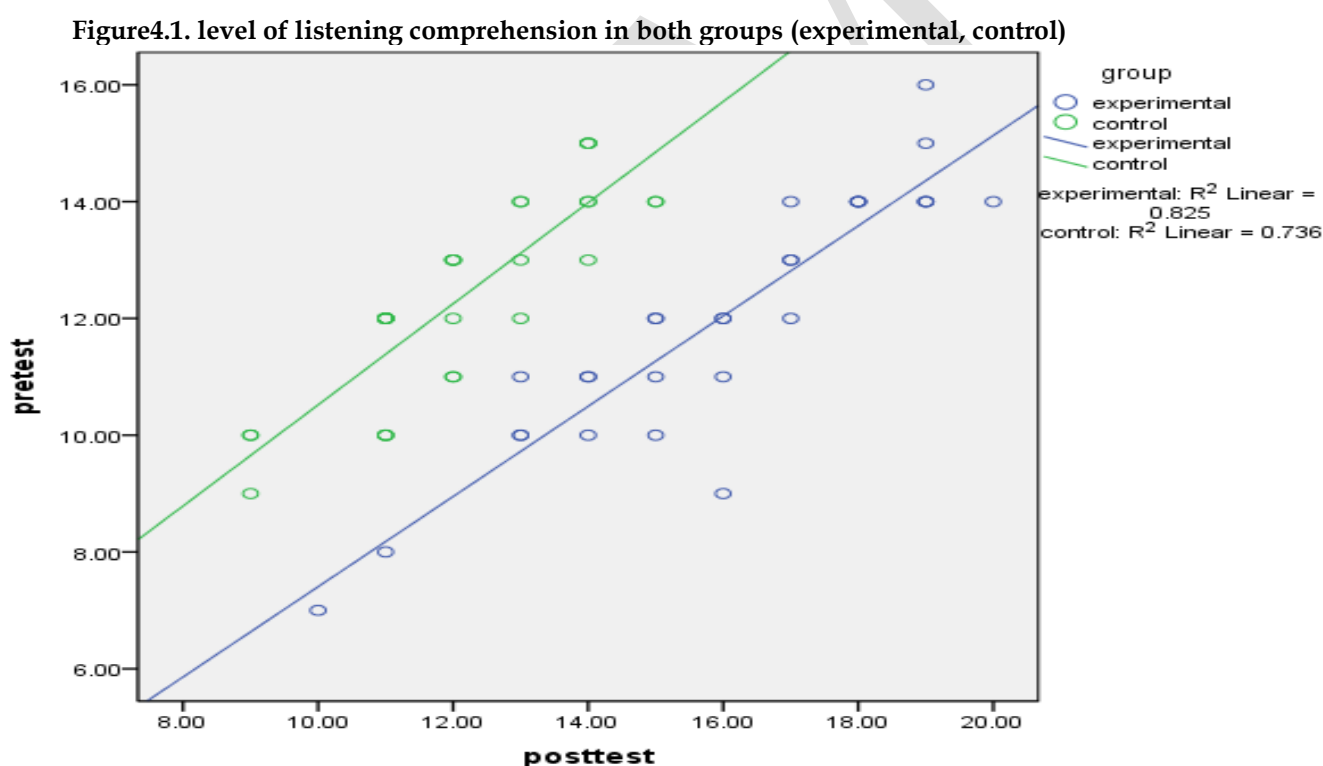


Table 1.

Sig.	variables
0/009337	listening comprehension (PRETEST)
$P < 0/5$	listening comprehension (POSTTEST)

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of pre and posttest in both groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exp	22	16.87	1.885

Cont	22	8.73	1.335
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Table 3. The results of T-TEST to examine the differences between pre and post test in control and experimental group

Group			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	Pair 1	Posttest	8.60	1.724	.445	-69.945	.000
		Pretest	16.87	1.88478	.487		
Control	Pair 1	Posttest	8.33	1.234	.319	-1.468	.164
		Pretest	8.73	1.335	.345		

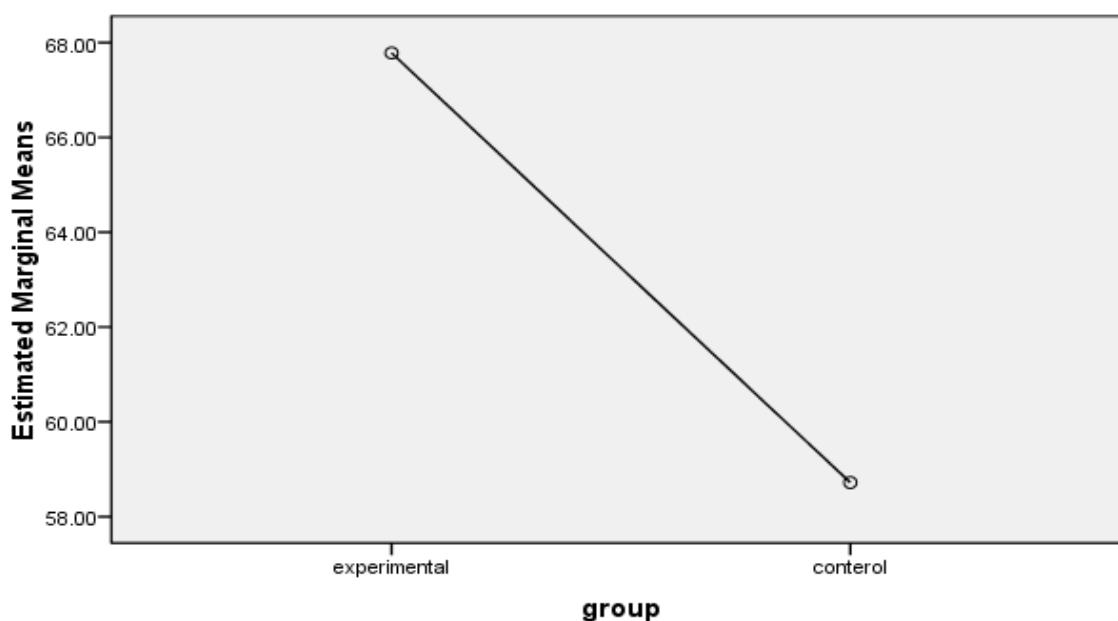
Table 4. Mean and adjusted means of listening comprehension test in post test

Source	posttest		adjusted mean	
	M	SD	M	SE
Experimental	16.87	1.885	16.741 ^a	.213
control	8.73	1.335	8.859 ^a	.213

Table 5. listening comprehension covariance in both groups

Eta	P	F	Mean Square	Sum Squares	of df	source	Variable
.962	.000	.679 678	461.920	461.920	1	.680	18.350
					27	Error	

Figure4.2. means of listening comprehension in post test in both groups



Discussion and conclusion

In the following, research question is respectively discussed and answered.

Q1: Does slow speech rate has any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability?

To answer the research question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H01: slow speech rate does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

According to the findings of the research based on the data in table 4.2, the study concluded that the null hypothesis as "slow speech rate does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability" was rejected, because there is a significant difference between students' mean scores in their pre-test and post-test in experimental group. The current research aimed to examine two different speech rate and listening comprehension of Iranian Intermediate learners. In this part, the results reported in the previous part was discussed and evaluated in light of previous research on rates of speech, and data are discussed in detail, in terms of the research questions. The major findings provided qualified support for the effectiveness of two different speech rates need two different form of listening comprehension of it. To determine the effect of the various rates of speech in experimental focused the effect of slow speech rate and control group the other one, that data consist of an OPT test and listening scores (pre-and post test), and T-TEST. Mean scores were calculated for the Recall task, the Recognition task. Statistical analyzed to provide answer to the research question and used SPSS. The findings from this study are consistent with research.

The reference speeds used in previous studies (e g Griffiths 1990a, 1990b, 1991, Rader 1991) were arbitrarily chosen by the researchers two different reference (150 WPM and 188 WPM in Griffiths). According to Zaho(1997) it is quite meaningless to say that slower speeds helped or did not help listening comprehension because the perception of speed varies from one person to another whether a speed is fast or slow is the result of the interaction between the pausological quality of the speech and listener-internal factors Due to the variations among second language learners, the same passage can be perceived as 'slow' or 'fast' The speed used by the participants in the present study ranged from 95 WPM to 192 WPM Since the participants were told to use the speed that best suited them and since their scores suggested when they selected their own speed their comprehension improved, it can be assumed that the speed used was the ideal speed for each of them Based on the results of the study, I would argue that 'reference' is inside the learner, rather than in the passage. I had questioned whether two different s of rates of speech has more effect on listening comprehension of Iranian Intermediate learners. The result of this research in experimental and control group were showed that mean in experimental group is higher than mean in control group and listening comprehension of covariance showed that there are meaningful difference between experimental and control group. So we can claim that slow speech rate has effect on student's listening comprehension ability. The paradigm used in this study may be extended to examine speech rates of learners and listening comprehension

of it loop more closely. The graph showed that there are significant difference between listening comprehension in both groups, after posttest learners in experimental groups have higher listening comprehension ability to control group.

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THE EFFECT OF USING IELTS SPEAKING CORPUS (ISC) ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING ABILITY ACROSS GENDER

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ABSTRACT

The present study proceeds to the effect of using IELTS speaking corpus on Iranian learners' speaking ability across gender. To do this, 200 English learners of Borna Language Teaching Center in Rasht were given a proficiency test (OPT). Those whose scores ranged from 15 to 19 out of 20 were selected to participate in the study. The participants in this study both male and female were in the IELTS level. First all the participants were given pretest and assigned to two groups male and female and then each group was randomly assigned to two groups: one control group that received placebo (the existing method) and one experimental group that received IELTS speaking corpus. The researcher herself taught the treatment of the experimental groups in 5 sessions. Then posttests were given to all four groups and the data were analyzed through paired t-Test and Two- Way ANOVA. The results showed that IELTS speaking corpus (ISC) effects on Iranian EFL speaking ability but this affect is not salient because there is less differences between male and female's scores.

Keywords: Speaking, Speaking ability, Corpus, Speaking Corpus, IELTS, IELTS Speaking Corpus

1. Introduction

The capacity to speak is an amazing ability that allows people in different physical locations and eras to communicate ideas, grand and mundane, to one another. Yet, on a day-to-day level, most people do not normally think of the speaking ability as being any kind of extraordinary activity. But all proficient language users have implicit knowledge about register, word meaning and grammatical and lexical patterns. We often find it hard to explicate all that we intuitively know about language, however, and in any case we cannot always rely upon what we think we know. If this were not the case we would not be able to speak and write with any fluency.

According to (Kayi, 2011), speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Identifying and analyzing working mechanisms that influence fluency then should be regarded significant for our understanding of the complexities of speaking. It is probably one of the most important qualities of speech which greatly contributes to examiners' intuitive understanding of proficiency and technical assessment of learners' oral performance.

Speaking in the foreign language has always been considered as the most applicable skill to develop in the learners of the target language compared to such other skills as listening, reading, and writing. This is in part due to the fact that it is more than simply knowing the linguistic components of the language. In practice, however, many learners feel frustrated as they find that speaking in a foreign language is a complex matter. It is because speaking involves many factors. The ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot (Harmer, 2001).

This study, aims to investigate the effect of using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) on Iranian EFL Learner' Speaking Ability across Gender.

2. Review of Related Literature

Chastain (1988, p. 270) maintains that speaking a language involves more than simply knowing the linguistic components of the message, and developing language skills requires more than

grammatical comprehension and vocabulary memorization. Teachers and students come to language classes with conscious or subconscious attitudes, expectations, interests, and needs. These are especially germane to establishing course objectives for speaking, which has tended to receive the greatest attention and emphasis in recent years and for which achievement has tended to be the most disappointing, perhaps because expectations have been elevated beyond realistic levels.

Learning English is often related to learning how to speak the language. As Ur states of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important. People who know a language are referred to as speaker of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing; and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak (Ur, 1996).

Burumfit (1984) writes about language activities designed to foster accuracy and those designed to foster fluency. When applied to language tasks these do necessarily have to be seen as 'opposite' but can be complementary, depending on the actual aims and purpose of the speaking skills class in question. Within the percommunicative framework it is evident that the speaking skills were accuracy-focused to a large extent. Within the more communicative framework, however, the emphasis is far more open-ended with the whole target language being a potential vehicle for communication and not just a restricted object of study: hence activities are designed to develop fluency in the learner.

Nunan (1999) suggests that teachers need to be aware that motivation is a consideration in determining whether or not learners are willing to communicate. Clearly the more meaningful the materials and tasks are for the learners involved the better the outcome will be.

Sinclair (2004) defines a corpus as "a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research." The term "corpus" is sometimes used more loosely, however: Thompson (2006) comments on collections of texts or text samples which are referred to as corpora but are not in electronic form, and Handford (2010, p. 262) mentions a number of studies of spoken professional discourse which are described as corpus - based, but which do not really qualify as corpus studies because the data has not been fully transcribed.

Baker (2006, p. 25) argues that creating one's own corpus leads the way to effective analysis: The process of finding and selecting texts, obtaining permissions, transferring to electronic format, checking and annotating files will result in the researcher gaining a much better "feel" for the data and its idiosyncrasies. This process may also provide the researcher with initial hypotheses as certain patterns are noticed - and such hypotheses could form the basis for the first stages of corpus research.

3. Statement of the problem

In the English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, the focus is often on teaching reading, writing and grammar skills while little time is spent teaching speaking skills. This becomes a problem when students need to use English to speak.

Observations and experiences have shown that many Iranian EFL learners seemed to worry about how they can pass different courses like listening and speaking ones in the institute. However, they failed to speak in real situations of language use. This claim was supported by a pilot study done on a group of Iranian junior EFL learners in which their speaking ability was tested and traces of failure were proved to exist. Some of the problems in speaking ability include: a) They do not have enough motivation to practice in the class b) They are too shy and afraid to take part in the conversation c) They have nothing to say and d) They do not like the materials (Rahimy & Safarpour, 2012).

The skill of speaking in English as a non-native language is arguably an important and challenging one which is affected by a substantial number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The study sought to elicit and compare perspectives of a group of Iranian EFL students from three Iranian universities and their professors teaching them an advanced lab course on some linguistic problems facing students in lab classes. (Hojati & Afghari, 2013).

The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second or foreign language learners. Learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how well they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency. As more and more teachers become aware of corpus resources and their applications, questions arise as to how best to prepare teachers in training appropriately to access and

interpret corpus information. This is important as an element of materials evaluation as more and more types of materials and resources become corpus-informed.

4. Purpose of the study

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Speaking is a crucial part of language learning and teaching. For many years, students repeated the drills and memorized the dialogs but today, they should learn how to express themselves. They should learn to follow social and cultural rules in any situation. They learn to speak in different communicative circumstances. To fill this gap, the present study proceeds to the effect of using IELTS speaking corpus on Iranian learners' speaking ability across gender. In this study IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) is used as a tool to help language learners speaking ability with a collection of vocabulary and sentence patterns.

5. Research Questions

In the present study, the questions which have received attention are:

RQ1: Does using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) have an effect on Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Ability?

RQ2: Does using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) affect Iranian male/female EFL Learners differently?

6. Research Hypothesis

The present study attempted to test the following hypothesis:

RH1: Using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) does not have an effect on Iranian EFL learner's Speaking Ability.

RH2: Using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) does not affect Iranian male/female EFL learners differently.

7. Significance of the study

English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and is practiced within a context-restricted environment in Iran where language learning is shaped largely by classroom practices, including the use of particular textbooks and the teacher's management of classroom work, without substantial support from social contexts outside the classroom. For many years, students repeated the drills and memorized the dialogs but today, they should learn how to express themselves. They should learn to follow social and cultural rules in any situation special framework peculiar to oral reproduction. They learn to speak in different communicative circumstances.

With the realization of the fact that IELTS as an international standardized test of English language proficiency is a tricky and difficult test for most Iranian EFL learners and they seem to worry about how they can pass different skills specially speaking, it is necessary to find a method for improving the speaking ability of the learners.

8. Definition of Key Terms

8.1. Speaking

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. It's form and meaning are depend on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purpose for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

8.2. Speaking ability

Speaking ability is the ability to communicate accurately and effectively in real-life situations. It is a social phenomenon because it is enacted for the purpose of communicating thoughts to the listeners.

8.3. Corpus

A corpus refers to a large principled collection of natural texts. The use of natural texts means that language has been collected from naturally occurring sources rather than from surveys or questionnaires. The corpus content becomes more and more complicated and the size larger and larger with the development of computation power and the speech technology (Schmitt, 2002).

8.4. Speaking Corpus

Speaking corpus, the collection of speech signal, its annotation, metadata and documents, is the basis for both analyzing the characteristics of speech signal and developing speech synthesis and recognition systems (Aijun & Yiqing, 2006).

8.5. IELTS

A test of English for academic purposes, used widely to measure the English language proficiency of international students native languages are not English and who intend to enter universities in Australia, Canada, The United Kingdom and elsewhere. (Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 2002, p.269)

8.6. IELTS Speaking Corpus

In this study, IELTS Speaking Corpus is a collection of linguistic components (vocabularies and sentences) which are used as a corpus in teaching IELTS as a proficiency test and the researcher is going to conduct the research base on such issue.

9. Methods of Research

9.1. Design of the study

This study follows a quasi-experimental design. There were 60 students as the participant of this study. For homogenizing the subject, the OPT proficiency test, including 20 multiple choice questions of vocabulary and reading was assigned with the criteria of one standard deviation below the mean because the progress of the students will be clear when the proficiency is weak. After OPT test, 60 students were divided into four groups. (Two Experimental groups and Two control groups)

A speaking pretest, including 10 oral questions were asked from all participant groups to check the subjects' speaking ability. Then the experimental groups were received treatment (IELTS speaking corpus (ISC)) while the control groups were received a placebo (the existing method). In order to measure the effectiveness of the treatment, the posttest was administered. The posttest includes 10 IELTS speaking questions.

9.2. Participants

Participants of this study were 60 Male and female learners recruited from the Borna Language Teaching Center, Rasht, Iran. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 28. Since homogeneity of the participants was required in this study, for homogenizing the subject, the OPT proficiency test, including 20 multiple choice questions of vocabulary and reading was assigned. The students were randomly divided into two control group participants and two experimental group participants (overall, four groups). All the participants were informed about the general objectives of the project and the confidentiality of the personal information revealed during the sessions and their explicit consent was obtained; however, giving any type of detailed information that would influence their use of IELTS speaking corpus (ISC) was avoided by the researcher. Two experimental groups that received IELTS speaking corpus and two control groups received placebo (existing method). The researcher herself taught the treatment of experimental groups in 5 sessions.

9.3. Materials and Procedures

To conduct the present study, the following instruments were employed:

1. A proficiency test (OPT)
2. Pre-test and post-test
3. A collection of linguistic components (vocabularies and sentences) are used as a corpus in teaching IELTS as a proficiency test in this study.

This part of the study consists of three stages. First, 200 English learners participated in this study. In order to check their level of proficiency, the subjects were required to take an OPT that included 20 multiple choice questions.

According to their English language proficiency scores, 60 male and female learners (those whose scores ranged from 10 to 15 out of 20) were selected. Then these participants were divided into four groups. They were divided in four 15 members groups on the basis of their obtained scores. As a result of this procedure, 4 homogenous groups, 2 experimental groups and 2 control groups were designed.

During the third stage which lasted 5 sessions, the learners were involved in real group activities. In each session, the classes were conducted according to the lesson plan for experimental groups.

10. Results and Discussion

Analysis of variables is statistical techniques that can remove the effect of a confounding variable's influence from a study. Analysis of variables (ANOVA) uses the principles of partial similarity with analysis of the pretest and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of posttest scores are compared.

Analysis of variables is a method of analysis that enables the researcher to equate the pre-experimental status of the groups in terms of relevant known variables. The initial status of the groups may be determined by pretest scores in a pretest-posttest study or in posttest only.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pretest of Male Control group	15	2.50	3.50	6.00	4.9000	.73679	.543
Pretest of Female Control group	15	2.50	3.50	6.00	5.0667	.67788	.460
Pretest of Male Experimental group	15	2.50	3.50	6.00	5.0333	.69351	.481
Pretest of Female Experimental group	15	2.50	3.50	6.00	4.8667	.81211	.660
Posttest of Male Control group	15	2.00	4.50	6.50	5.4667	.61140	.374
Posttest of Female Control group	15	2.00	4.50	6.50	5.7000	.81941	.671
Posttest of Male Experimental group	15	2.50	5.00	7.50	6.3000	.70204	.493
Posttest of Female Experimental group	15	2.00	5.50	7.50	6.2333	.70373	.495
Valid N (listwise)	15						

Differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated. The scores that have been corrected by this procedure are known as residuals, for they are what remain after the inequalities have been removed. The researcher used statistical test and analysis of variables in order to confirm data analysis and generalize the results of the study to the statistical population. The obtained results are shown below. The analysis of variables was used in order to test the hypothesis. The results are shown in the following table.

Paired Samples Test								
Paired Differences								
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PostFemaleExperimental - PreFemaleExperimental	1.36667	1.06010	.27372	.77960	1.95373	4.993	14	.000

Paired Samples Test								
Paired Differences								
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PostMaleExperimental - PreMaleExperimental	1.26667	.88372	.22817	.77728	1.75605	5.551	14	.000

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Score

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7.446 ^a	3	2.482	4.883	.004
Intercept	2106.338	1	2106.338	4.144E3	.000
Teaching	7.004	1	7.004	13.779	.000
Gender	.104	1	.104	.205	.653
Teaching * Gender	.338	1	.338	.664	.419
Error	28.467	56	.508		
Total	2142.250	60			
Corrected Total	35.913	59			

a. R Squared = .207 (Adjusted R Squared .165)

In the above table, we see the three scores of Teaching, Gender and Teaching*Gender that separately show the effect of these factors on learners speaking ability. The P-value for teaching is 0.000 that is

less than the 0.05. So, the two different method IELTS corpus and placebo have different effects on the learners speaking ability but the P-value for Gender and Teaching*Gender is 0.653 and 0.419 that are more than 0.05. It means that the gender of male and female doesn't have much difference in their learning. (There isn't any meaningful difference between male and female according to statistics).

This study had two major hypotheses:

RH1: Using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) does not have an effect on Iranian EFL learner's Speaking Ability.

RH2: Using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) does not affect Iranian male/female EFL learners differently.

In so doing, 200 learners from the Borna Language Teaching Center, Rasht, Iran were chosen. The main point was that there would be sixty homogeneous students, who randomly assigned to four groups; two experimental groups and two control groups. The learners were almost between the ages of 18 and 28. Learners were randomly assigned to the experimental groups and control groups. After giving the pretest, 5 sessions of teaching, and giving posttest, the scores were analyzed by paired t-Test and Two-Way ANOVA.

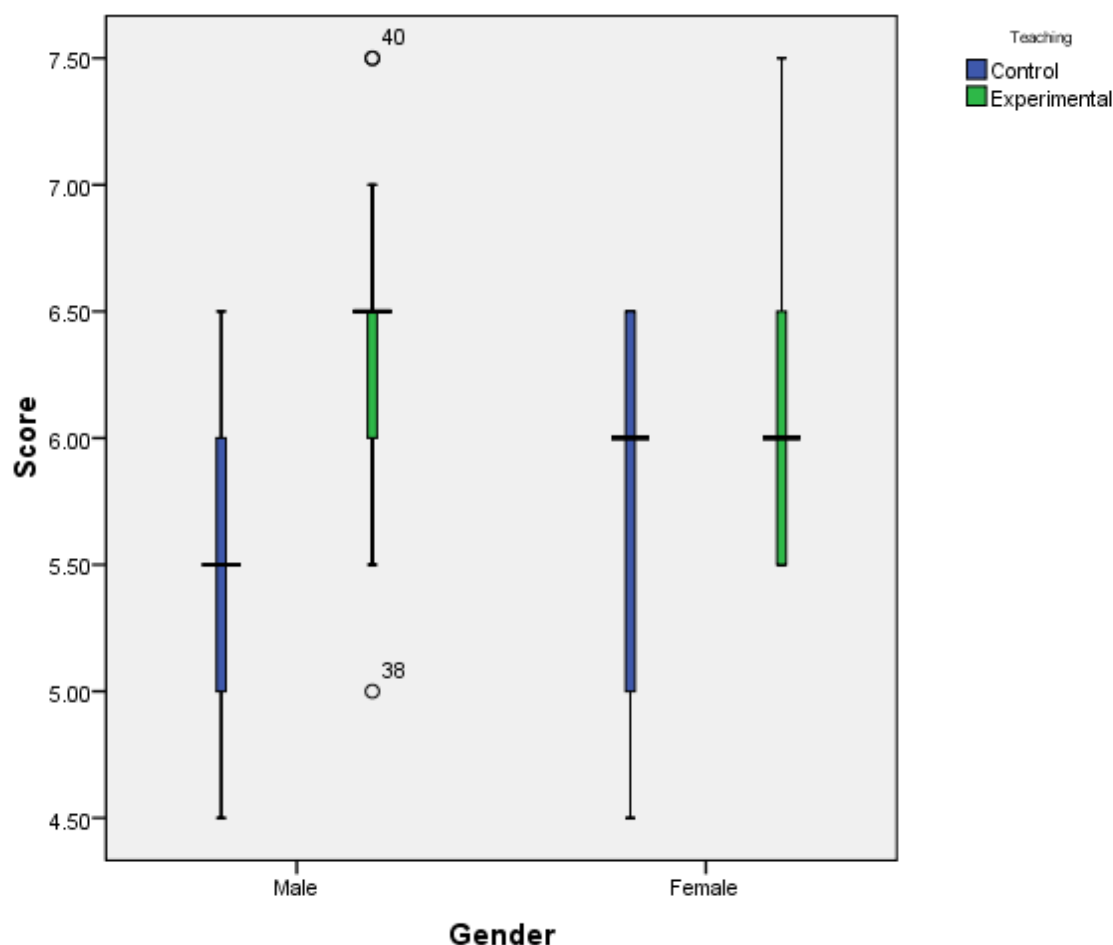
Based on the result the both the first and the second hypothesis of the study are rejected. Therefore, there is difference between the two groups. The experimental groups progressed to learning better than control groups.

The following information can elaborate increasingly the above-mentioned written statement.

The present study aimed at provides a model for teaching IELTS speaking. The researcher has used corpus as a tools to improve learners speaking ability. But we should say that corpora may not provide the answers to all your questions, and they should not necessarily be seen as a replacement for all other types of resources. Instead, they can be viewed as a complementary resource that can be used in conjunction with other types of resources. For example, intuition or dictionary use

According to the experimental studies elaborated in the previous chapter and the researches above there is relationship between IELTS speaking corpus and speaking ability. IELTS speaking corpus affects speaking ability. After 5 sessions teaching corpus, the post score of experimental groups are higher than the control ones.

There is also progress in all groups, but the experimental groups' progress is greater. The Two-Way ANOVA analysis shows the progress clearly.



11. Conclusion

Results of hypotheses testing investigated that there is a significant difference between the performances of the four groups. Before the program, there was not a statistically significant difference between the control groups and experimental groups in terms of their speaking ability.

At the end of the study, there was statistically a significant difference between the performances of the four groups in terms of their speaking ability. The comparisons made showed that the speaking ability of those students in the treatment groups where IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) assessment implemented differ significantly from those of students in the control groups where traditional assessment implemented.

Finally findings of the study was rejected the first null hypotheses and the second null hypotheses was supported. It was concluded that there is a significant difference between the effect of using IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) and the traditional assessment on EFL learners' speaking ability and IELTS Speaking Corpus (ISC) has a positive effect on EFL learner' speaking ability.

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A COMPARISON OF IELTS SPEAKING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND AN IELTS PREPARATION BOOK IN TERMS OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study compared the speaking strategies found in IELTS Speaking assessment criteria with an IELTS speaking strategies of an IELTS preparation book, which was published in Iran. As a result, the comparison revealed that strategies under category of planning for oral interactions, managing and assessment one's own learning, self-monitoring, and repair, and seeking assistance from resources were used in both materials. While, the IELTS preparation book introduces other helpful production strategies, which are in cooperation to the main ones. These strategies are named collaborating with others, using alternative forms of oral or written expression, seeking clarification, and seeking assistance from others. It should be mentioned that it seems such strategies are aiding to get a high score indirectly. It is hoped the users of IELTS preparation books will benefit from the results of this study, which aims at illuminating which important strategies to emphasize during preparation period before taking an IELTS Speaking test.

Keywords: IELTS, Speaking assessment criteria, Strategies for communication.

1. Introduction

Based on Melendez, Zavala, and Mendez (2014), some students use different strategies when learning a foreign language. As an example, Oxford (cited in Murrieta and Hernández 2012) claimed that those students who learn easily use a great number of learning strategies. Murrieta and Hernández (2012) believe that using learning strategies decreases the level of anxiety of learners which is very common reaction at these early stages of language learning. In addition, Huang (2010) mentioned research on second-language acquisition offers a positive relationship between learners' strategy use and second-language performance. On the other hand, it must be noted that textbooks play a very significant role in the teaching and learning especially in developing countries where teachers and students can benefit from them according to their needs (Mahmood, 2011). Textbooks impact both the teachers and students. That is because they provide pattern to the teachers. Therefore, the teachers could teach in a better way. Also, it provides guide lines to the students for better learning (Shah, et. al., 2014). That is why Bano (2005) mentioned textbooks are considered as the sole and legitimate source of knowledge both for students and teachers. That can be a support to research on IELTS results. For instance, Huang (2010) found participants used 90 different individual strategies during the IELTS Speaking Test and overall, there were 2454 instances of strategy use identified in participants' performing of the three tasks. Of the six strategy categories, metacognitive, communication, and affective strategies had the highest percentages. Meanwhile, due to the various amounts of IELTS test course books available in market, it seems noticeable to find out which one of them are most effective for the test. Thus, the present research is to evaluate one IELTS preparation course book, which is popular in Iranian market. Here, the researcher seeks the answer to the following questions:

Which speaking strategies are emphasized in the IELTS Speaking test?
Are these strategies in the focus of the IELTS preparation course books?

2. Method

Material

IELTS Speaking Tests by Iravani (2013) was used for the analysis in this study. This IELTS preparation book was the concern of this research since it introduced speaking strategies in its three chapters, which corresponds the three phases of the IELTS Speaking test. The book starts with an introduction of the IELTS speaking module and brainstorms the reader with the process of the test, types of questions related to each phase of the speaking test, and the band scores in IELTS scale. It also provides the reader with a list of common IELTS speech functions, which are explained within exam-hint parts in details and practiced in a number of conversation-tips during the three chapters. The functions are categorized under providing personal and non-personal information, expressing opinions, explaining, suggesting, and justifying opinions, speculating (hypothesizing, guessing or thinking about a situation), expressing a preference, comparing, summarizing, conversation repair, contrasting, narrating and paraphrasing, and analysis.

3. Analysis

In order to analyze the IELTS preparation book, which is under this study, the researcher referred to the list of general strategies for communication by Alberta Education (2008) and the speaking assessment criteria by ESOL. They were basically regarded as the standard strategies, which must be employed by any 2nd language learner. So, if the book under evaluation of this research obeys such instructions, it can be considered as a standard source of IELTS preparation.

It should be noted that Alberta Education (2008) has published a listing of suggested language learning strategies of which students should be made aware and that should be taught explicitly, practiced and applied to their learning of language strategy use helps learners become more effective and efficient in their learning. This list is divided into various categories: communication strategies, vocabulary development strategies, general language learning strategies and metacognitive strategies. These strategies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. General Production Strategies for Communication

Planning in advance for spoken or written expression	
planning for oral or written expression activities	<input type="checkbox"/> determining the purpose of the task to be carried out, taking note of key words in instructions provided, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> dividing the task into subtasks <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing models to support the creation of a new oral or written text
planning for oral interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> recalling and rehearsing an appropriate set of phrases from the repertoire <input type="checkbox"/> role-playing in advance, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> recording oneself and playing back to compare with a model, where appropriate
During oral or written expression activities	
collaborating with others	<input type="checkbox"/> collaborating with others to brainstorm and communicate messages <input type="checkbox"/> collaborating with others to practise or review oral or written messages
seeking assistance from others	<input type="checkbox"/> identifying any difficulties, then seeking assistance from others <input type="checkbox"/> seeking confirmation that one's expression of language is being understood; if not successful, starting again, using different tactics
seeking assistance from resources	<input type="checkbox"/> identifying any difficulties, then using appropriate reference materials; e.g., word posters, charts, lists, personal or other dictionaries <input type="checkbox"/> verifying the quality of the oral or written expression using appropriate

	reference materials; e.g., word posters, charts, lists, personal or other dictionaries
monitoring and repair	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> listening to oneself or rereading a personal written text and making adjustments to the message
using models of text forms	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> copying or imitating words, expressions, sentence patterns or text structures from other media that can serve as models
using alternative forms of oral or written expression	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> finding an alternative means of expressing an oral or written message in order to sustain the communication, such as rephrasing or using circumlocution, definitions, gestures or drawings <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> using alternative forms to represent a message; e.g., outlines, point form notes, charts, graphs, dialogue, sentences, multimedia
self-editing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> using knowledge of sentence patterns and rules of grammar to form new sentences <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> comparing written work with models to make edits for accuracy in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> revising and correcting the final version of a text
During oral interactions	
seeking clarification	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> indicating when unable to follow an oral interaction, either nonverbally or verbally by asking for repetition or clarification using expressions such as Pardon? Pouvez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît?
Metacognitive Strategies to Support Oral or Written Expression	
being aware of one's learning	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> consciously identifying what one knows about the topic that one is going to speak on or write about <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> keeping track of successful use of strategies during a spoken or written task
self-monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> focusing attention on the spoken or written task <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> focusing attention on what is known and ignoring what is unknown <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> determining level of anxiety in relation to the task <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> keeping oneself motivated prior to commencing the task, during and upon completion of the task <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> using self-talk to build confidence while speaking or writing <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> monitoring speech and writing to check for persistent errors <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> identifying a plan to address errors in the future
managing and assessing one's own learning	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> setting goals for future tasks related to spoken or written expression <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> identifying purposes for an interaction with someone and reflecting on the degree to which these purposes were attained <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> assessing one's performance after completing a task <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> assessing how well one applied strategies during an oral interaction, an oral activity or a written activity or task

Below comes the IELTS Speaking test assessment criteria published by ESOL:

Table 2. IELTS Speaking assessment criteria (band descriptors - public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar Speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features Develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics Uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately Produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety Sustains flexible use of features throughout Is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content related and only rarely to search for language Develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning Uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies Uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wide range of structures flexibly Produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriateness or basic/unsystematic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wide range of pronunciation features Sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses Is easy to understand throughout; 1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence May demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction Uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics Uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices Uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility Frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows all the positive features of band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is willing to speak at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a mix of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a range of

	<p>length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<p>enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriateness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally paraphrases successfully 	<p>simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<p>pronunciation features with mixed control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • Can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going • May over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • Produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • Attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • Uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows all the positive features of band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • Links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • Rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • Errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a limited range of pronunciation features • Attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • Mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks with long pauses • Has limited ability to link simple sentences • Gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information • Has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances • Makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows some of the features of band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of band 4

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pauses lengthily before most words • Little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only produces isolated words or memorised utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No communication possible • No rateable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not attend 			

As the specification of each band score from the highest to lowest shows planning, managing and assessment, self-monitoring, and repair are of the most important strategies which the IELTS Speaking assessment system credits under the criteria of fluency and coherence. In addition, accuracy as the other criterion of IELTS Speaking assessment is in need of the testees' previous assistance from resources.

4. Discussional resource Grammatical range and accuracy Pronunciation

The two tables which follow summarize the details of the strategies and the comparison of the Conversation-tips and Exam-hints in the content of the book under evaluation.

Table 3. The contents of IELTS Speaking Tests by Irvani

Exam-Hints	Conversation-Tips	Examples of Conversation-Tips
Chapter one		
In part one, the examiner will ask you to introduce yourself. Listen attentively to what is asked. Free your mind from distractions, and focus on the question you have to reply.	What does he look like?	He's about my height.
	What is she/he like?	My boss is friendly, helpful, and intelligent I suppose.
Even if you haven't got an answer to a question, don't keep silent. You aren't examined on your ideas, but just your ability to express them in English.	Conversation strategies	Initiating a topic (You know,...), hesitating (well,...), directing/redirecting a conversation (by the way,...), asking for repetition (Sorry?), checking and indicating understanding (Okay?), checking one's own understanding (Let me see), and indicating understanding (I see)
Make sure you stick to the topic and complete the full task. Don't evade the question by changing the topic.	Have to/ must/ should/ had better	I have to work overtime.
Sometimes the examiner will ask questions like "Do you have any plan for holidays?" Do not answer with yes or no only. Expand your answer at least by one or two short sentences.	Some/any	Use some in positive sentences. Use any in negative sentences. Any and some in questions (in most questions we use any; while we use some when we offer things (Would you like some coffee?) or ask for things (Can I have some...?))
If a question isn't clear to you, don't hesitate to ask for repetition. This shows you are skillful in maintaining the conversation.	I think that.../My brother believes that.../ People say that...	Asking about what people said (Are you quoting her?), Direct speech/Quoting (John said," I'll send it to you next week.", Indirect speech (John said that he'd send it to you next week., General

		reports(People say that he can't be trusted.)
	I'm interested in.../I enjoy doing... I'm bored../ I hate doing...	(How was your trip? Fascinating.) (Are you having fun? I'm really enjoying myself.) Are you board? I'm board.)
Chapter Two		
In part two of exam, don't write too many notes. Three to five words or two word clues are enough. Be careful you are not allowed to read from your notes. You are just permitted to have glances.		
Chapter Three		
In part three, where you are involved in a discussion, you don't have to agree with the examiner all the time. However, it is not a good idea to indulge in a heated argument. This will make the maintenance of the argument very difficult for you. So, try to be friendly and polite all the times.	I'm completely satisfied/I'm a little dissatisfied	How was your trip? It was satisfactory. Do you have a complaint? I don't like the color.
	I prefer.../I would rather...	I prefer to live in the country.
	How long does it take?	How long does it take to get from...to...on foot? It takes 5 hours to get from... to... on foot. How long did it take you to do something? It took me 10 minutes to do something.
	So do I/ Neither am I/ I don't either I think so/Hope so	Use aux verbs with so and neither (I'm feeling tired. So am I. =(I am feeling tired too)). Use so after a number of verbs like think, hope, guess, suppose, and I'm afraid (Is she Canadian? I think so.) Use both/either/neither to talk about two things or people (Rosa has two children. Both are married.)
	Will you tell me when...? I don't know what...?	I know where he went. Will you explain how you spend the holiday? Please tell me how you spent the holiday.
	I support.../I oppose.../I object to...	Asking about support/opposition/objections (Who supports this plan? I'm in total support of it. / I object to the

		plan.)
	I agree/I disagree	Are you in agreement with me? I agree./I disagree.
	I need.../It's not necessary to...	Asking about need/obligation (Is there anything you need?) Stating Need/Obligation (It was necessary to scold him.) Denying Need/Necessity/Obligation (She thinks she needs to buy a new pair of shoes.)
	Is it possible to.../What are the chances of.../That's very likely/I doubt if..	Asking about Possibility/Probability (What will probably happen to her?) Stating Possibility (May be/could be/perhaps.) Stating Impossibility (No way!)
	I hope.../I wish...	Asking about Wants/Hopes (What do you want?) Expressing Wants/Hopes (I want to tell the truth. Expressing wishes for future (I wish I would do something next...) Expressing wishes for present (I wish I did something now...) Expressing wishes for past (I wish I had done something last...)
	Prepositions in verbal combinations	A list of verbs were given(rely on, approved of,...); verb plus preposition combinations must be learned together
	Adjective plus preposition combinations that occur with the verb to be. Some verbs are followed by bare forms of verbs. These verbs are of two kinds: verbs of cause, and verbs of sense	Be afraid of, Be aware of,... Verbs of cause (He let me study in his room.), and verbs of sense (I heard him sing.)
	Some propositions exist in fixed phrases. Gerunds are used after prepositions. Like prepositions, there are many verbs followed by gerund	According to, Along with,...(According to the news, the government has fallen.) Admit, avoid,...(The thief admitted stealing the money.)
	If I pass IELTS,.../If I had a million dollars,...	Conditional Type I (If present, will/to be going to/may/can..+bare verb) Conditional Type II (If simple past, would/should/could/might+bare verb) Conditional Type III (If past perfect, would/should/could/might+past

		participle form of the main verb)
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Having compared the Conversation-tips and Exam-hints emphasized in this book with those production strategies for communication, which are the goals of measurement in IELTS Speaking test, will give the users a clear idea about the real quality of the book scientifically.

Table 4. Comparison of Conversation-tips and Exam-hints with IELTS production strategies

Exam-Hints	Production Strategies	Conversation-Tips	Production Strategies
In part one, the examiner will ask you to introduce yourself. Listen attentively to what is asked. Free your mind from distractions, and focus on the question you have to reply.	planning for oral interactions, collaborating with others, self-monitoring	What does he look like?	seeking assistance from resources
		What is she/he like?	seeking assistance from resources
Even if you haven't got an answer to a question, don't keep silent. You aren't examined on your ideas, but just your ability to express them in English.	using alternative forms of oral or written expression	Conversation strategies	seeking assistance from resources
Make sure you stick to the topic and complete the full task. Don't evade the question by changing the topic.	managing and assessing one's own learning	Have to/ must/ should/ had better	seeking assistance from resources
Sometimes the examiner will ask questions like "Do you have any plan for holidays?" Do not answer with yes or no only. Expand your answer at least by one or two short sentences.	self-monitoring	Some/any	seeking assistance from resources
If a question isn't clear to you, don't hesitate to ask for repetition. This shows you are skillful in maintaining the conversation.	seeking clarification	I think that.../My brother believes that.../ People say that...	seeking assistance from resources
		I'm interested in.../I enjoy doing... I'm bored../ I hate doing...	seeking assistance from resources
In part two of exam, don't write too many notes. Three to five words or two word clues are enough. Be careful you are not allowed to read from your notes. You are just permitted to have glances.	monitoring and repair, planning for oral interactions		
In part three, where you are involved in a discussion, you don't have to agree with the examiner all the time. However,	seeking assistance from others, monitoring	I'm completely satisfied/I'm a little dissatisfied	seeking assistance from resources

it is not a good idea to indulge in a heated argument. This will make the maintenance of the argument very difficult for you. So, try to be friendly and polite all the times.	and repair		
		I prefer.../I would rather...	seeking assistance from resources
		How long does it take?	seeking assistance from resources
		So do I/ Neither am I/ I don't either I think so/Hope so	seeking assistance from resources
		Will you tell me when...? I don't know what...?	seeking assistance from resources
		I support.../I oppose.../I object to...	seeking assistance from resources
		I agree/I disagree	seeking assistance from resources
		I need.../It's not necessary to...	seeking assistance from resources
		Is it possible to.../What are the chances of.../That's very likely/I doubt if..	seeking assistance from resources
		I hope.../I wish...	seeking assistance from resources
		Prepositions in verbal combinations	seeking assistance from resources
		Adjective plus preposition combinations that occur with the verb to be. Some verbs are followed by bare forms of verbs. These verbs are of two kinds: verbs of cause, and verbs of sense	seeking assistance from resources
		Some propositions exist in fixed phrases. Gerunds are used after prepositions. Like prepositions, there are many verbs followed by gerund	seeking assistance from resources
		If I pass IELTS,.../If I had a million dollars,...	seeking assistance from resources

On the whole, it is concluded from the Table 4 above that the production strategies are taught in the "IELTS Speaking Tests" book by Iravani. Such production strategies are planning for oral interactions, collaborating with others, self-monitoring, using alternative forms of oral or written expression, managing and assessing one's own learning, seeking clarification, monitoring and repair, seeking assistance from others, and seeking assistance from resources.

5. Conclusion

The comparison of production strategies data between IELTS Speaking assessment criteria and Conversation-tips and Exam-hints shows that the "IELTS Speaking Tests" book by Iravani introduces

those production strategies, which are important in IELTS scoring. Such strategies are called planning for oral interactions, managing and assessing one's own learning, self-monitoring, repair, and seeking assistance from resources. Meanwhile, the book introduces other helpful production strategies additionally, which are in cooperation to the main ones. These strategies are named collaborating with others, using alternative forms of oral or written expression, seeking clarification, and seeking assistance from others. It should be mentioned that it seems such strategies are aiding to get a high score indirectly.

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IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' CRITICAL THINKING AND THEIR LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have been done in the area of critical thinking to show that it has an important function in education. This study aimed at investigating the relationship between Iranian higher and lower EFL learners' critical thinking abilities and their performance on referential and inferential listening comprehension tests. The participants of the study were 64 EFL advanced learners, with the age range of 17 to 23, studying at Kish Institute of Science and Technology, Rasht, Iran. In this study, to homogenize the learners the Longman Paper and pencil test (2004) was utilized; moreover, in order to divide learners into high and low critical thinkers a Critical thinking questionnaire (Honey, 2004) with 30 items whose reliability was calculated by Cronbach's formula was used ($\alpha = .86$). The design of the study was an ex-post facto one. By using descriptive statistics, researcher obtained the means of each group in two different tests of listening. And the results of Independent T-Test revealed that there are statistically significant differences between high and low critical thinkers' performance in both tests ($p < 0.01$). It means that although in the case of language proficiency all learners are homogeneous, high critical thinkers outperformed low critical thinkers in both inferential and referential listening comprehension tests. The results of the study implied that educators must pay more attention to the role of critical thinking on the learning processes.

Key words: referential and inferential questions, critical thinking, Listening Comprehension

1. Introduction

Traditionally, it was believed that higher education will make people more successful in their jobs and lives since it was thought that higher education will empower intellectual abilities and will result in informed and successful citizens (Kuhn, 1999). Moreover, connection between critical thinking and language have been emphasized by many theorists (Vygotsky, 1962; Piaget, 1971). It was thought that enhancing learners' abilities in reflecting on their own learning process will improve learning. Renner (1996) indicated that for improving higher-order skills of learning higher order thinking is essential because it enables learners to gain higher proficiency in language skills. However, academically successful students are not defined as persons who memorize facts and learn fixed routines and procedures; instead as individuals who can mix their intellectual knowledge to think critically both when they face difficulties and what they are learning (Chaffee, 1992). Huitt (1998) mentioned that critical thinking is a very important element of education in this century since in the information age, thinking is an important part in people's life. He further adds that the movement toward the information age has changed attention to good thinking as a main element of life success.

Lai (2011) declared that having background knowledge is helpful for a person to think critically. This ability is a skill that both teacher and students can use it to move toward a systematic education. And teachers by instructing some strategies such as problem solving, logical reasoning, methods of analyzing to their students can contribute them to gain better achievements. In fact, as Stapleton,

(2001) indicated, to be an effective listener, it is essential that learners carefully analyze the speaker's intended meaning and consider the situation of the communication. To analyze the purpose of the speaker, listeners should analyze the indirect meaning of speaker's content of the message. Also, analyzing the communication setting needs learners judge what influences comprehension and what does not, and how the setting influences on their understanding. It seems inferring, asking question and reasoning are among main factors which enhance listening skill in L2. He added that Critical thinking is very critical in language skill acquisition especially in listening and writing. These essential skills play important roles in academic success, however; their relationships with critical thinking particularly those who are learning English as a foreign language is not considered a lot. And also the studies that investigated the relationships between aforementioned construct and general language proficiency are not noticeable.

There have been some studies that investigated the relationship between critical thinking and different language skills such as De Boo (1999) and Gardner and Jewler (2000) Khorasani and Farimani (2010), Nikoopour (2011) Kamali & Fahim(2011), Fahim & Sa'eepour (2011) and Villavicencio (2011). In Their studies, they have investigated relationship between higher critical thinking abilities with reading comprehension skill. However, listening comprehension is an important skill that needs higher critical thinking and its role in language learning cannot be ignored.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

2.2 Critical thinking

The concept of critical thinking has progressed during centuries and different definitions have been suggested, so "there is no one especial definition of critical thinking" (Fasko, 2003, p.8), and a single definition is not widely accepted (Halonen, 1995). Norris and Ennis (1989) define critical thinking as "logical and reflective thinking that is deciding what to believe and do" (p.3). And Dewey (1933) defined critical thinking as "Active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends (p.91)." Within recent decades, critical thinking has been appeared in educational circles.

Scriven and Paul's (2004) definition of critical thinking is " the mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them" (P.3). Moreover, Paul(2008) divided critical thinking as Weak-sense critical thinking which is the utilization of critical thinking to support your current beliefs and Strong-sense critical thinking that is the use of similar skills to evaluate all statements and beliefs, especially your own. According to Yuretich (2004) if we give a chance to learners to think critically such as providing them the time for analyzing, reflecting and discussing a problem in a real context that enforces them to use their critical thinking will be a good support for this construct and the key of critical thinking instruction. He adds that using this higher order reasoning cannot be applicable in traditional class modes managed by teachers with lecturing and summative exams. But arranging classes with active modes of learning and teaching will be more appropriate for improving this skill through pondering a question by students, discussing about that in pair or group and finding the probable answers.

Some pedagogues such as Storey and Bourdillon (2002) believe that students should both take part in the process of critical thinking and know why they want to be critical thinkers and what they will learn. Similarly, Mayfield (2001) mentioned that teachers must attend to develop learners critical thinking , elaborate for learners their of processes that they are involved and aims that they should struggle to reach through critical thinking. According to Buskist and Irons (2008) some students are reluctant to think critically and teachers do not include some activities and tasks related to critical thinking instruction in their courses to help students in this way. But most instructors have enough motivation to teach their learners to think critically in spite of being a laborious task to do and needs lot of self-commitments since designing critical thinking activities, problem solving tasks or some other similar tasks are themselves critical thinking tasks. They added that although many teachers are eager to face challenge, there may be some causes why they don't satisfy teaching the aforementioned construct to learners. a) Teaching this construct is more demanding job that needs to do lots of researches and to provide some services which prevent them to do some other things in their profession especially when they are under the pressure for lack of time. (b). Some instructors insist in teaching critical thinking since evaluating the result of teaching to see whether teaching has been

effective or not is not easy, unlike other course contents (c)Not being critical thinkers themselves and not having enough knowledge to know how to teach this skill, teachers may not take teaching this construct seriously.

As Fok (2002) declared when learners can distinguish opinion from facts will not be enough for having a critical mind but they should be equipped with different critical thinking skills and critical approaches that can evaluate their own views and beliefs, investigate the world that they are living in and ask critical questions about the world.

2.3 Listening comprehension

To have a successful communication listeners must understand the speaker's speech. To understand someone's speech, one can not just match between meaning and sound but understanding spoken language involves conception of some cues which accompanied with inferential process. The process of listening comprehension consists of four modules:

- (i) hearing: the perception of sounds which is also used for non-speech sound
- (ii) Categorization of sounds: arranging sounds into some categories.
- (iii) recognition of word: dividing sounds into its components and getting their meaning from long term memory
- (iv) Comprehension: extracting the meaning of the sentences by combining the meaning of individual words, indeed; it means interpretation of speakers' intended meaning.

In Listening comprehension three processes may be involved. First process model is bottom up one. Vandergrift (2002) stated that this process includes decoding information by segmentation of words to its components. In order to reach higher level of processing, listener must start processing from lower level or linguistic knowledge to understand the whole message. Second process in listening comprehension is top-down process, in contrast with bottom up process is "holistic" going from whole to part, and focused on interpretation of meaning rather than recognition of sounds, words and sentences. Listeners actively formulate hypotheses as to speaker's meaning, and confirm or modify them where necessary" (Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2002: 197). Third model processing called interactive process. Paran (1997) indicated that in listening comprehension both top down and bottom up processes are involved. He claimed that these two processes even influence each other.

2.3 Listening comprehension and critical thinking

It was the late 1940s that investigation has been started in the field of listening comprehension. Anderson (2005) mentioned that listening comprehension has essential role in second and foreign language learning and is vital for communication. Buck (2001) indicated that listening comprehension involves two operations decoding and meaning making. Fundamentally, decoding includes the listener drawing on the sounds features of the received speech signal onto representations of target language sounds, then into word sounds, then into words and phrases in their words, prior to creating concepts which carry the literal meaning of the input.

Wood (2002) states that Listening involves active, empathic, critical, and enjoyment listening. Active listening is listening with intention involving empathic and critical listening. Empathic listening means your attempts to understand another interlocutor. Critical listening needs investigating a speaker's speech for meaningfulness, accuracy, and usefulness. In addition to listening for pragmatic purposes, we also listen to something for enjoyment purposes.

Wood (2002) states that critical thinking and Critical listening are in interaction: no one can listen critically without thinking critically. Critical listening is a version of active listening in which you carefully evaluate the correctness, meaning, and purpose a speaker's intention. Also, critical thinking includes investigating the situation, and the speaker's views to make critical decision about the message being represented. Not only relationship exists between critical thinking and critical listening, we can use critical thinking when reading or doing any other skill or task.

Lai (2011) explains that there are three ways that help you to use your critical thinking in listening comprehension. One way to think critically is to evaluate the communication setting, or the situation that communication is taking place. The second way for involving in critical thinking and listening is to analyze the speaker's views and ideas by asking some question related to what he says. Third, person needs to distinguish whether speakers are describing and expressing things based on his own conclusions or just reporting others' drawn conclusions. The distinction between these things includes the differences between first-person and third-person.

Listening comprehension questions are categorized based on their forms and functions. Widdowson (1983) clarifies four types of questions in terms of form: (a) true-false questions (b) multiple-choice questions (c) wh-questions, (d) polar (yes/no) questions. In addition they may also be distinguished based on their functions: usage, use and reference questions (Widdowson, 1979); Micro and Macro and questions (Cohen & Fine, 1978); Higher and Lower order questions (Been, 1975; Watts & Anderson, 1971); Textually implicit and explicit questions, (Johnson & Pearson, 1978); Factual, inferential, and referential questions (Farhady, 1998).

3.4. Empirical studies

Recently, great deals of studies have focused their attention on critical thinking and different aspects of language learning. Solon (2003) has done a study to investigate the influence of various critical thinking methods on critical thinking skills of university students. The findings of the study uncovered that different methods affected significantly on improving critical thinking skills of those receiving instruction in comparing with the control group that not received such instruction.

Yuretich (2004) who intensified the importance of higher critical thinking skills such as evaluation, analysis and synthesis conducted a study about teaching critical thinking skill. He intended to know the effects of instruction of active strategies on critical thinking at American schools. The results of the study indicated the positive influence of active learning strategies instruction on critical thinking skills. By active strategy he means students are encouraged to evaluate the information by discussing with other groups, by providing conditions for them to analyze, evaluate and reflect on an issue in a context. This is indeed a kind of instruction.

A study has been done by Dunham and Davidson (1996) on Japanese EFL students to assess their critical thinking abilities after one year content-based instruction. They have used a control group and an experimental one, both groups received this content-based instruction but only experimental group received more instruction on critical thinking. The results revealed that the treatment group has done significantly better than other one in final content-based test that was given to both groups. It implies that teaching critical thinking can be a part of EFL learners' instructional schedule.

Curtis and Chapple (2000) in their language instruction utilized film as content. In this study, learners themselves were asked to evaluate their own progress. Researchers do not study the critical thinking skill development directly, but by analyzing their responses, it is found that learners' critical thinking and analytical abilities have improved a lot. And their language progress was rated as second achievement.

In another study, Huang's (2003) had investigated content-based instruction in china for EFL learners. Some activities have been designed for both language and culture development. Although no direct critical thinking instruction was provided but evidence of using some higher critical thinking skills such as evaluating and reasoning have been observed.

Kamali & Fahim(2011) investigated the relationship between resilience, critical thinking ability and reading comprehension of texts containing unknown vocabulary items. The result of their study showed that there is a significant relationship between resilience, critical thinking ability and L2 reading comprehension. Fahim & Sa'eepour (2011) conducted a study to investigate the impact of teaching critical thinking skills on reading comprehension ability. Their findings showed that incorporating critical thinking skills in language classroom is vital to improve language teaching and learning. Behdani (2009) has done a research investigating the relationship between critical thinking ability autonomy and reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL students. The results indicated that there existed a significant relationship between learners' autonomy and performance on reading comprehension. Villavicencio (2011) investigated to find the relationship between engineering students' performance and critical thinking. He concluded that those with higher critical thinking outperformed the lower critical thinkers in final exam.

Furthermore, Yeh and Wu (1992) conducted a study to find relationship between students' achievement and critical thinking and they found significant positive correlations between these factors. In another study, Mirzaie (2008) studied the relationship between lexical inference and critical thinking of EFL learners, the researcher found out that there was a relationship between critical thinking levels and lexical inference of learners.

Ambigapathy & Abdul Ghani, (2005) conducted a study in Malaysia and found that English communicative skill is one of the main requirements for students to be graduated in order to find a job. This study found that thinking skills are also required by students.

Izadi & Nourmohammadi (2011) studied the relationship between listening strategies and self-efficacy. They discovered that self-belief is important in learners' performance and using of strategies. Rahimi & Baleghizadeh (2011) by studying the relationship between listening test performance and metacognitive strategy use found a significant relationship between metacognitive strategy use and listening performance. They intensified that even using metacognitive listening strategies enhances the listening performance of the students. In another study Reback (2008) discovered that that authentic listening increases learners' perception in listening and their interest. Therefore, studies show that personal features play an essential role in learning.

Izadi & Abdollahzadeh (2013) studied the relationship between using listening comprehension strategies and critical thinking. The finding of their study revealed that high critical thinkers used more listening comprehension strategies.

According to Fahim & Kamali (2011), increasing learners' critical skill can enhance their comprehension skills effectively. Listening comprehension is one aspect of the L2 learning that most of L2 learners have problems. It is also one of the important means of interaction. Without listening, people cannot utter their ideas and receive attentions from speakers that is essential in interaction. There are some studies investigated the relationship between some skills especially reading comprehension and critical thinking skill; However, to the best of researcher knowledge there is no any specific study done on Iranian EFL learners to find the relationship between higher and lower critical thinking and their performance on listening comprehension tests. For this purpose, in this study researcher aims at finding the probable relationship between critical thinking and listening comprehension questions. Therefore, the present study investigates the relationship between critical thinking and performance on listening tests to find the extent to which critical thinking has relationship with learners' performances on inferential and referential listening comprehension questions.

This study aims to answer the following research question:

- Do high and low critical thinkers perform differently on inferential listening comprehension questions at advanced proficiency level?
- Do high and low critical thinkers perform differently on referential listening comprehension questions at advanced proficiency level?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study have been selected from among EFL learners studying at the advanced level at Kish Institute of Science and Technology, Rasht, Iran. The researcher used intact groups as the participants of the study. In other words, participants involve all individuals from advanced existing classes at the institute. The whole selected sample was composed of 94 advanced male EFL learners. After administering a TOEFL test in order to homogenize the participants 64 learners, with the age range of 17 to 23 with the average being 20, were selected.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. TOEFL Test

In order to ensure the homogeneity of learners in language proficiency the Longman Paper and pencil test (2004) was administered in one session. This test comprised of three sections: (a) structure and written expression with 40 items, and (b) reading comprehension with 50 items and (C) listening comprehension with 50 questions. The allocated time to take the test was 140 minutes, and the scoring was estimated out of 150. Based on the obtained scores, those learners with a score falling within one standard deviation above and below the mean ($M=80.45$, $SD=9.33$) were selected. Finally, 64 learners with the scores between 71 and 90 formed the homogenized group.

3.2.2 Critical thinking test

In the second session, the homogenized group was given the Peter Honey (2004) critical thinking questionnaire containing 30 items using a 5-point Likert scale. Students were requested to read items and chose an item ranging from never to always. The reliability of questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's formula ($\alpha=.86$) and to make the test valid, it was reviewed by five experts in this field. The students were divided into two groups of high and low critical thinkers based on their performance on critical thinking test. Those who scored 75 out of 150 and above were considered as high critical thinker group (38 participants) and those with lower than 75 out of 150 were defined as low critical thinkers (26 participants) (farahani, 2011).

3.3 Design of the Study

The study followed an ex post facto one, since the relationship between critical thinking ability of advanced EFL learners and their listening comprehension abilities in referential, and inferential questions was correlated.

3.4 Procedure

In this study, from Kish Institute of Science and Technology, Rasht, Iran 64 EFL advanced learners whose homogeneities were tested by Longman TOEFL test were chosen. For assuring of their understanding of instructions, Persian as their native language was utilized. Taking test time was 140 minutes and the total score was 150. Moreover; they were not allowed to interact during test administration. After test administration those with mean of 80.45 and SD of 9.33 with scores between 71 and 90 were selected.

In the second session that is one session after selecting a homogenized group, the critical thinking questionnaire of Peter Honey (2004, as cited in Naeini, 2005) with 30 items and using a 5-point Likert scale was given to selected learners. By taking this test, those with score of 75 out of 150 and above were considered as high critical thinkers and below this score as low critical ones. Finally from among fifty listening comprehension questions used to check proficiency level of learners 28 of them were referential questions and the rest (22) inferential questions, researcher obtained the mean scores of low and high critical thinkers in referential and inferential questions and compared their sum of scores in these listening comprehension question types.

3.5 Data Analysis

By using descriptive statistics, researcher obtained the mean of each group in two different kinds of questions namely inferential and referential. Then the means of each question were compared to see whether the differences between higher and lower thinkers' performance in these questions are meaningful or not. For this purpose student t-test were used.

4. Results

4.1 Critical Thinking and referential Listening Comprehension Question

In order to answer the first question which was whether high and low critical thinkers perform differently on referential listening comprehension questions at advanced proficiency level or not the following procedure was proceeded. First, descriptive statistics was used. The scores of referential questions in low and high critical thinkers with the skewedness ratio of 0.85 and 0.76 were distributed normally. Since the ratio values of inferential question scores in both groups were within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 , normality was assumed and using independent t-test was justified. Moreover, the mean scores of high critical thinkers was 20.31 with standard error of 0.84, Standard Deviation of 5.33 and variance of 16. And the mean scores of low critical thinkers was 16.19, with standard error of 0.60, Standard Deviation of 3.03 and variance of 9.45. Both group answered 28 questions.

Therefore it was claimed that high critical thinkers had done better than low critical thinkers on referential questions and also both groups had homogeneous variances (Levene's $F = 10.73$, $p = 0.002 < 0.05$) (See Table 1). Therefore, in order to see the significance of differences that exist between high and low critical thinkers performances on inferential questions first row of independent samples t-test was used.

Table1.T-Test on the Referential Questions Scores of the High and Low Thinkers

group	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Equal variances assumed	10.73	0.002	5.711	62	0.000	-6.62348	1.15970	

Equal variances not assumed			6.286	60.286	0.000	-6.62348	1.05375	
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The results were shown in Table1 ($t = 6.286$, $df = 60.286$, $p = 0.002 < 0.05$). The p value was less than 0.05. Therefore, the first question was answered positively and high and low critical thinkers performed differently, and there is a significant difference between the mean scores of referential questions in low and high critical thinkers.

4.2 Critical Thinking and inferential Listening Comprehension Questions

In order to answer the second question, i.e. "Do high and low critical thinkers perform differently on inferential listening comprehension questions at advanced proficiency level?", first descriptive statistics used to check whether the normality was assumed or not. By using of the descriptive statistics for inferential questions, the skewedness ratio values of .126 and 0.098 was obtained since the ratio values of inferential question scores in both groups were within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 , normality was assumed and using t-test was justified. Moreover, the mean scores of high critical thinkers was 11.44 with standard error of 0.45, Standard Deviation of 1.76 and variance of 3.11. And the mean scores of low critical thinkers was 7.88, with standard error of 0.57, Standard Deviation of 1.81 and variance of 3.30. both group answered 22 questions. It indicated that high critical thinkers performed better than low critical thinkers in this test; therefore, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean scores of both groups on inferential questions to see whether differences were meaningful or not. Table 2 shows the results of inferential questions performance of both groups by using the independent samples t-test.

Table4.T-Test on the Inferential Questions Scores of the High and Low

group	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Equal variances assumed	0.000	0.035	8.108	62	0.000	3.62302	.44687	
Equal variances not assumed			8.095	57.832	0.000	3.62302	.44757	

As the Table 2 indicates, the results of the Levene's test ($F = 0.000$, $p = 0.035 < 0.05$) made clear that the variances between the two groups were not significantly different and thus, homogeneity of variances was assumed. So the second row of t-test was applied. The probability related to the t-value ($t = 8.035$, $df = 57.832$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$) was lower than 0.05, therefore, it could be said that there was a significant difference in performance on inferential listening comprehension questions between high and low critical thinkers, it means that the ability of critical thinking can influence on performance of learners on inferential questions. Therefore, the second question also can be answered positively.

4.3. Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between critical thinking and advanced EFL learners' performances on inferential and referential listening comprehension questions. The analysis revealed that those with high critical thinking outperformed low critical ones in both referential and inferential question types. It means that differences in performance on listening comprehension tests between low and high critical thinking is significant.

There are some studies that adjust the positive correlations between critical thinking and listening comprehension skills and are in line with the present study findings, such as Villavicencio (2011) that investigated to find the relationship between engineering students' performance on listening skill and critical thinking. He concluded that those with higher critical thinking outperformed the lower critical

thinkers in final exam. Izadi & Abdollahzadeh(2013) studied the relationship between using listening comprehension strategies and critical thinking. The findings of their study revealed that high critical thinkers used more listening comprehension strategies in comparison with low critical thinkers and they are better listeners. Wood (2002) stated that Critical thinking and Critical listening are in interaction. His study uncovered that not only relationship exists between critical thinking and critical listening, but we also can use critical thinking when reading or doing any other skill or task. Fahim & Kamali (2011) found that increasing learners' critical skill can enhance comprehension skills effectively and without listening, people cannot utter their ideas and receive attention from speakers that is essential in interaction. Yeh and Wu (1992) conducted a study to find relationship between students' achievement and critical thinking and they found significant positive correlations between these factors.

Moreover, there are some other studies that investigated the relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension that is a receptive skill including: Facione (2007), Fahim and Kamali's (2011) and Fahim and Sa'eepour's (2011) found a positive significant correlation between performance on reading comprehension tests and critical thinking.

The results of this study can help many teachers who still look at listening comprehension as a passive process and consider listening comprehension as some passages that learners must answer to some factual question to change their views and consider listening as an active process. However, "teaching for understanding rather than knowledge will bring students to a higher level of learning" (Baviskar, 2007, p. 31). So, teachers should attend more to the questions they ask during teaching and the exams. Questions should be designed to ask about understanding of passages and inferring ideas rather than literal meaning.

Although researcher expected that just high critical thinker would be better in inferential questions, even they performed better in referential questions. This could have important pedagogical implications which are going to be explained later.

4.4.Implication

The results of the study can be helpful to both teacher educator to teach and work on related topics, syllabus designers to consider the findings in syllabus compilation and provide ways to improve reasoning and critical thinking ability of learners rather than providing some materials for rote memorization and policy makers to consider ways of improving and changing their planning policies in direction with training critical to lead to reflective teachers.

The study indicates that critical thinking level of the students is very important in their listening comprehension ability and their performances on two kinds of questions. The teaching methodologies should look at teaching from critical thinking perspective; on the other hand, critical thinking should be given an essential role in language teaching. Moreover, it is suggested language teachers teaching critical thinking strategies to their learners, since how to be a better thinker is one important responsibility of a good teacher. Using pre-tasks or post-tasks for the purpose of teaching critical thinking among learners is recommended. In addition, teachers should design questions from deeper levels rather than to shallow and literal level. In addition, teachers should provide an atmosphere among the students to listen deeply, and look for connections among ideas. Instructors must also change the view of "what to think" with "how to think" (Young, 1992).

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THE ROLE OF BRAINSTORMING IN ENHANCING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is a difficult and complex skill to learn in a foreign language to the extent that it activates others' judgments about one's language performance. Therefore, to master learning how to teach speaking effectively can be of so much help in the journey of language learning. The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of brainstorming strategy on teaching and developing speaking skill among Iranian EFL learners and their attitudes towards learning English. The participants were undergraduate male students who were studying at Imam Sadeq (PBUH) College in Shiraz, Iran.

The findings of the study indicated that using the brainstorming techniques significantly enhanced the speaking skill among the members of the experimental group and positively affected their attitudes towards English. Secondly, brainstorming proved to be an important factor in improving speaking which in turn activates background knowledge that students bring with them and helps them to perform the speaking task more successfully.

Based on the results of the current study, it is recommended that EFL teachers adopt the brainstorming strategies in their classroom practices. This adoption could be realized by designing some of the contents of the textbooks they use according to brainstorming procedures and principles.

Keywords: Brainstorming, Progress, Achievement, Speaking Skill, Creative Thinking, Problem Solving, Motivation

1. Introduction

Improving EFL/ESL learner's speaking skill has been one of the main focuses of English teachers. They must develop some approaches and classroom talks to provide a communicative situation and to motivate students. But how to motivate the learners to speak has been controversial. Researchers have conducted a lot of studies on different methods to improve learners' speaking skill. Of the most well-known methods is brainstorming which has been studied in this research. In recent years many researchers have conducted a lot of studies to investigate the role of brainstorming in developing language skills.

Any teacher wishes to facilitate learning by using suitable activities and make the students become good learners. Good learners are those students who can recall their existing knowledge and organize and direct the knowledge towards the subject in which they are involved. In this way the learners provide a link between the new and existing knowledge, which causes extraction and integration of ideas from the mind of the learners themselves. Because these ideas belong to the learners themselves,

they are very willing to expand and maintain them for a long period of time. It seems logical to say that in a brainstorming session, everybody is more willing to consolidate his own idea which originated from his own mind than others' ideas. Ariana and Mirabela (2012) stated that nowadays teachers help learners to discover knowledge on their own, as they are no longer empty recipients and they are eager to integrate and exchange ideas. This makes the students become good learners in natural contexts, but how the teachers can help the students to express their ideas is the key point.

Brainstorming can be a useful tool to help learners generate ideas. In this way, it is supposed that the teachers can create a situation in which the learners, when speaking, think about the subject of the discussion, but not the grammar, vocabulary and other language issues, so that they can help EFL learners enhance native-like fluency. Soleimani and Taheri Mahmoodabadi's (2013) investigation showed that in task-based learning approaches the learners' mind is free of language control and learning language in these approaches is developed naturally.

Native speakers of a language speak fluently, whether they are children or adults, while L2 learners, even if they are advanced learners, cannot speak as fluently as native speakers. The main and key point which differentiates their fluency is that native speakers, when speaking, think about the subject of the discussion, but not the grammar, vocabulary and other language issues. In other words, their mind is merely involved in the subject issues. However, because EFL/ESL learners concentrate on their grammar, vocabulary, etc., they cannot speak fluently, as it seems that they do not think about the subject itself. To overcome this problem, ESL/EFL learners can exercise and develop their speaking skill by using brainstorming strategy in the classroom. It seems that brainstorming can be a good way to solve this problem and results in learning cognitively.

For the EFL teachers, teaching the four main skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is a goal. They wish to facilitate learning these skills, but how to facilitate learning is their main problem. Productive skills like speaking have always been regarded as important skills in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Productive skills stimulate thinking, compel learners to concentrate and organize their ideas, and cultivate their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize. It also reinforces English learning ability and the ability of thinking in English carefully and deeply. Nevertheless, students find these skills difficult, because the process demands that they utilize many cognitive and linguistic strategies of which they are uncertain. On the one hand, many students cannot generate ideas as they lack ideas and cannot think creatively of anything interesting or significant enough to write or speak about. On the other hand, since most EFL teachers are often perplexed by these problems in their writing and speaking classes, they cannot find an efficient way to awaken students' imagination and set their minds working. At best, some teachers adopt a product-based approach, focusing on exemplification, contrast and comparison, description and classification. But most of them are not aware of the role of the brainstorming strategy or the value of strategy training in promoting students' learning skills (Bejarano, Levine, Olshtain, & Steiner, 1997). It seems, among the above mentioned skills, teaching speaking is considered to be a problem for teachers and they need to find out some ways of teaching which can help learners improve their speaking performance. To overcome this problem, the teachers should think of creating a suitable situation in which their students can start speaking and be involved in speaking more than their previous stages.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Dealing with the problem of how to motivate EFL learners has led to some cases of research regarding brainstorming. For example Mohammad and Hussein (2013) investigated the exploitation of brainstorming as the first step in the writing process to enhance students' motivation to write essays. The results indicated that brainstorming was motivating to students.

Language acquisition skills (specially, productive skills) through traditional methods of teaching is problematic for L2 learners. Hamzah and Ting (2010) believe that communicating naturally in English is one of the long term goals that language teachers would like to achieve in class.

Most research on brainstorming has been conducted within relatively confined issues and only a small number of studies have examined the effect of brainstorming on speaking. Speaking is a skill which is problematic for the most EFL learners, and teachers face many problems in teaching it. Having problems in facilitating speaking situation, teachers cannot teach speaking skill; and through having problems in speaking, learners cannot interact well.

Although previous studies have reported a few findings, there have been some issues to be examined of which the effect of brainstorming method on speaking skill is the main issue in this research. The rationale for conducting this study is the need for a wider and more inclusive examination than previous studies.

Reviewing the literature showed that most research has been conducted on the role of brainstorming in developing writing skill and that there have been a few consistent findings about the effectiveness of brainstorming on speaking skill; so, this research intends to study the role of brainstorming in enhancing the Iranians speaking skill.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine if brainstorming helps EFL learners become better English speakers. The second objective is to determine the potential implication of group work activities on students' individual performance in speaking assessment. The third objective is to investigate whether brainstorming can have any role in motivating foreign/second language learners to speak or get engaged in speaking and to find out whether brainstorming affects the speaking skill of learners who study English as a foreign language in Iran. And finally to examine if acquiring speaking skill through brainstorming methods is more useful than traditional methods.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study helps to determine the effectiveness of using brainstorming strategy in teaching speaking in EFL classrooms. It provides language teachers with the rationale to carry out oral group work activities in class to improve students' speaking skills. It also gives suggestion to EFL teachers to develop successful oral group activities and hence they can identify the major speaking problems which their students faced. Thus, teachers will become conscious with the advantages of brainstorming in teaching and learning process.

Moreover, students will appreciate and share their knowledge with other classmates. This will increase learning, planning and discussion skills and eventually improve their speaking capabilities. Students will be involved as active participants and decision-makers in oral group work activities. Besides, the value of brainstorming in EFL classroom will be determined. Hence, this study is helpful to provide knowledge on methods to develop natural ways in speaking activities.

On the basis of Isaksen's (1998) review of 50 empirical studies and related literature, brainstorming maybe the most researched and least understood creative thinking technique which may need more research to conduct. As mentioned before, there have been a small number of studies on the role of brainstorming in speaking skill and the need to do more is also felt, so it seems essential to conduct this research (Hamzah & Ting, 2010).

The findings of this research will present new information about Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill and will confirm the previous studies, because there was an empirical research to prove if brainstorming had an effect on the development of speaking skill. The results can encourage learners to use brainstorming method and improve their performance and also can help instructors to have a successful language teaching class.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

Q1. Does brainstorming help Iranian EFL learners make progress in speaking skill?

Q2. Does brainstorming help Iranian EFL learners make significant achievement in speaking skill?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H0. Brainstorming does not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' progress in speaking.

H1. Brainstorming does not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' achievement in speaking.

H2. Applying brainstorming strategy will not bring about a significant difference in mean scores of control and experimental groups on pre- and post-oral interview test.

2. Literature review

In recent years, some studies have been conducted on the role of brainstorming in teaching English as a foreign language. Brainstorming and writing and speaking skill motivation are major areas in second language learning and teaching. Brainstorming strategy is a key factor that can have an impact on students' writing and speaking skill motivation. According to Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013), brainstorming strategy has a positive effect on EFL learners' writing achievement and also makes them more active. In fact, the issue of teaching writing and speaking in EFL/ESL by starting with

brainstorming and its relation to students' motivation has become increasingly important to educators, EFL/ESL teachers, as well as to students (Mohammad & Hussein, 2013). Osborn (as cited in Maghsoudi & Haririan, 2013) was the first who developed brainstorming as a helpful method to cover all problems. In this method, a group generates new ideas in order to support creative problem solving. It helps people both to generate innovative ideas and create a productive and enjoyable atmosphere. Khodadady, Shirmohammadi and Talebi (2011) explored the effectiveness of brainstorming on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency and found that the experimental group members' performance were significantly better than that of control group members.

Of the learning strategies brainstorming is the one which has been elaborated and researched by many researchers and they have proved its positive effect on problem solving (Bjerregaard & Compton, 2011), learning and recall of lexical items (Soleimani & Taheri Mahmoodabadi, 2013), enhancing the learners' motivation to write (Maghsoudi & Haririan, 2013; Mohammad & Hussein, 2013), idea generation (Rietzchel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2005) and enhancing the learners' motivation to speak and develop this skill (Khodadady, Shirmohammadi & Talebi, 2011). In other words, they have focused on the role of brainstorming in achieving educational objectives in various fields. Teachers try to give opportunities to students to make them more motivated when performing learning activities.

Brainstorming activates the learners' background knowledge which enhances the learner's confidence and impels them to speak. Lai (2011) states that background knowledge is one of the essential factors in helping one to think and speak critically. Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013) claimed that brainstorming is a technique which helps the students to transfer their thoughts from the brain to tongue and helps members to share their information especially in the form of speaking and writing. Reviewing many studies, they found that groups generate more ideas when they use Osborn's brainstorming rules than when they do not. Osborn (as cited in Isaksen, 1998) defines brainstorming as a method by which a group tries to find a solution for a specific problem by amassing a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members. Isaksen (1998) stated that the word "brainstorming" has several popular meanings. Firstly, it simply means to get together and have a causal discussion in order to strike some ideas and motivates students to carry out productive tasks. Secondly, it is an idea generation tool which is one of the most well-known tools for effective thinking. Isaksen added that some others believe that brainstorming is a universal way to be creative and synonymous with creative problem solving process. And finally, for a few of people it means a waste of time.

Hayes (1940) found that brainstorming sessions cause a social epidemic in which one participant's idea inspires a better idea in another. The second and better idea has not been come to his mind before. Stein (as cited in Hayes, 1940), reviewed some studies and came to the result that brainstorming technique contributes to produce more ideas than those groups which generate and evaluate ideas simultaneously.

According to Osborn (1948) there are four guidelines when performing a brainstorming session which reduce social inhibitions and contribute to verbalizing a lot of ideas:

1. The participants should ignore evaluation and judgment.
2. Unusual and strange ideas are wanted.
3. The large numbers of ideas are wanted.
4. Combination and improvement of ideas can be turned into better, more or another ideas.

Osborn (1948) found two reasons for the question "why is group brainstorming productive?" The main reason is that group brainstorming focuses on creative thinking excluding discouragement and judgment which inhibit picturing ideas. The other reason is that brainstorming evokes speaking and presenting ideas contagiously. He stated that social facilitation is a psychological factor in group thinking which leads to social interaction. He believes that it is a principle which has been proved by many scientists. The scientists' experiments have proved that numerous "free associations" are the results of group creativity.

Holden (1996) tested the effectiveness of brainstorming and non-brainstorming approaches to teaching writing skill. The results showed that the members of experimental group performed better on the posttest than that of the control group members did. Bejarano, Levine, Olshtain and Steiner (1997) discovered the important role played by small group interaction in helping students develop learning strategies. Few cases of researches, however, have considered the effectiveness of learning strategies such as brainstorming in the teaching of productive skills such as writing.

Osborn (as cited in Isaksen, 1998) felt that the evaluative orientation of meetings and group discussions hinders the creative productivity of the members. He believed that judgment of ideas in

such a condition is like driving a car while the driver or somebody else brakes on. He designed the brainstorming session as a creative conference for the sole purpose of producing a checklist of ideas which can subsequently be evaluated and processed. According to Isaksen's (1998) study, brainstorming was identified as only one of a variety of tools for generating ideas; and idea generation was outlined as only one aspect of the entire creative problem-solving process. Group brainstorming was suggested as a supplement to individual ideation, not a replacement.

Sutton and Hargadon's research (as cited in Isaksen, 1998) showed that working in real brainstorming groups contributes the learners to enhance their ability to do competent work in the future. They believed that having experience encourages the participants to be more active and contributes to their growth and personal well-being. The main goal of this research is to help language teachers and learners to develop speaking skill, so the quality of ideas about the selected subject is not important. For the learners the more the quantity of ideas the better they have the occasion of speaking. Isaksen (1998) stated that quality is apart from quantity. He believes that average quality of ideas generated by brainstorming groups would be lower than non-brainstorming groups. So brainstorming groups generate more ideas which is the goal of language learners and teachers in developing speaking skill. Isaksen (1998) reviewed 50 studies from 1958-1988 and evaluated the outcomes of these studies. He found that there are 21 different measures that have been utilized in these researches (see table 1). Far and away the most wide-ranging criterion was the quantity of ideas production. According to table 1, quantity as the most pervasive criterion logically encourages the teachers to use brainstorming as an effective tool in speaking skill development.

Table 1. Problems and Tasks Utilized

Problem or Task	Number of Times Used
Thumbs	19
Tiny people	13
Teacher	9
Hanger	9
Tourist	6
Energy	6
Broom	5
Brand names	3

Khodadady, Shirmohammadi and Talebi (2011) explored whether applying brainstorming strategy has a positive effect on Iranians' English speaking proficiency and their critical thinking skill. Twenty male Iranian students enrolled in their speaking. The students were randomly assigned to two control and experimental groups. Brainstorming strategies were employed only in the experimental group. At the end of the course they tested the performance of both groups. The results of the posttest at the end of the course in comparison with pretests showed that the mean scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than that of the control group. So there was a positive relation between brainstorming and speaking skill.

Ibnian (2011) conducted a research to investigate if there is a relationship between brainstorming and essay writing. His study proved that brainstorming technique has a positive effect on developing students' essay writing skill in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, language use and language skills emerged from creative thinking abilities like fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. He found that brainstorming technique enables learners to generate ideas, to interact each other, to exchange ideas and to crystallize their new thoughts about the raised topics which lead to a positive effect on the learners' performance. In addition, the brainstorming technique help the learners to enhances their motivation to get engaged in the learning process and express themselves freely without hesitation in a non-evaluating situation.

Soleimani and Taheri Mahmoodabadi (2013) stated that teaching and learning a foreign language has moved toward task-based approaches. Their investigation showed that task-based learning has become a noteworthy approach in recent years. They also stated that according to some researches (Ellis, 1987; Foster & Skehan, 1996) empirical task-based implementations, of which brainstorming is one, have had a strong effect on language learning, which was in line with conclusion of their study.

In their research, Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013) proved that teaching writing skill by the help of brainstorming technique was more effective and successful than traditional training methods. Mohammad and Hussein (2013) investigated the use of brainstorming as a motivating approach in teaching writing. They found that this method constitutes a motivating and engaging phase in writing process.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Setting

In total, 59 participants were chosen from a population of Iranian undergraduate male students who were studying at Imam Sadeq (PBUH) College in Shiraz, Iran. The type of selection was a non-probability sampling technique where subjects were selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. In all types of research, it would be ideal to test the entire population, but in most cases, the population is very large and it is impossible to include every individual. That is why many researchers prefer this sampling technique because it is fast, inexpensive, easy and the subjects are readily available.

Their age ranged from 20 to 24 years old. The participants' mother tongue was Persian and they were majoring in fields other than English. According to the oral interview, all students were in pre-intermediate level and they were homogenous with regard to speaking level, gender, class situation, living place (dormitory), and their motivation (getting a job at the Navy). In other words, the above mentioned dependent variables were controlled as much as possible in order to manipulate the test variable (speaking proficiency) better. The course in which the present study has been conducted, involved speaking. For this study the students attended classes 3 sessions per week for three months. The samples were divided into two groups: group A, experimental group ($n=30$), consisted of students whose teacher purposely applied brainstorming strategy in discussions related to the speaking course; they brainstormed for about 90 minutes on different interesting topics per session. Group B, control group ($n=29$), consisted of students whose teacher did not use any brainstorming strategy (used traditional methods). None of the students had previous experience in brainstorming.

3.2. Instrument

A placement test interview, designed by Iran Language Institute, and a multiple-choice placement test were administered to evaluate the homogeneity of the students. Also an oral pre- and posttest with standard criteria of scoring speaking, designed by Iran Language Institute was administered to measure the students' present and final speaking ability. Sa'dabadi and Sarkhosh (2014) "A highly valid and reliable proficiency test, $r=.90$, institutionalized by Iran language institute was utilized. It included questions on grammar, vocabulary followed by an interview. It served the purpose of homogenizing the participants in terms of language proficiency at the outset of the study" (p.340). To increase the reliability of the tests scores the researcher in cooperation with an English teacher played the role of interviewers independently. Both of them had an experience in teaching English.

3.3. Procedures

The study made use of a Quasi-Experimental Design. Two classes were chosen randomly from Imam Sadeq (PBUH) College. One class served as the experimental group and the other as the control one. The students of the experimental group received instruction through the proposed technique (brainstorming), whereas students of the control group received instruction through the traditional method. The course in which the present study has been conducted, involved speaking. A proficiency interview test designed by Iran Language Institute was administered and all the participants were interviewed individually to ensure that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of their knowledge of course content and speaking proficiency. A pre-posttest in the form of an oral interview was administered to both groups at the beginning and end of the course in order to assess the participants' speaking proficiency before and after the implementation of the proposed technique on the experimental group. The raters including the researcher in cooperation with an English teacher interviewed the participants and scored them independently to increase the reliability of the tests. The researcher used new interchange book one as a textbook which is usually used in English for international communication courses.

The participants were interviewed individually and their scores were registered as their pre-test scores. Then during a three-month speaking course, participants in the experimental group took part in 32 brainstorming sessions. Each instructional session lasted for 90 minutes and all participants had to attend the class all sessions. In each session, the teacher would employ some topics to perform

brainstorming strategy in order to stimulate students' motivation to verbalize their ideas. To make a brainstorming situation in the class, the teacher would provide the four brainstorming guidelines designed by Osborn (1948) the first person who organized group-thinking sessions. According to Osborn (1948) there are four guidelines to be followed while performing a brainstorming session so that social inhibitions are reduced and verbalizing ideas is facilitated:

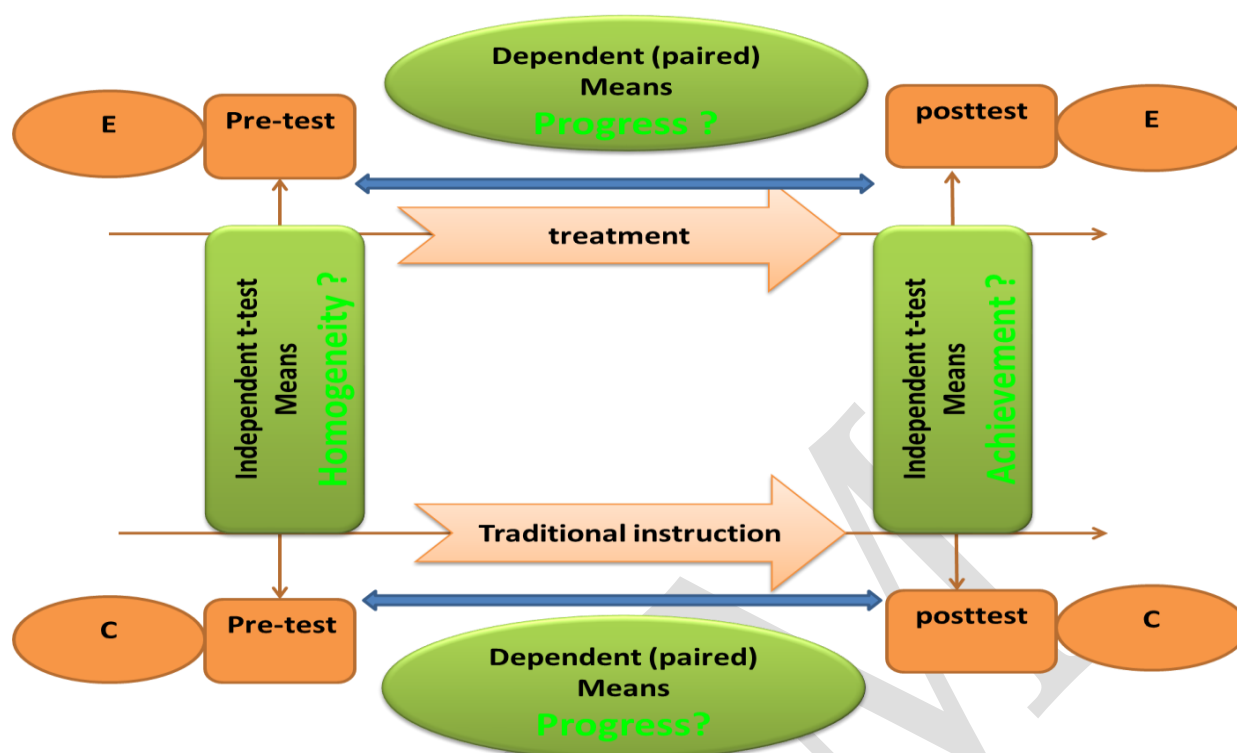
1. The participants should ignore evaluation and judgment.
2. Unusual and strange ideas are wanted.
3. The large numbers of ideas are wanted.
4. Combination and improvement of ideas can be turned into better, more or another ideas.

A training course was held that included the researcher and an EL teacher who implemented the instructional program and who tested and evaluated the participants. The students were asked to generate different ideas about the topic without being judged and evaluated, whereas freewheeling was encouraged and they were asked to combine and improve ideas. After writing all the ideas on the board, the teacher combined the ideas that were similar, then discussed each based on its own merits and finally eliminated those ideas which did not relate to the original topics; of course, the teacher did this process to enhance the participants' motivation to speak as the main goal and not to come up with qualitative ideas.

3.4. Data Analysis

The major source of data was the students' interview scores which were analyzed to answer the research questions. Data from the English speaking skills of the control and experimental groups were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

To answer the research questions and to test the difference in adjusted mean scores between the two groups to find out if they were statistically significant, the researcher administered the speaking skills interview test as a pre-test for both experimental and control groups. The data obtained from pre-tests of both groups were used to run an independent t-test to check if the two groups are homogeneous or not. During the course period both experimental and control groups received conversational instructions (experimental group: instruction of brainstorming strategy as treatment; control group: traditional conversational instruction). At the end of the course another interview test was administered as posttest for both groups. A paired samples test was run using mean scores of pre- and posttest of experimental group to investigate if there is a progress in speaking skill of experimental group. Another paired samples test was run using mean scores of pre- and posttest of control group to investigate if there is a progress in speaking skill of control group. According to the results of the dependent tests the first question was answered. Moreover, an independent samples t-test was run to answer the second question using the means the experimental and control groups' posttest scores. The results showed if there is an achievement due to using brainstorming strategy in experimental group.



3.5. Treatment

The researcher focused on brainstorming strategies related to the purpose for speaking and generating ideas via brainstorming because this strategy has been shown to make a difference in terms of students' speaking quality. To examine the effects of the brainstorming strategies in relation to consideration of the speaking purpose, the participants of this study were trained through brainstorming strategies. The researcher used New Interchange that has been used in this conversation course as the textbook. The instruction of brainstorming strategy used as treatment was given to the participants to think and verbalize any words they might thought of being useful in their interactions.

In this study the applied brainstorming strategy in experimental group was the independent variable and the students' motivation to speak and their performance level in speaking was the dependent variable. The main purpose of this study was to assess if the independent variable has any effect on students' speaking proficiency. The participants in the experimental group participated enthusiastically in the classroom discussion and they were very positive about the classroom situation; even the shy students had a positive outlook even if they were just listening and were not speaking. Of course, the teacher had to select a topic about which the participants had background knowledge.

At the same time, the control group received traditional conversational instructions. In other words, in the control group no brainstorming strategy was employed. At the end of the course the samples in both groups were interviewed individually and their speaking skill was assessed by averaging the scores given by the two interviewers. Finally, the researcher provided a pre-test and a post-test score for every student to analyze if there was any significant change in the experimental group's speaking ability.

4. RESULTS

The results of both pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the independent sample t-test. A t-test was run using the total score of the students of the two groups on ILI (Iran Language Institute) oral interview to conform to course objectives.

The statistical parameters of mean, standard deviation, maximum, minimum as well as trainees' numbers for both pretest and posttest variables for training brainstorming strategy are depicted in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre-test of control group	29	7.00	16.50	11.2759	2.08988
post-test of control group	29	6.00	17.50	12.8017	2.51990
pre-test of experimental group	30	5.00	18.00	11.1083	2.66740
post-test of experimental group	30	9.75	20.00	15.0500	2.54138
Valid N (listwise)	29				

As indicated in the above Table, the means of pretests show close results, however, the means of posttests show differences between groups. The values of mean and standard deviation for pre-test scores in control group for student's speaking proficiency level are 11.28 and 2.09, respectively. In another example, the mean and Std. values of posttest scores in control group for trainee's speaking skill are 12.80 and 2.52, respectively. Those results indicate that there is not any significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the student's speaking proficiency level in control group. However the mean of the pre-test for experimental group's speaking proficiency level is lower than the mean of the posttest in this group, as can be seen, there is a significant difference between the pretest scores of experimental trainee's speaking skill (i.e. 11.11) and their posttest scores (i.e. 15.05). Moreover, another significant difference is observed between the posttest scores of student's speaking skills in control group (12.80) and experimental group (15.05).

Comparing the two sets of statistics generally and considering the mean of their total score for both pretest and posttest particularly, it can be inferred that the participants have shown overall improvement in their performance. It can be concluded that the training variable of brainstorming strategy has an obvious and great effect on the trainee's speaking performance. Regarding the first research question, it can be claimed that the use of brainstorming techniques has been effective in improving students' performance in speaking skill.

As Table 2 shows, after the participants in the experimental group received instruction, the researcher implemented the same interview to the experimental group as posttest. The mean scores of the post-test for the experimental group were 15.05. Thus the second null-hypothesis as brainstorming strategy will not bring about a significant difference in mean scores of control and experimental groups on pre and post oral interview test, was rejected. To determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores, a Paired sample t- test was conducted. Table 6 represents the results.

Table 3. Group Statistics

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pre-tests of both groups	control group	29	11.2759	2.08988	.38808
	experimental group	30	11.1083	2.66740	.48700
post-test of both groups	control group	29	12.8017	2.51990	.46793
	experimental group	30	15.0500	2.54138	.46399

The data analysis of the pre-test and posttest were summarized in table 3 and that of t-test is presented in table 4. The homogeneity of the two groups was confirmed at (.05) significance level. As the table 3 reveals, there is no significant difference between the pre-test score means of both control and experimental groups: the mean of the control group was 11.28 and that of the experimental group was 11.11. According to table 3, the posttest mean score of the experimental group came out to be 15.05 and higher than that of the control group (12.81). Moreover, the skewness ratios fell within the acceptable range signifying that score distribution in both groups represented normality.

In order to test the null hypothesis of the study, an independent samples t-test was legitimately run to compare the mean scores of control and experimental groups. Table 4 shows the results of the

independent samples t-test run on the pre-posttest mean scores of the two groups. Table 4 shows that the difference was not significant at (0.05) significance level ($p>.05$). It confirms the homogeneity of the groups.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
pre-tests of both groups	Equal variances assumed	1.445	.234	.268	57	.790**	.16753	.62529	-1.08459	1.41965
	Equal variances not assumed			.269	54.686	.789	.16753	.62272	-1.08058	1.41564
post-test of both groups	Equal variances assumed	.008	.927	-3.411	57	.001**	-2.24828	.65907	-3.56805	-.92851
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.412	56.961	.001	-2.24828	.65898	-3.56787	-.92868

** $P<0.05$

The second hypothesis was tested through independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test. As table 4 shows, according to the findings and on the basis of calculation of sample t-test, observed value of 2-tailed statistic for the experimental group and the control group was less than the alpha level of .05. So it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their performance on the posttest. Also, observed value of 2-tailed test for the experimental group in pre-test and posttest was less than the alpha level of .05. It can be, therefore, concluded that there was a significant difference between performances of the experimental group from pre-test to posttest. Reviewing these findings it can be concluded that the experimental group outperformed both in comparison to its' own pretest and in comparison to the control group's posttest. Since all the variables were constant and groups were homogeneous; it can be inferred that the higher performance of the experimental group is the result of employing brainstorming strategy in experimental group. The null hypothesis, thus, was rejected.

As displayed in table 4, with f-value of 0.008 and the p-value of 0.927 being larger than 0.05, the variances between the two groups were not significantly different, and thus the homogeneity of variances was assumed. Therefore, the results of the t-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances ($t = -3.411$, $df = 57$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$, 2-tailed) indicated that there was a significant difference between control and experimental groups' mean scores on the speaking proficiency posttest, thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Comparing the mean scores of the control and experimental groups (12.81 and 15.05 respectively) the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in speaking. Therefore, it can be concluded that using brainstorming strategy did have statistically a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency. In other words there is a significant difference between the groups at a $=0.05$ significance level. Therefore, using brainstorming strategy seems to have a significant role in the development of the students' speaking skill.

According to the following table, it could be concluded that the two groups were almost equivalent in their speaking skills. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of both groups, thus, any later significant change in students' speaking proficiency will be due to the effect of the implementation of the brainstorming techniques.

Table 5. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre-test of control group	11.2759	29	2.08988	.38808
	post-test of control group	12.8017	29	2.51990	.46793
Pair 2	pre-test of experimental group	11.1083	30	2.66740	.48700
	post-test of experimental group	15.0500	30	2.54138	.46399

As table 4 indicates, there is a difference between the means of the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group and this difference shows that the treatment has been beneficial, while such a difference for mean scores of pre-test and posttest in the control group is very small. Table 4 also indicates the descriptive statistics for the total post-test results for the control and experimental groups respectively. As the descriptive statistics indicate, there was a small variance among the subjects in the control group (2.51990) compared to the experimental group (2.54138). The statistical characteristics and the results of paired T-test have been shown in table 6.

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre-test of control group - post-test of control group	-1.52586	2.26911	.42136	-2.38899	-.66274	-3.621	28	.001**
Pair 2	pre-test of experimental group - post-test of experimental group	-3.94167	2.01469	.36783	-4.69396	-3.18937	-10.716	29	.000**

** $p < 0.05$

In the above table, adjusted means for dependent variable is presented. In fact, the effect of random variables has been statistically removed and the means in question indicate that the means of the experimental group have been placed at a higher level, compared to the control group.

As the results of the paired T-test indicate, there is a difference between the means of the pre-test and post-test results of the variable in the experimental group and the difference is significant at the level 0.001. Such a significant difference in experimental group between the pre and posttest is beneficial, while such a difference in the control group is not significant. As a result, it should be pointed out that improvement in the test scores in the experimental group is apparent. In other words a significant difference was observed between the pre and post test scores of the experimental group, i.e. ($t(29) = -10.716$, $p = .000 < .05$). Thus the first null-hypothesis as brainstorming does not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill was rejected.

5. Discussion

Based on the quantitative analysis, results of the study did not support the hypotheses presented by the researcher, indicating that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the EFL learners in terms of their speaking performance in the experimental group and the experimental group performed much better on the post-test than the control group in which the

traditional instructional techniques have been used. Based on the results shown above, all null hypotheses were rejected. To put it simply, the results showed improvement in EFL learners speaking ability among the members of the experimental group and consequently the technique was found effective. In other words, brainstorming has played a significant role in the development of speaking skill of the students in the experimental group.

5.1. The first research hypothesis

The first hypothesis claiming that brainstorming does not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' progress in speaking has been examined in this research. According to table 2 and 3 it can be concluded that brainstorming techniques has been effective in progressing students' performance in speaking skill. Statistically, considering the mean of both control and experimental groups total score for both pre- and posttest, it can be concluded that there has been an overall improvement in their performance. It can also be inferred that the experimental group had a better progress than control group, as the posttest mean score of this group is higher than that of control group.

5.2. The second research hypothesis

The second hypothesis claiming that brainstorming does not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' achievement in speaking was rejected, as the analysis of posttest results show that the obtained p value (0.008) is less than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) and therefore, there is a significant difference between the groups at a $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. In other words brainstorming strategy has played a significant role in the achievement of speaking skill of EFL learners.

When the qualitative part of the study was examined, group members were more willing to speak. In the qualitative part, experimental group members were more motivated at each discussion process, even the shy students, at least, were willing to listen carefully to what their classmates in discussion process expressed which increases their motivation more than control group members. Thus, if one student cannot show a good performance, it doesn't mean that brainstorming does not have a positive effect on their performance. In other words, the presence of the student in the brainstorming based discussion environment will at least enhance his/her performance in listening skill.

The researcher believes that the use of the brainstorming technique highly contributed to enable learners generate ideas, exchange opinions and crystallize new thoughts about the raised topics, a fact that positively affected their performance on the post-interview test.

In addition, using the brainstorming technique motivated EFL learners to get involved in the learning process and express themselves freely without hesitation, since the instructor, according to Osborn's (1991) guidelines, told them that their ideas will not be judged during the brainstorming session, thus they felt free while generating their ideas and came up with unique and unexpected thoughts.

5.3. The third research hypothesis

The third hypothesis that applying brainstorming strategy will not bring about a significant difference in mean scores of control and experimental groups on pre and post oral interview test was rejected in this research. Table 2, 3 and 5 show that there is a statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the two adjusted means of the students' scores due to the teaching procedure in favor of the experimental group.

The program included various speaking activities, exercises and instructions which focused on the process rather than the product. In addition the activities were purposeful and the tasks were emphasized on communication and meaning. The students also learned English by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in meaningful activities and tasks were either those that the students need to achieve in real life, or those that had a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom.

Students were able to understand questions, interact fluently and give extended answers in the designed tasks and activities. This process enhanced students' fluency. Students were also able to use correct complex language structures and they used rich vocabulary and pronounced correctly. This enhanced their accuracy. In addition, the students had ample opportunities to express their opinions and ideas that were related to the designed brainstorming topic. Of course the positive attitude of the teacher who implemented the program towards brainstorming strategy also played an important role in developing the students' speaking skills.

6. Conclusion

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the findings and theoretical propositions of the related literature:

1. Brainstorming improves students' speaking skill and develops students' attitudes towards learning English and enhances their achievement to speaking proficiency.
2. Brainstorming is an important factor in improving speaking that activates background knowledge which students bring with them and helps them to perform the speaking task more successfully. This knowledge helps the learners to match new information with what they already know about the topic leading them to get more ideas, more confidence and thus willing to express these ideas orally.

Based upon the findings of this study, it is recommended that English language instructors should be encouraged to use brainstorming strategy in teaching speaking skill. It is recommended that teachers design some of the contents of textbooks they use according to brainstorming procedures and principles. By doing so, they can vary their teaching procedures, and as a result, their students will be more interested in learning English as a foreign language. Regarding speaking tasks, they should be designed or chosen to provide opportunities for students to transform their ideas and knowledge, the process in which verbalizing knowledge can develop their speaking skills

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PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT FROM SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY: A CASE OF IRANIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted among 279 Iranian EFL teachers working in language centers or universities. The purpose of the study was to examine the possible relations between burnout and social comparison. To investigate the relationship, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) along with a new version of Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) were used. To find the relationship between burnout and social comparison tendencies with respect to teachers' job experience, and level of education, the data underwent Spearman Rank Order Correlation tests and Phi and Cramers' V Tests. The findings of the study suggested a small correlation between the two variables and a strong positive relationship between burnout, years of teaching and level of education. It can be concluded that social comparison as a common phenomena in workplaces cannot be expected to be among the causes of burnout.

Keywords: Social comparison; Burnout; EFL teachers; Level of education; Years of teaching

1. Introduction

Any society needs a teacher with high levels of education and also high levels of patience and mental health. In fact fresh teachers and those teachers experiencing interest and enjoyment in their jobs can accelerate the teaching process and increase students' motivation at the same time, this is while the existence of burnout can negatively influence the amount of interest and enjoyment teachers experience. Burnout as a social phenomenon can be found in different occupations, especially jobs needing high amount of interaction with people. This is while teachers need to interact with not only the students who are in direct relation with them but also supervisors, parents, and colleagues during a long time. Maslach and Jackson (1982) emphasized the very fact that the phenomenon of burnout which starts with the intense interaction in working with people has been of great importance in different human service occupations such as health and mental care professions. Jennet, Harris, and Mesibov (2003) studied the social phenomenon of burnout from the same perspective and mentioned that burnout is the result of long term occupational stress especially among human service workers, including teachers. In this study, the researcher is focusing on the relationship between social comparison tendencies and burnout.

Burnout happens in social interactions influencing one's sense of identity and self-worth and in this regard social comparison tendencies of teachers- upward or downward- might influence the occurrence of burnout syndrome. In this regard teachers who are in permanent interaction with

students, parents, supervisors, and colleagues are indispensable of the comparison that occurs among them. Greenberg, Ashton-James, and Ashkanasy (2007), suggested that social comparison processes are rooted in most social interactions especially in organizational life. The researchers also focused on six topics of interests to organizational psychologist, one of which is stress. Therefore, social comparison processes might be related to burnout, as the development and persistence of burnout lays mainly in the context of the working environment, a domain where social comparison is a quite common phenomenon (Brenninkmeijer 2002).

2. Review

Maslach (2003), described burnout by three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and sense of inefficacy. These three dimensions are also defined by different researchers. Schwab (1983) outlined emotional exhaustion as a prominent feature of burnout syndrome. The researcher also argued that intensive interaction on a prolonged basis will lead to the emotional drain of teachers and teachers cannot act as they did earlier in their jobs. Jennet, Harris and Mesibov (2003) specified emotional exhaustion as a condition in which teachers' emotional resources are low and they experience the feeling that they are no longer able to give psychologically of themselves. As the second dimension of burnout syndrome, cynicism also called depersonalization points to a condition in which teachers seclude themselves from the students and different aspects of the job (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Regarding cynicism, Jennette, Harris and Mesibove (2003) presumed that teachers experience negative, cynical, indifferent attitudes and feelings about their students. Schwab (1983) also expounded depersonalization as the condition in which teachers flourish negative cynical attitudes toward their students and can impart these attitudes in ways such as using derogatory labels. E.M. Skaalvik and S. Skaalvik (2009) believed that these feeling of cynicism might also occur in relation to colleagues. The third aspect of the burnout syndrome is called the sense of inefficacy. Schaufeli and Greenglass (2001) offered the third aspect of burnout as 'reduced personal accomplishment' which in his words refers to a decrease in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's job. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) expressed that the components of reduced efficacy or accomplishment represent the self evaluation dimension. Schwab (1983), E.M. Skaalvik and S. Skaalvik (2009) defined the third aspect of burnout as a condition in which the teachers lose their feelings of accomplishment and recognize themselves as no longer making a meaningful contribution through their work and make negative evaluation of themselves.

Therefore, in this study burnout is going to be studied according to its three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and sense of inefficacy which are present in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Burnout and its three dimensions are going to be studied in relation to social comparison tendencies. This is the case while it was mentioned earlier that burnout as a social phenomena might be influenced by social comparison which is a social process itself and has two different directions.

Festinger (1954) as a pioneering in social comparison generated a considerable amount of research regarding the ways in which people collect information and use the gathered information in evaluating their abilities and opinions. From Festinger's original view on social comparison, individuals ability to evaluate their standing on a performance dimension related to others, can be achieved. In addition Festinger (1954) proposed social comparison as a crucial source of knowledge about oneself. Festinger (1954) also uttered that people evaluate their abilities by comparing their own characteristics, fortunes, and weaknesses to those of others and in this regard social comparison as an influencing mechanism of comparison between the self and others can affect people's judgment, experience, and behavior. According to different studies of social comparison, (e.g; wood, 1989; Taylor & Lobel, 1989) individuals try to compare themselves with objective, nonsocial standards, however in many situations where these standards are missing, individuals will be tempt to make social comparison. Buunk (1994) also mentioned that social comparison has improved knowledge about the stress coping ways.

Anderson (1980) studied the relationship between aspects of burnout and perceived needs deficiencies among 459 classroom teachers in Connecticut. Need deficiency is the difference between what the organization should do to foster the needs of individuals such as physiological, security, society, esteem and self actualization and what the organization is actually doing. Findings of the study suggested that feelings of burnout are more common among teachers whose organization did not enhance self actualization and esteem needs (Schwab, 1983).

McIntyre (1981) scrutinized the relationship between teachers' locus of control and aspects of burnout among 469 special educators. The study was conducted in Connecticut and Massachusetts. According to locus of control the teachers were divided into two groups of internally and externally oriented. Externally oriented teachers believed in luck, fate, chance, or powerful others and felt that these can control the events. The results of the study indicated more feelings of burnout among teachers that were externally oriented (Schwab, 1983).

Schawb and Iwanicki (1982b) and Crane (1981) examined the three aspects of burnout and their relation with role conflict, role ambiguity. Schawb and Iwanicki (1982b) considered the perceptions of 469 randomly selected teachers from Massachusetts. Crane (1981) studied 443 special education teachers who were from eight central cities in Connecticut. The findings of the study suggested that role conflict and role ambiguity explained a statistically significant amount of variance in feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Schwab, 1981).

Schawb and Iwanicki (1982a) perused 469 randomly selected Massachusetts teachers. The findings of the study demonstrated a relationship between certain personal and background variables with the levels of burnout. Teachers were classified according to different variables. There was no significant difference in teachers' feelings of burnout where they were classified according to their marital status, the place they had worked-urban, suburban, rural-, their degree and the number of years they had taught. In contrast, there was a difference when they were classified according to their sex, level taught and age. The study took into account the three aspects of burnout and indicated that sex and grade level taught were related to teachers' feelings of depersonalization. Male teachers indicated more negative attitudes toward their students while this was lower among female teachers. High school and middle school/junior school teachers also showed more negative attitudes toward their students than elementary school teachers. The relation between grade level taught and feelings of personal accomplishment proposed more frequent feelings of accomplishment among Elementary teachers than high school teachers.

Russel, Altmaier and Velzen (1987) examined burnout among teachers and considered the effect of job related, stressful events and social support. The researchers studied 600 public school teachers in Iowa and used a questionnaire to find the results. The researchers found that teachers who reported receiving positive feedback concerning their skills and abilities and those having supportive supervisors were less vulnerable to burnout.

Friesen and Sarros (1989) scrutinized the sources of burnout among 128 school based administrators and 635 teachers using questionnaires. The study was conducted to explore the nature of burnout among school-based educators and to find its sources. The study also aimed to assist the development of conceptual model toward explaining burnout and work variable relation. The findings of the study suggested a positive correlation between work stress and burnout and also indicated that work load contributes to both stress and burnout.

Mazur and Lynch (1989) considered differential impact of administrative, organizational, and personality factors on teachers' burnout. The study was conducted with the participation of 200 public high school teachers and suggested that leadership style was not an important predictor of teacher burnout, while organizational stress factors and personality characteristics were significant causes of burnout.

Friedman and Farber (1992) perused professional self-concept as a predictor of teacher burnout with the goal of investigating the relationship of teacher burnout with the different ways that teachers view themselves professionally and how others view them within the same educational systems. 641 teachers were the participants of the study. Results of the study indicated a strong negative correlation between professional satisfaction and burnout. It also demonstrated that the stronger correlations to burnout were viewed in how teachers perceived themselves rather than how they felt that others perceive them. The study suggested that, if teachers give themselves credit for even partial educational success, they can avoid burnout.

Cheuk and Wong (1995) examined 80 in service teachers enrolled in a teacher refresher program that was conducted at the university of Macau using a questionnaire that contained the variables of interest to study the relationship between job-related difficulties and burnout and the effect of social support on burnout. The results of the study also proposed a strong relationship among difficulties with fellow teachers, supervisors, students, and parents with burnout.

Burke, Greenglass, and Schwarzer (1996) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate antecedents and consequences of psychological burnout. The 362 participant completed questionnaires and the

findings indicated that antecedents encompassed red tape, disruptive students and lack of supervisor support. The study also demonstrated heart symptoms and depressive mood as the consequences of burnout.

In the study of Brouwers and Tomic (1998) the direction and time frame of relationships between perceived self efficacy in classroom management and three dimensions of burnout was examined. The participants of the study were 243 secondary school teachers. The analysis of the results recommended a longitudinal effect of self-efficacy on depersonalization and a synchronous effect on personal accomplishment, but the time frame was synchronous for the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion.

Evers, Brouwers, and Tomic (2002) studied 490 randomly selected teachers and conducted the study using three different questionnaires measuring burnout, self-efficacy and teachers attitudes regarding the effectiveness of the study-home as an educational innovation. Study-home is a student centered approach in which the aim is to train independent and responsible students who can take the responsibility of their own academic achievement. Findings of the study demonstrated that self efficacy beliefs for each of the three domains were related to depersonalization and exhaustion in a significantly negative way and the three domains were significantly positively related to the personal accomplishment. It was also found that teachers, who had more negative attitudes toward the study-home system, suffered more from depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion.

Micinov (2005) conducted two cross-sectional studies with two groups of 72 and 100 police officers. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship among social comparison directions, occupational burnout, health complaints, and job burnout. Perceived control was low among those who compared themselves to worse-off employers while few health complaints, little emotional exhaustion, and higher level of perceived control was the result of frequent up-ward comparison.

Greenberg, Ashton-James, and Ashkansy (2007) examined the role of social comparison processes in organizations. The researchers considered six areas of organizational inquiry in which stress also included. The researchers suggested that the degree to which assessment of resources can occur objectively due to the absence of comparative information, influence the extent to which social comparisons are involved. It was also found that there is a relation between up-ward comparison and stress. On the other hand, comparison with an identified individual, raise the confidence as the person tries to relate himself to better ones, therefore there is a reduction in stress level. By contrast, there is an increase of stress among those who use down-ward comparison and this is due to the fact that they feel less qualified. People making up-ward comparison might also make their decisions based on their perceived capacities, the result of which is experiencing stress. Using down-ward comparison which leads to under evaluation of one's capabilities might cause stress at first but accomplishing a task results in reduction of stress level. As a conclusion, the researchers focus on the temporary nature of stress-relieving or stress-inducing effects of engaging in social comparisons.

E.M.Skaalvik and S.Skaalvik (2007) examined the relationship among teacher self-efficacy, perceived Collective teacher efficacy, external control, strain factors and teacher burnout. 244 elementary and middle school teachers participated in this study. Teacher efficacy was found as a multidimensional construct including six separate but correlated dimensions of self-efficacy, including instruction, adapting education to individual students 'needs', motivating students, keeping discipline, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and coping with changes and challenges. In this study teacher self-efficacy was separated from perceived collective teacher efficacy and external control. It was determined that teacher self-efficacy was strongly related to collective teacher efficacy and teacher burnout.

E.M.Skaalvik and S.Skaalvik (2009) examined 2249 Norwegian Elementary and middle school teachers to explore the relationship between teachers' perception of the school context, teacher self-efficacy, collective teacher-efficacy, teacher burnout, teacher job satisfaction, and teachers' beliefs that factors external to teaching puts limitations to what they can accomplish. The findings of the study viewed that the variables of teacher self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and two dimensions of burnout were differently related, both to school context variables and to job satisfaction.

Mukundan and Khandehroo (2010) studied burnout and its relation with demographics of age and workload among 184 randomly selected teachers in Malaysia, using MBI. Findings of this study demonstrated high levels of burnout in all dimensions. Emotional exhaustion was found higher among younger groups of teachers-aged below 25- while older ones -aged above 45- demonstrated high levels of depersonalization. Feelings of reduced accomplishment were low in both groups. The

groups of teachers aged 26 to 45 were more vulnerable to both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while they were less vulnerable to reduced personal accomplishment. Regarding workload emotional exhaustion was high among teachers with more than ten hours workload per week and Teachers with less than thirty hours workload per week were faced more with depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.

As becomes clear, majority to all existing studies involved investigation of the role of personal attributes such as teachers' sense of efficacy, teaching style, and emotional intelligence in teachers' burnout. There are none/ few, however, that report how pressures from contexts, such as this research context, which persuade competition, and hence comparison of various types might impose unwanted comparisons and change the results for teachers with different characteristics.

3. Materials and Methods

This section deals with the research methodology used to collect the desired data to meet the objectives of the study. It discusses the participants, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and the method of data analysis used to answer the research questions.

3.1. Participants

The research venues were language centers and universities. The online participants were from different cities of Iran while the offline participants were working in language centers of Northern Province of Iran (Guilan). The study examined data from three groups of teachers which were chosen by convenience sampling. Group one and two were teachers from Guilan language centers and universities but group three included teachers from Guilan Province and different cities of Iran ($n=170$, 109 respectively). The first group was 30 teachers (25 female, 5 male) who answered the preliminary version of the questionnaire for checking the reliability of the instrument. The second group included 30 teachers (25 female, 5 male) who participated in an interview discussing the results of the study. The third group of teachers consisted of 279 teachers, 209 female and 70 male answered the final version of the questionnaire for the formal study. In general 279 answers were received from teachers. Among the received questionnaires, 209 were filled by female teachers. This was equal to (74.9%) of the total sample. It means that, the majority of the participants were female. There were also ($N=70$) male participants that included (25.1%) of the whole participants. the total participants of the study were classified into three groups according their level of education. The greater number of the participants had MA. Degree ($N=151$). This included (54.1%) of the total group. In the second place, the number of the participants with BA. Degree ($N=119$) was higher than the participants with Ph.D. Degree ($N=9$). The 279 participants of the study were also categorized into four groups according to their age. There were ($N=10$) participants whose age was lower than 20 years old. This was equal to (3.6%) of the total sample. Moreover, the majority of the participants ($N=172$) were within the range of 20 to 30 years old that was about (61.6%) of the total sample. There were also ($N=80$) participants who were within the range of 30 to 40 years old that 3 included (29.4%) of the whole participants. The last group comprising of ($N=15$) participants were in the area of higher than 40 years old that equaled to (5.4%) of the total participants. The participants were also grouped according to their years of teaching experience. In so doing, the total participants of the study were classified into four groups. There were ($N=57$) participants who had teaching experience lower than two years. This was equal to (20.4%) of the total sample. There were also ($N=88$) participants who had teaching experience between two to five years that included (31.5%) of the whole participants. Moreover, greater number of the participants ($N=96$) had taught English for five to ten years that was about (34.4%) of the total sample. The last group comprising of ($N=38$) participants were in the area of higher than 10 years teaching English that equaled to (13.6%) of the total participants. Finally, the participants were classified with respect to the centers they taught English in. Concerning the centers and institutes they taught English, the participants were divided into three subgroups including language centers, universities, or both language centers and universities. In this regard, the major proportion of the teachers ($N=235$) had the experience of teaching English just at language centers that amounted to (84.2%) of the total sample. Furthermore, simply ($N=4$) of the teachers reported that they had the experience of teaching English at universities (1.4%). Additionally, there were ($N=40$) who had the experience of teaching English at both language centers and universities.

Table 3.1.1
Demographic data

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	209	74.9
	Male	70	25.1
	Total	279	100.0
Valid	BA	119	42.7
	MA	151	54.1
	Ph.D.	9	3.2
	Total	279	100.0
Valid	<20	10	3.6
	20-30	172	61.6
	30-40	82	29.4
	>40	15	5.4
	Total	279	100.0
Valid	<2	57	20.4
	2-5	88	31.5
	5-10	96	34.4
	>10	38	13.6
	Total	279	100.0
Valid	Language Centers	235	84.2
	Universities	4	1.4
	Both	40	14.3
	Total	279	100.0

3.2. Instrument

The applied questionnaire consisted of three parts-46 questions, each part focusing on one of the three variables of the study, burnout, social comparison tendencies, and instructional self efficacy. To measure the burnout level of the teachers the Maslach Burnout inventory was used. The scale is a 22-item self-report instrument described in the literature as “the most widely used operationalization to burnout” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The questionnaire encompasses three subscales of Emotional Exhaustion with nine items, Depersonalization with five items, and Personal Accomplishment with eight items. MBI describes burnout syndrome in terms of (a) high levels of Emotional Exhaustion, (b) high levels of Depersonalization, (c) reduced Personal Accomplishment. The second part of the questionnaire number 22 to 37 included questions of INCOM scale. The Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) comprises 11 core items created by Gibbons and Buunk (1999). 6 of the questions were changed to measure the tendencies of social comparison called upward or downward based on the basis of experts’ comments and revision. The last part of the questionnaire included 9 items to measure instructional self-efficacy. In this part Bandura’s instrument of teacher self-efficacy scale (1977) was used. The 46 items were incorporated into a closed 5-likert scale questionnaire (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly disagree). In addition to the 46 items, the scale required the participants to provide the following demographic information: gender, level of education, age, years of teaching experience, and centers they taught English. Although all items were rated as appropriate by experts, a pilot test was also conducted with 30 teachers from Guilan language centers and universities for additional feedback on the clarity of the items. These teachers provided feedback on the clarity, understanding, and perceived relevance of the items. To describe the reliability and internal consistency of items Cronbach’s Alpha (1951) was used. The value of reliability was explained according to the reliability standards suggested by Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott (1994). The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for the

questionnaire was (.807) that was good indicating that the instrument could be considered as the reliable tool for the main study.

Table 3.2.1
Suggested Standards for the Reliability Index (Adopted From Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott, 1994)

Interpretation	Reliability indices
Good	.80
Acceptable	.70
Marginal	.60
Poor	.50

Table 3.2.2
Reliability Statistics for the burnout Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
burnout questionnaire	37

The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 279 teachers who participated in the study. The questionnaire was developed in two forms, paper and web-based. The online version was accompanied by a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the rights of research participants, as well as information concerning participation. All participants were briefed on the procedures and the option they had -- they could withdraw from this research at any time if they wished to. The paper version of the questionnaire was administered by the researcher herself to clarify the instructions for teachers to complete the questionnaire and they were ensured of anonymity of their responses. Teachers were asked to indicate their responses according to their working experiences and feelings they have toward their job.

3.3. Analysis

Having gathered the necessary data, the researcher took several steps to analyze the data, reach the goals of the study, and find the answers to the posed questions.

To provide answer to the first research question "What is the relationship between burnout, and teachers' social comparison tendencies?" Spearman Rank Order Correlation tests were performed using SPSS 22 to answer the first research question and find the possible correlations between burnout, teachers' social comparison tendencies, and instructional self-efficacy. The second research question "Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout, and social comparison tendencies, with respect to teachers' job experience, gender, and level of education?" was examined by Phi and Cramers' V Tests. Phi and Cramers' V Tests were run to the results of different categories of the questionnaire to examine the possible relationship between teachers' burnout, and social comparison tendencies with respect to teachers' job experience, gender, and level of education to provide answer to the second research question.

4. Result

4.1.

RQ1. What is the relationship between burnout, and teachers' social comparison tendencies?

To provide answer to the first research question, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Test first was run to the mean ranks of the total burnout, and teachers' social comparison tendencies, values obtained for the individual teachers. The output generated from this procedure (Spearman results) is presented below.

Table 4.1.1:
Correlation between Total Burnout, and Teachers' Social Comparison Tendencies, Values

	burnout	social comparison upwards downwards tendencies	

Spearman's rho	Burnout	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.269**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		N	279	279	
	social comparison upwards downwards tendencies	Correlation Coefficient	.269**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		N	279	279	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output provided a table giving the correlation coefficient between total burnout, and teachers' social comparison tendencies values, the significance level and the number of cases. For the burnout and social comparison values, Spearman rho value ($\rho = +.269$) was positive, indicating a positive correlation between the total burnout and social comparison values. This value indicated the strength of the relationship between these two variables.

The results of the Spearman Rank Order were interpreted based on Cohen's classification.

Table 4.1.2: Cohen's Guidelines for Interpreting the Results of the Correlation Coefficient

Interpretation	Correlation value
Small	.10 to .29
Medium	.30 to .49
Large	.50 to 1.0

The above guidelines were applied to interpret the (ρ) value. There was a small correlation between burnout and social comparison values ($\rho = .269 \leq .30$), suggesting small relationship between the total burnout and social comparison values.

The possible correlations between two sections of the questionnaire were estimated through calculating pair-wise associations for the mean ranks of burnout, and teachers' social comparison tendencies. The findings were represented in the above matrix. The strength and direction of the association between burnout and teachers' social comparison tendencies were computed. The results of the Spearman's rho showed that the association between the participants' burnout and social comparison values was statistically significant ($P \leq .05$).

4.2.

RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout, and social comparison tendencies with respect to teachers' job experience, and level of education?

4.2.1 The relationship between teachers' burnout and teachers' job experience

Table 5.2.1:

Chi-Square Tests for Burnout and Years of Teaching

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	527.775	465	.023
N of Valid Cases	279		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for burnout and years of teaching was smaller than (0.05), so it could be concluded that the relationships between these variables were not due to chance variation. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Phi and Cramer's V test was run.

Table 4.2.2:

Symmetric Measures for Burnout and Years of Teaching

Symmetric Measures		
	Value	Approx. Sig.

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.375	.023
	Cramer's V	.794	.023
N of Valid Cases		279	

Based on the results of Phi and Cramer's V, there appeared to be a significant positive association between burnout and years of teaching. The value of Cramer's V came to (.79; sig. (.023) $\leq .05$).

4.2.3 The relationship between teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' job experience

Table 4.2.3:

Chi-Square Tests for Social Comparison Tendencies and Years of Teaching

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	133.528	111	.072
N of Valid Cases	279		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' job experience was higher than (0.05), so it could be concluded that the relationships between these variables were simply due to chance variation. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Phi and Cramer's V test was run.

Table 4.2.4:

Symmetric Measures for Social Comparison Tendencies and Years of Teaching

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.692	.072
	Cramer's V	.399	.072
N of Valid Cases		279	

Based on the results of Phi and Cramer's V, it was found that there was not any significant association between teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' job experience. The value of Cramer's V came to (.399; sig. (.072) $\geq .05$).

4.2.5 The relationship between teachers' burnout and teachers' levels of education

Table 4.2.5:

Chi-Square Tests for Burnout and Level of Education

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	423.563	310	.000
N of Valid Cases	279		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for teachers' burnout and teachers' levels of education was smaller than (0.05), so it could be concluded that the relationships between these variables were not due to chance variation. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Phi and Cramer's V test was run.

Table 4.2.6:

Symmetric Measures for Burnout and Level of Education

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.232	.000
	Cramer's V	.871	.000
N of Valid Cases		279	

Based on the results of Phi and Cramer's V, it was found that there was a significant association between teachers' burnout and teachers' levels of education. The value of Cramer's V came to (.871; sig. (.000) $\leq .05$).

4.2.7 the relationship between teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' levels of education

Table 4.2.7:
Chi-Square Tests for Social Comparison Tendencies and Level of Education

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	82.128	74	.242
N of Valid Cases	279		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' levels of education was higher than (0.05), so it could be concluded that the relationships between these variables were simply due to chance variation. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Phi and Cramer's V test was run.

Table 4.2.8:
Symmetric Measures for Social Comparison Tendencies and Level of Education

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.543	.242
	Cramer's V	.384	.242
N of Valid Cases		279	

Based on the results of Phi and Cramer's V, it was found that there was not any significant association between teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' levels of education. The value of Cramer's V came to (.384; sig. (.242) $\geq .05$).

5. Discussion

This study examines the relationship between burnout and social comparison among EFL teachers in language centers and universities. As Brenninkmeijer (2002), stated social comparison is common phenomenon in working contexts. The results of the current study show that burnout is only correlated to social comparison to a small degree. That is the level of burnout is not related to the way teachers compare themselves or to the frequency of their comparison.

These findings are along with the findings of Greenberg, Ashton-James, and Ashkansy (2007) who declared that the two tendencies of social comparison lead to stress and positive or negative consequences, but the experienced stress is temporarily and does not cause long term problems in organizations. As it was mentioned earlier, burnout is the result of long term occupational stress in workplace (Jennet, Harris, and Mesibov, 2003). Therefore, it can be concluded that the consequences of social comparison such as stress is also temporary among teachers in language centers or universities and cannot be considered as a cause of burnout.

In the second part of the study, the relationship between burnout and social comparison was examined with respect to teachers' job experience and level of education. First the relation between burnout, social comparison and job experience was studied and there appeared to be a significant positive association between burnout and years of teaching, this is while it was found that there was not any significant association between teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' job experience. It is concluded that the more experienced the teachers are the higher is the level of burnout. Secondly, the relation between burnout, social comparison and level of education was studied and it was found that there was a significant association between teachers' burnout and teachers' levels of education but it was found that there was not any significant association between

teachers' social comparison tendencies and teachers' levels of education. It can also be concluded that the teachers with higher levels of education, experience higher levels of burnout.

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MJLTM

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSERTIVENESS AND WRITING ABILITY AMONG IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The current study was an attempt to explore the relationship between the multi-dimensional construct of assertiveness and overall writing ability. One hundred and three lower-intermediate students (33 male and 70 female) from two English language institutes in Nowshahr and Chalous, Iran, were chosen as the main participants of the study after giving Oxford Quick Placement Test to 164 EFL students. They were then asked to fill in the Persian version of a validated self-perception questionnaire developed by Townsend (1991). This questionnaire includes four subscales, namely assertiveness, aggressiveness, submission and passiveness. Based on their scores on the questionnaire, the subjects were categorized into assertive, aggressive, submissive and passive learners. The researcher investigated the correlation between these four personality types and overall writing ability and also different components of writing (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). Students' writing ability was assessed using two free compositions which were scored by two raters based on ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al, 1981). The results of the study pointed toward a significantly positive relationship between four personality types of assertiveness and overall writing ability ($\eta^2 = .648$). The assertive learners had the highest writing ability and the passive learners had the lowest overall writing ability. Moreover, there was a significantly positive relationship between personality types and the five components of writing. Finally, after running independent sample T-tests to the results of writing test scores, it was revealed that there was no significant difference between assertive male and female learners in terms of their overall writing ability.

Keywords: Personality factor, assertiveness, overall writing ability, components of writing ability, Iranian intermediate EFL learners

1. Introduction

There is no doubt that human beings are different from each other in numerous ways. They may exhibit different behaviors depending on what time and situation they are in so we can mark them as distinct social creatures. Likewise, learners as these distinct human beings behave differently as a response to various learning tasks and activities. As stated by Brown (2000), each of them practices a

special type of learning style. For example, some individuals learn better with pictures and illustrations, some learn better with repetition and some others get better results through participation. Dörnyei (2005) defines *individual differences* (IDs) as: "characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other"(p.1).

The focal point in the educational system has always been on the material, changing the curriculum, and transferring of the content but not on the teacher and learners as human beings who have preferences and interests (Bahri, 2003). Educators should know about the research into personality and learner characteristics, in other words, understanding the personality development is critical if the educational system is to meet its obligation to achieve this goal.

Over the past few decades, there has been a burgeoning interest in individual differences and their associations with language learning areas in second language acquisition (SLA) research and it has been discovered that most of the personality factors (motivation, shyness, self-esteem, etc.) do significantly impact on an individual's language production in a variety of contexts. Crozier (1997) argues that individual differences may lead to academic success or failure in the area of foreign or second language learning. This implies that certain personality traits are appropriate for language learning success and some others have a negative impact on language learner's performance. By the same token, this confirms that personality factors are, at least, as important as such factors as intelligence for educational achievement.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Three Styles of Behavior

People react to single situations and across different situations with various mixtures of non-assertiveness, aggressiveness and assertiveness (Nelson-Jones, R., 2006, p.183), which non-assertiveness reveals itself as passive and submissive behavior. Similarly, Hartley, (1999) states that all the assertiveness books define three styles of behavior: assertion, aggression, and submission (or non-assertion). According to Nelson-Jones (2006), "Assertive behavior reflects confidence and respect for both yourself and others."(p. 184). Galassi et al. (1974) declared that assertive people are communicative, free-spirited, secure, self-assured, and able to influence and guide others. As Hartley(1999) puts it, aggression can be defined as "some form of threat which undermines the rights of the other person". According to him, aggressive behavior is "about winning, regardless of other person's feelings" (p. 196). Assertiveness varies from aggressiveness in such a way that assertion definitely does not include any intent to injure, but instead, a positive, purposeful, goal-directed action that serves the healthy function of self-protection (Craig, 1979 as cited in Haswell, Hock & Wenar, 1982). According to Lange & Jakubowski (1976), non-assertive behavior (also called unassertive, passive, and submissive), can be characterized by communicating one's viewpoints and feelings in such an over-apologetic, timid, and self-deprecating fashion, that it leads others to easily ignore or dismiss them. Hartley (1999) claims that submissive behavior "gives in to the demands of others by avoiding conflict and accepting being put upon.

2.2. Advantages of Assertive Behavior

One of the important benefits of assertive behavior is that it is likely to neutralize the anxieties that many people experience in various interpersonal situations. Once individuals try an assertive response, and practice it, there is usually a noticeable reduction in social anxieties. With reduced anxiety in social situations, a person can be less defensive and afford to risk greater openness and honesty in emotional expression. Assertive behavior helps people to be more constructive and confident in dealing with situations and in building positive and effective relationships. As a matter of fact, assertiveness is a crucial and valuable skill that has a power to enhance the social relationships, academic success and personal development. It increases viable options and control over our life and in turn builds up our self-respect.

It is often perceived that some L2 learners, irrespective of their overall language proficiency, fail to deliver a clear and well-argued language production, whether written or spoken. On the contrary, some learners, even with average language knowledge are quite competent in productive skills comparing to their peers. So, the lack of "assertiveness", a personality trait which manifests itself mainly in productive language skills, may be the reason we see variation in the quality of language productions among L2 learners.

2.3. Related Studies

Yong (2010) examined the assertiveness and academic procrastination of English and Communication Skills students at a private university in Malaysia. Overall mean scores showed that (1) business students were less assertive than engineering students, (2) female students were less assertive than male students, and (3) younger students were less assertive than older students. The results of the study also indicated that English and Communication Skills students procrastinated relatively due to indecisiveness, low self-esteem, task aversiveness, laziness, time management problems, perfectionism, and lack of assertion. It was also concluded that students need to show high level of assertiveness as a way to excel in English and Communication Skills. On the other hand, in a study, Omid Oskoui (2004) found a negative relationship between Iranian EFL students' assertiveness and their argumentative speech and also their oral proficiency. Likewise, Rasouli (2008) found that there was no relationship between assertiveness and language achievement. It was also reported that there were no differences among the four groups, namely assertive, aggressive, submissive and passive regarding their average grade on five courses of reading 1 and 2, Conversation 1 and 2, and Grammar and writing 2 and also their grade on each course separately. Foghahaei (2008) revealed a positive and significant correlation (.447) between EI and Iranian EFL learners' course achievement. Also, a positive and moderately significant correlation (.285) existed between assertiveness and course achievement. Similarly, in a study, Abdolreza Pour (2012) came up with the result that introducing emotional intelligence strategy has a significant effect on students' writing ability. TEIQue-ASF test (Petrides, et al., 2006) which was used to assess the students' emotional intelligence before the experiment, gives scores on four factors which assertiveness was one of their sub-factor. In a similar study, Jafari (2013) also found a statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' assertiveness and writing ability. What is more, the results of ANOVA showed that personality behavior groups were significantly different from each other regarding their writing performance. Moreover, it was reported that assertive learners outperformed on writing test.

In spite of the significance of the study in the field of individual differences in language learning, insufficient studies have been carried out to measure assertiveness and language learning areas and too little attention has been paid to show the impact of assertiveness on and its relationship with writing ability. Thus, this study tries to investigate the relationship between the multi-dimensional construct of assertiveness and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing ability and its components (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). The present research also enjoys one more issue, i.e. gender in such a way that if there is any significant difference between Iranian male and female intermediate assertive EFL learners in terms of their writing ability.

2.4. Research Questions

- 1- Is there any significant relationship between personality types and overall writing ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?
- 2- Is there any significant relationship between personality types and components of writing ability (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?
- 3- Is there any significant difference between Iranian male and female intermediate assertive EFL learners in terms of their writing ability?

2.5. Research Hypotheses

- 1- There is no statistically significant relationship between personality types and overall writing ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.
- 2- There is no statistically significant relationship between personality types and components of writing ability (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?
- 3- There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female intermediate assertive EFL learners in terms of their writing ability.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The target participants of the study were 103 Iranian EFL students (70 females and 33 males) with intermediate level of English language proficiency from two prominent English language institutes in Nowshahr and Chalous .i.e., Tabarestan-e Nowshahr and Kish Air. The participants were selected randomly. Both male and female students aged between 15 and 32, with different educational backgrounds took part in this study.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Oxford Quick Placemen Test (QPT)

In the beginning, to ensure that the subjects were homogenous, Oxford Quick Placement Test Version 1 (2001) was administered to 164 EFL subjects. The participants were instructed to mark one letter, A, B, C, or D for each question. Then, based on the results of QPT, 103 intermediate students (33 males, 70 females) were chosen.

3.2.2. Self-perception Questionnaire

The main instrument of the researcher to achieve his objective was self-perception questionnaire which was introduced by Townend (1991) in his book entitled "Developing Assertiveness". Townend (1991) applied this questionnaire in several case studies, especially for managers. The questionnaire was first translated by Ghasemzadeh and Jalali in 1995 and was validated and utilized in a PhD dissertation by Jalali (1995). The questionnaire includes 80 items with 'yes' and 'no' options for respondents. In this questionnaire, the concept of "assertiveness" consists of four sub-scales of assertive, aggressive, submissive, and passive. Each of these sub-scales contains 20 questions that are jumbled up in the questionnaire items. After reading each item, the testee should examine the specific questioned behavior introspectively; if the questioned trait exists in his behavior with high degree of frequency he should answer "yes", otherwise he should choose "no".

3.2.3. Free Compositions

Two free composition tests have been used to evaluate the participants' writing ability. The participants were instructed to write two well organized and developed compositions about two different topics in two separate sessions within a 30 min time period for each of them. To choose the topics, the students were given five writing topics from TOEFL ibt and IELTS writing tasks by the researcher out of which two topics were collectively picked by the students to write about.

3.3. Procedure

At the first step, Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT) which consisted of 60 items was administered to 164 students to determine their language proficiency level. Based on their scores on the OPT, 103 intermediate students were selected as the main subjects of this research. The test lasted up to 50 minutes.

Next, the self-perception questionnaire was strictly translated into Persian by the researcher and also double-checked by the supervisor and then validated in a pilot study with 15 students. The Persian version of the self-perception questionnaire was distributed among 103 participants. After providing a brief instruction about answering the questionnaire, the participants were asked to read and fill in the questionnaire. Each testee was given four scores each of which was linked to one of the four sub-scales. And hence, based on their scores of these four subscales, they were assigned to four different personality groups of assertive, aggressive, submissive, and passive. The sub-scale that received the highest score was considered the dominant behavior of the testee.

The last step aimed to measure the participants' writing ability. Two topics were chosen from TOEFL ibt and IELTS writing tasks which were in the domain of the students' language knowledge. To give an objective assessment of writing and also to protect the reliability and validity of the research, the researcher used the analytic scoring criteria based on ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al, 1981) in which features like content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics were considered. The students' free compositions were scored by two raters including the researcher and one full-fledged academic professor. The inter-rater reliability was gauged. The students' scores were submitted to conduct the statistical procedures. Then the correlations of the assertiveness with the total score of the free compositions and also with each of the four components of writing ability based upon ESL Composition Profile were obtained. Then it was observed whether there is any significant difference between assertive learners' writing ability and gender.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS 22.0 software. The reliability of 80 items of the self-perception questionnaire and also 60 items of QPT was estimated through a pilot study on 15 EFL learners. Cronbach Alpha was performed to the results of the questionnaire and QPT in order to estimate their reliability index.

The participants' free compositions were scored by two different raters who were experienced foreign language teachers. The average score between the two raters for two writing tests was considered as the students' final writing test score. The consistency of the two raters' judgments was tested using Pearson correlation test to examine the inter-rater reliability for the writing test scores.

The assumption of Pearson correlation; namely, normality was examined before running the main statistical analysis. Skewness analysis was employed to examine the normality of the scores.

Summaries of different categories of the questionnaire with the summary of total writing test scores and different components of the writing test were presented to provide the important data.

Measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and measures of dispersion (range, variance, standard deviation) along with measures of distribution (Skewness and Kurtosis) were computed for the main and sub-categories of the questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were calculated for different components of the composition test and overall writing test scores. To answer the first and second research questions, the non-parametric chi-square test together with measure of association, namely Eta were run for participants' total writing scores and also their different components of the writing tests.

Independent sample T-test was utilized for the two independent samples (assertive males and females) to determine whether the values of composition scores differ across gender. Before running this statistical analysis, normality was established for the distributions of the scores.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Findings of the Main Study

4.1.1. The First Research Question

The main participants were divided into four groups including assertive (N=64), aggressive (N=16), submissive (N= 13), and passive (N=10). In order to test the first null hypothesis, the chi- square test was run to the results of the total writing scores of the four groups followed by Eta test.

In The following cross tabulation table, the relationship between personality types and overall writing ability of lower intermediate participants was investigated using Chi- square test followed by Eta test.

Table 4.1:
Chi-Square for the Total Writing Scores of the Participants with Different Personality Types

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	229.404	192	.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.626	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	103		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic (.034) was lower than (.05), so it could be concluded that the relationship between these two variables (personality type and total writing scores) was not due to chance variation, which implied that each participant with specific personality type disclosed different writing proficiency. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Eta test was run to the results of writing test.

Table 4.2:
Eta Test for the Total Writing Scores of the Participants with Different Personality Types

Directional measure			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	total writing scores Dependent	.648

Based on the results of Eta test, there was a significant positive association between types of personality and overall writing test scores (Eta= .648). Thus, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

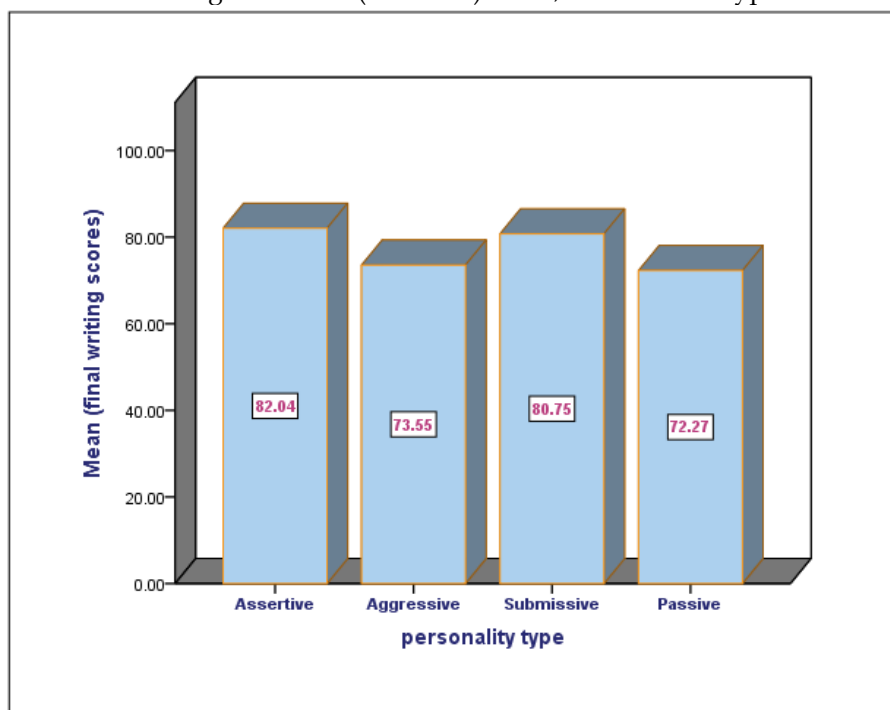


Figure 4.1: The Relationship between EFL Learners' Personality Type and Writing Proficiency

As it is shown by the graph, the participants with high scores in writing test were those who were reported as assertive in self-perception questionnaire (X assertive participants=82.04). On the other hand, passive participants had the lowest mean rank (X passive participants=72.27).

4.1.2. The Second Research Question

For the second research question, the data gathered from the self-perception questionnaire were converted into nominal data (assertive, aggressive, submissive and passive). Then the possible relationship between personality types and five components of the writing test was computed through running chi-square test followed by Eta test to compute the degree of the relationship between the variables. The following table presents descriptive statistics for the five components of the writing test:

Table 4.3:
Descriptive statistics for the Components of the Writing test of the Participants with Different Personality Types

		final content	final organization	final vocabulary	Final language use	final mechanics	Final writing score
N	Valid	64	64	64	64	64	64
Mean	(assertive)	23.64	16.53	17.53	19.42	4.90	82.03
N	Valid	16	16	16	16	16	16
Mean	(aggressive)	21.59	15.18	15.32	17.56	3.87	73.54
N	Valid	13	13	13	13	13	13
Mean	(submissive)	22.07	18.23	17.23	19.09	4.11	80.75
N	Valid	10	10	10	10	10	10
Mean	(passive)	20.20	17.32	16.15	15.40	3.20	72.27

According to the above table, assertive participants scored higher than the other groups ($X_{\text{assertive participants}} = 23.64$) in "content" component of writing. With respect to "organization", submissive participants outperformed other groups ($X_{\text{submissive participants}} = 18.23$). Regarding "vocabulary", the participants with assertive personality type performed better than other groups ($X_{\text{assertive participant}} = 17.53$). In the second place, the submissive group scored higher than passive and aggressive participants did ($X_{\text{submissive participant}} = 17.23$). Concerning "language use", assertive students outperformed the other participants ($X_{\text{assertive participant}} = 19.42$). Submissive participants ranked the second place in this regard ($X_{\text{submissive participant}} = 19.09$). With respect to "mechanics", assertive and submissive participants ranked the first and second place. The means of assertive and submissive participants were (4.90) and (4.11) respectively.

Afterwards, a chi-square test examined the possible relationship between EFL learners' personality type and their performance on different components of the writing test.

Table 4.4:
Chi-Square for the Components of the Writing test of the Participants with Different Personality Types

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square (final content scores)	143.224	102	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.573	1	.000
Pearson Chi-Square (final organization scores)	99.779	66	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.007	1	.025
Pearson Chi-Square (final vocabulary scores)	90.365	66	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.040	1	.008
Pearson Chi-Square (final language use scores)	128.580	78	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.045	1	.000
Pearson Chi-Square (final mechanics scores)	130.472	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	60.492	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	103		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for all of the five components of the writing test was lower than (0.05), so it was safe to say that the relationships between these variables were not due to chance variation, which implied that each participant with specific type of personality disclosed different performance on different components of the writing test. To show the strength and direction of these relationship, Eta test was run the results of which are presented in the following table:

Table 4.5:
Eta test for the Components of the Writing test of the Participants with Different Personality Types

Directional Measures			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	final content Dependent	.494
Nominal by Interval	Eta	final organization Dependent	.480
Nominal by Interval	Eta	final vocabulary Dependent	.483
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Final language use Dependent	.552
Nominal by Interval	Eta	final mechanics Dependent	.828

Based on the results of Eta test, there appeared to be a significant positive association between personality types and the five components of the writing test scores. Thus, the second null hypothesis was rejected.

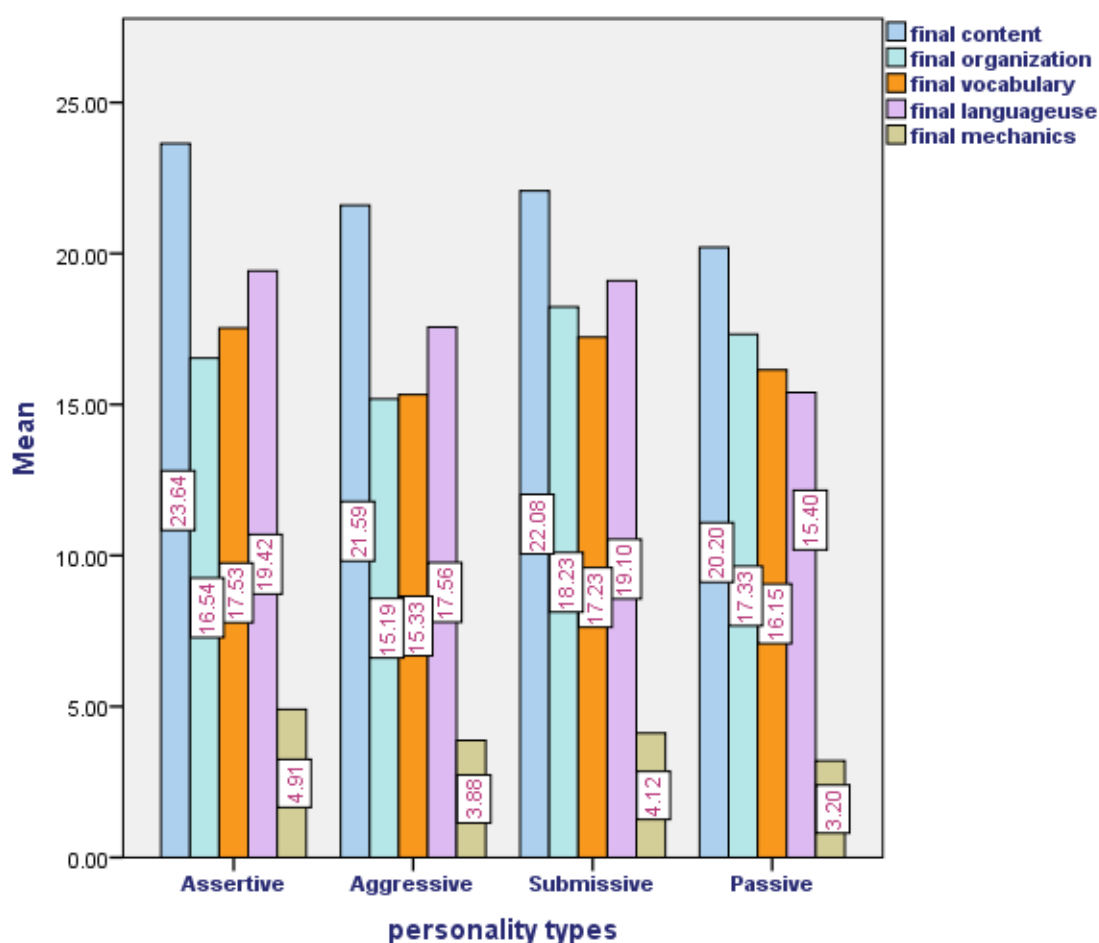


Figure 4.2: The Relationship between EFL Learners' Personality Type and Their Performance on Different Components of the Writing Test

4.1.5. The Third Research Question

To provide answer for the third research question, assertive participants were selected and separate independent samples T- tests were utilized for the results of the overall writing test scores and different components of the writing test of males and females. The results of descriptive statistics are presented in the following table:

Table 4.6:
Descriptive Statistics for the Components of the Writing Test For Assertive Male and Female Participants

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Final content	female	48	23.9688	1.75389	.25315
	male	16	22.6719	1.55113	.38778
Final organization	female	48	16.5938	1.78471	.25760
	male	16	16.3594	1.37831	.34458
Final vocabulary	female	48	17.2604	1.12155	.16188
	male	16	18.3438	1.35976	.33994
Final language use	female	48	19.5521	2.04534	.29522
	male	16	19.0313	.71224	.17806
final mechanics	female	48	4.9271	.32599	.04705
	male	16	4.8438	.43661	.10915
Final writing score	female	48	82.3021	5.13099	.74059
	male	16	81.2500	2.88097	.72024

The above output showed that in general the mean score of female participants was higher than males ($X_{\text{females' total writing score}} = 82.30$; $X_{\text{males' total writing score}} = 81.25$). However, males scored better than females in terms of "vocabulary" ($X_{\text{females' vocabulary}} = 17.26$; $X_{\text{males' vocabulary}} = 18.34$). In order to examine if the mean difference between males and females were statistically significant, the following independent sample T-test was run to the results of the writing test.

Table 4.7:
Independent Samples T- Test for the Components of the Writing Test for Assertive Male and Female Participants

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
content	Equal variances assumed	1.78	.18	2.63	62	.011	1.296	.492	.31	2.28
	Equal variances not assumed			2.80	28.8	.009	1.296	.463	.34	2.24
organization	Equal variances assumed	.32	.57	.47	62	.634	.234	.489	-.74	1.21
	Equal variances not assumed			.54	33.1	.590	.234	.430	-.64	1.10
vocabulary	Equal variances assumed	.91	.34	-3.17	62	.002	-1.083	.341	-1.76	-.40
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.87	22.2	.009	-1.08	.37	-1.86	-.30
language use	Equal variances assumed	14.03	.00	.99	62	.324	.52	.52	-.52	1.56
	Equal variances not assumed			1.51	61.7	.136	.52	.34	-.16	1.21
mechanics	Equal variances assumed	2.41	.12	.81	62	.420	.08	.10	-.12	.28
	Equal variances not assumed			.70	20.8	.491	.08	.11	-.163	.33
writing score	Equal variances assumed	8.38	.005	.77	62	.440	1.05	1.35	-1.65	3.75
	Equal variances not assumed			1.01	46.7	.314	1.05	1.03	-1.02	3.13

The results revealed that assertive female and male participants did not differ statistically significant in their total writing test scores. Although females performed better than males, this difference was not statistically significant. ($t_{\text{total writing test scores}} = 1.01, 0.314 \geq 0.05$). Thus, the third null hypothesis was supported suggesting that there is no significant difference between Iranian assertive male and female lower intermediate EFL learners in terms of their writing skill.

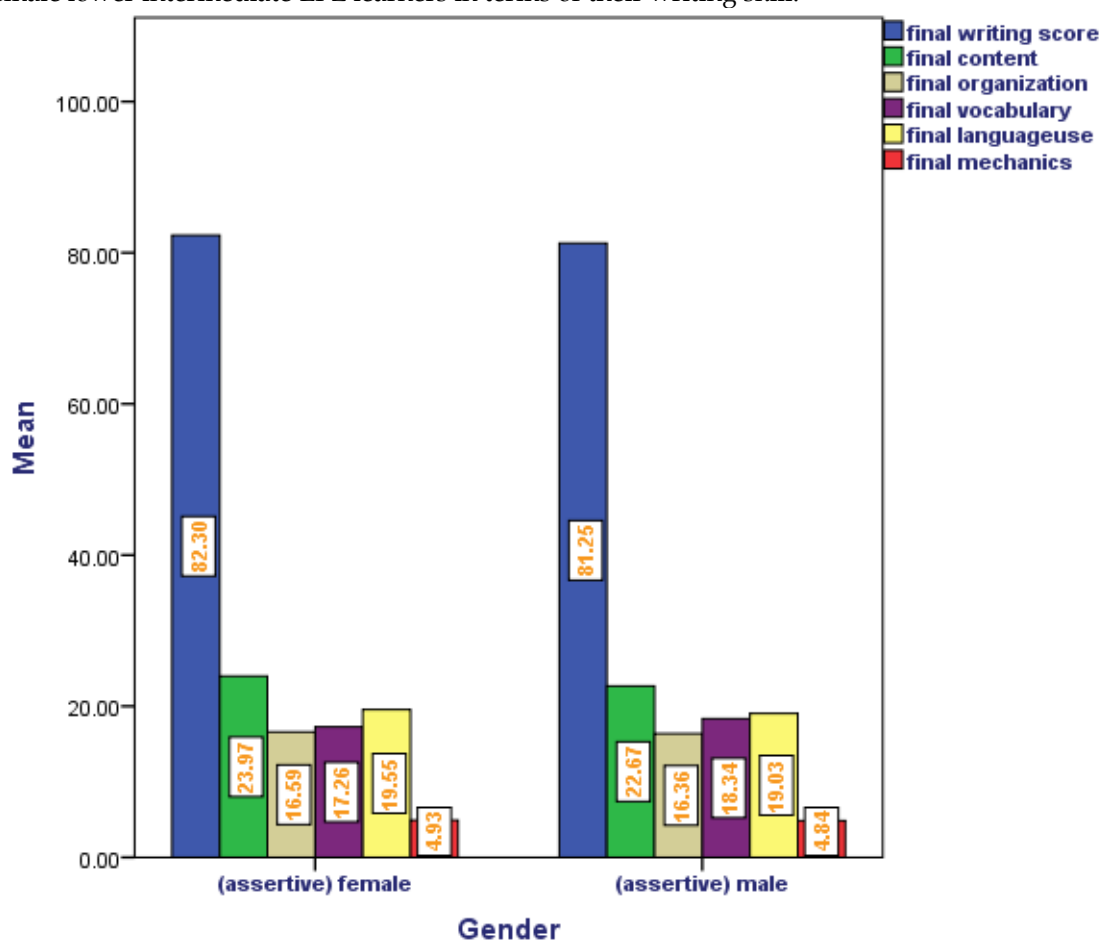


Figure 4.3: The Comparison between Assertive Males and Females With Respect To Their Writing Proficiency

4.4. Discussion

The data analysis for the first research question revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between personality types and overall writing test scores ($\eta^2 = .648$). What is more, the assertive learners had the highest and the passive learners had the lowest mean rank. The findings of the study, in this respect, are consistent with those obtained by Jafari (2013) where she came up with a significant relationship between assertiveness and writing ability. She also realized that learners with different personality types were significantly different from each other in their writing performance. It was also found that the passive students had the least writing scores. These findings of the present study were also in line with those gained by Abdolrezaipoor (2012) who revealed that introducing emotional intelligence strategy has a significant effect on students' writing ability. On the other hand, the findings of the present study, in this respect, are in sharp contrast with those of Rasouli (2008) where she came up with lack of correlation between Grammar and Writing grades and the four subscales of the self-perception questionnaire. Also, based on the obtained results of the study, in this regard, aggressive learners had the lowest overall writing ability after passive learners, which is somehow in agreement with the findings of Sardabi (2006) where she found that aggression had a negative impact on learners' overall writing ability and also with what Rasouli (2006) discovered. Concerning the second research question, interesting results were revealed. Each participant with unique personality type disclosed different performance on different components of writing ability. Regarding the "content" trait of writing ability, assertive learners scored higher than the other

groups ($X_{\text{assertive participants}} = 23.64$). Concerning the second component of writing ability, i.e. "organization", submissive participants outperformed other groups ($X_{\text{submissive participants}} = 18.23$). Concerning the third component of writing skill, "vocabulary", the assertive participants performed better than other groups ($X_{\text{assertive participant}} = 17.53$). After that, the submissive group scored higher than the passive and aggressive groups ($X_{\text{submissive participant}} = 17.23$). With respect to "language use", assertive learners outperformed the other learners ($X_{\text{assertive participant}} = 19.42$). What is more, submissive learners ranked the second place ($X_{\text{submissive participant}} = 19.09$). Lastly, in terms of "mechanics", assertive and submissive participants ranked the first and second place.

Finally, apropos of the third research question, the present study uncovered no significant differences among the assertive learners' overall writing ability across gender. This piece of finding is compatible with the findings of HemmatNezhad et al's (2014) study in which they found no significant effect of gender differences' extraverts/introverts on their writing proficiency.

5. Conclusion

The results of the current study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between four personality types of assertiveness construct and overall writing ability. Moreover, the assertive learners had the highest scores in free composition tests. Passive learners, in contrast, had the lowest overall writing scores. As a matter of fact, the learners' personality types were significantly related to their performance in writing ability. What is more, there was a significant positive relationship between personality types and the five components of writing ability. This implies that students with specific personality types performed differently in different aspects of writing ability. Finally, the findings of the study indicated that assertive male and female learners did not differ statistically significant in their overall writing ability.

5.1. Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The present research theoretically presented individual differences of personality as a prospective reason for poor language performance. What is more, this study described assertiveness as a vital personality trait which causes marked improvement in the learners' language skills, in particular writing. Other personality factors, especially passiveness, were also depicted as unfavorable which may have negative impact on final language productions. The findings of this study will provide EFL teachers, language researchers and designers with full insights into the learners' personality traits. What is more, it will help EFL teachers to recognize the role of assertiveness in stimulating or hindering their students' language skills.

From a pedagogical perspective, EFL teachers can also help their students who are struggling for self-expression, improve their assertiveness by applying assertiveness training programs and offering useful manuals. They can also provide their students with opportunities to express their ideas and feelings assertively in the classrooms. On the other hand, assertiveness is much more a personal and self-developmental skill that can be enhanced by the students themselves. In the same vein, the findings of this study are also helpful for EFL learners in such a way that they can succeed in different areas of language learning by working on their self-assertion skill. This study revolved around the association between the construct of assertiveness (personality types) and writing ability. Future studies can delve into the relationship between assertiveness and other language skills and sub-skills or the students' preferred language learning strategies.

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ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COGNITIVE STYLES AND WRITING SKILL OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between cognitive style of the learners, namely Impulsivity- Reflectivity and writing performance of the intermediate EFL university students whose major was English Translation. Moreover, the interaction of Impulsivity-Reflectivity cognitive style and gender in the writing skill was investigated. To this end, 36 male and female students from Azad University- in two branches of Lahijan and Rasht - participated in this study. The samples were selected according to their level of language proficiency. In order to make sure of the samples' language proficiency and to have homogenous group, Quick Placement Test (QPT) was administered. To obtain Impulsivity - Reflectivity data, Barratt Impulsiveness Scale-11 (BIS-11) was administered. Three writing tasks were given to the participants. Students' writing papers were corrected by two raters based on Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (as cited in Hughes, 2002, p. 104). Inter rater reliability was estimated by Pearson Correlation Test. The obtained data from writing tasks was analyzed by Chi- Square test along with Eta test. The analysis of the data revealed that the constructs of Impulsivity/Reflectivity are not related to the writing skill of intermediate EFL students of university. In addition, the analysis showed no significant relationship between Impulsivity/Reflectivity and gender in terms of writing skill through running Chi- Square test as well as Phi and Cramer's V test.

Key words: Cognitive Style, Impulsivity - Reflectivity, EFL Learners, Writing Skill, Gender.

1. Introduction

Among the skills of language learning, writing as the output of learners has a particular place, especially in EFL. When the learners try to write composition, they need not only to notice certain grammar and vocabulary structures but also to reflect on the reasons why they use them. Therefore, writing a given task is far more than grammar, vocabulary or punctuation. Writers need to reflect on the audience/s, content and to know how to organize their writings. As Iranian learners' writing skill was particularly problematic, the current study tended to provide more evidence for a potential source of the issue. Woolfolk, Winne, and Perry (1962) argued that individuals differ in how they approach a task, but these variations do not reflect levels of intelligence or any particular abilities. People actions depend on many things. Messick (1994) explained that "individuals have to do with 'characteristic modes of perceiving, remembering, thinking, problem solving, and decision making,

reflective of information processing regularities that develop around underlying personality trends" (p.122, as cited in Woolfolk et al. 1962, p. 126). Hence, there is a close relationship between a learner's personality and his/ her performance in language learning. A learner's personality determines the ways a learner controls his/ her emotions and feelings during the learning process. One of those learner's features involved in learner's performance is cognitive style, namely Impulsivity-Reflectivity. Theoretically, impulsives tend to do their jobs immediately with quick decision, quick response and quick thinking. On the contrary, reflectives tend to do their jobs with more thinking and reflection on the given task with further delay. Writing is the skill that needs further reflection in order to perform properly. Therefore, practically, it can be expected that the reflectives probably outperform impulsives, especially in writing skill.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. *Impulsivity vs. Reflectivity*

In the language learning area, learner factors may affect the performance. These factors and variables in learning English as a foreign language are more critical and need more consideration. Everyone knows that human beings are different in their tendencies and behavior and these differences are the points which representing various kinds of personality features. Impulsivity (I) and Reflectivity (R) are human characteristics in cognitive domain and psychology field. Reflection is a process of problem solving through thinking deeply about the problem. On the contrary, impulsiveness is doing suddenly without thinking about the problem first (Kagan, 1965). Impulsivity – Reflectivity phenomenon has been known by the name of kagan (1965). Messick (1970) outlined three major reasons for determining information about an individual's cognitive style: First, investigation into cognitive style is noteworthy since personality aspects related to cognitive style probably interact with some variables to moderate learning, memory, and transfer of information; second, controlling the backwash effects of programming and testing somehow depends on a subject's cognitive style; and third, through appropriate programming it is possible to identify the cognitive styles as claimed that they contribute to an individual's achievement and performance.

2.2. *Related Works*

2.2.1. *Impulsivity – Reflectivity and Learners' Performance*

Jamieson (1992) defined the role of Reflection-Impulsivity when adults were learning English as a second language. He believed that reflectivity / impulsivity would provide a method for classifying successful and unsuccessful language learners within a construct. He stated that "this is theoretically and empirically important because it will provide construct – related evidence validating a model of SLA that includes cognitive style as a source of individual variation" (p. 491). There is a consensus among researchers about the importance of cognitive styles in different processes and aspects of language. It is obvious that cognitive styles act as determining factors in success or failure in language learning performance. Ellis (1994, p.471) confirmed that in language learning "there's a veritable plethora of individual learner variables which researchers have identified as influencing learning outcomes" (as cited in Fonseca Mora, 2005, p. 2). Cognitive styles in general are of the important individual factors affecting the process of language acquisition to a great extent. Shipe (1979) argued that reflectives demonstrate more control on the given task. In addition, they make themselves responsible for their own successes or failures (as cited in Razmjoo & Mirzaei, 2009, p. 5).

2.2.2. *Impulsivity – Reflectivity and Writing skill*

Hayes and Flower's (1980) model distinguished between three basic processes in writing: "planning, included generating ideas, organization and goal setting; translating plans into text; and reviewing that consisted of reading and editing" (as cited in Galbraith, 2009, p. 8). Writing includes the planning process which is the first basic step in all writing models. According to Galbraith (2009), planning, translating and revising can occur at any moment during writing; these processes refer to cognitive processes. With regard to the importance of cognitive style in language learning process, literature shows that it plays a significant role in the process of language acquisition. The thesis aimed to find more evidence for the role of the cognitive style in writing skill.

Azizi's (1990) study aimed to see the role of reflectivity/impulsivity in EFL writing. The results of the study demonstrated that reflective students achieved better results in writing a composition than impulsive ones (as cited in Rezaei, Boroghani & Rahimi, 2013).

Interchangeably used the term Conceptual Tempo with impulsivity/reflectivity (I/R), Michońska-Stadnik (2013) validated that there was a systematic relationship between impulsive-reflective style

and success in grammar acquisition. She focused on two main factors in conceptual tempo, time factor and correctness factor. As reported in her study, the reflectives tended to be slower at grammar processing, but accurate, whereas impulsives needed less time for an answer but with more mistakes in their tasks due to their rapid guesses.

Mahdavinia and Molavizadeh (2013) conducted a research related to impulsivity- reflectivity and learners' use of idioms in composition writing among advanced MA male and female learners. The study instruments were TOEFL test to ensure their homogeneity and Persian Impulsivity Sub- scale of Eysenck's (1990) Impulsiveness Questionnaire to divide the subjects into high and low impulsive. A love story consisted of 20 idioms was given to subjects and asked them to write two compositions according to the given topics related to the love story. The study revealed that reflective (low impulsive) learners used more idioms.

Dewaele (2005) stated that more research was required to assess the effectiveness of psychological variables in the process of language acquisition. He pointed out that there was a relatively inconclusiveness among applied linguists towards psychological variables. Nonetheless, recently some researchers had showed an increasing interest in examining the impact of psychological variables on behavior and learning. Cognitive style refers to cognitive processing which relates to how learning tasks may occur.

2.2.3. *Impulsivity – Reflectivity and Gender*

Many studies considered gender as effective factor in language learning process. Kiany and Salimi (2004) found out that both impulsivity and gender were significant factors in the subjects' performance. On the contrary, Keshavarz and Cheraghy's (2005) and Bazargani and Larsari's (2013) findings did not reveal any significant relationship between gender and impulsivity with learners' performance.

Readers are now informed about the literature and the related works in Impulsivity- Reflectivity area. To sum up, it was revealed that the findings of research on cognitive styles for language learning are inconclusive. Therefore, more researches are needed to support the cognitive styles phenomena, especially in writing skill. In addition, further research is required about the gender variable impact on the cognitive styles. Insufficient studies have been carried out to measure cognitive styles and writing skill. The significance of this study is to investigate the cognitive styles' potential role in writing area among intermediate students of university.

2.3 *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there any significant relationship between Impulsive - Reflective learners and Iranian EFL learners' writing skill?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Impulsive - Reflective learners and gender?

Hypotheses

H0.1. There is no significant relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity as cognitive style and writing skill.

H0.2. There is no significant relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity as cognitive style and gender.

3. **Methodology**

3.0. **Introduction**

The current study was a quantitative- nonexperimental research. In order to collect data, the researcher selected the samples from two composition writing classes based on their level of proficiency. They were selected only from fifth- semester students in order to avoid possible significant heterogeneity of the samples in writing proficiency. Among 42 students in both classes, one in Lahijan Azad University and the other in Rasht Azad University, the researcher selected 36 students in the Intermediate level of proficiency. Participants, Instruments, Procedures and Data Analysis are the sections presented in the following.

3.1. **Participants**

The participants of the current study were among the BA students of two branches of Azad University in Guilan Province, namely Lahijan Branch and Rasht Branch. The subjects were within age range of 19 to 32. The students' major was English Translation, 14 were male, and 22 were female. They studied Composition Writing course in the spring semester in 2014. They had passed Advanced

Writing course as prerequisite of Composition Writing course, therefore, in research time the students were in 5th semester. They were supposed to know about the basic framework for writing papers.

3.2. Instruments

Three instruments were used for collection of data. As the first step, in order to make sure that the learners were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency, Quick Placement Test (QPT) was administered. The named questionnaire consisted of 60 questions. The students were supposed to answer the questions in 45 min. The second instrument was Barratt's Impulsiveness Scale 11 or shortly BIS-11. The data was required in order to categorize the students' personality type as Impulsive or Reflective. The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions. The students were supposed to answer them in 10 min. The Persian version of BIS-11 was administered. In the current study a pilot study of 15 students was performed due to estimate the questionnaire reliability. The values of Cronbach's Alpha was ($\alpha = 0.807$). Collecting papers was the third and the last step to gather data. In order to have the students' writing scores, three samples of students' compositions were collected which they wrote during one semester in *Composition Writing* course.

3.3. Procedures for Data Collection

Based on the mentioned instruments, the research went through the proper procedures. After QPT administration, the homogeneous students were selected as population for the current study. Among 42 students, 36 were intermediate in terms of language proficiency. There was no randomization and it was an intact class. All intermediate students were included in this study. Allocated time to the BIS_11 was ten minutes. The students had to respond 30 questions in this amount of time, since they were asked to respond the first choice coming to mind. It was necessary to collect three writing tasks in order to fulfill the research goals. Three writing samples (i.e., three tasks) of each student were collected. The students were not informed about the research. Therefore, the students' writing papers were as usual pattern. The two writing classes, Lahijan Branch and Rasht Branch, received the same tasks. There was cooperation between the course professors and the researcher. The writing papers were corrected by two raters according to Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (as cited in Hughes, 2002, p. 104).

3.4. Data Analysis

After running the pilot study for BIS-11, QPT and writing test, the results and findings of the main study were analyzed by SPSS 22.0. The data analysis was as the following: in order to ensure about reliability of writing performance of the learners, it was required to give three writing tasks to the students during one semester. The writing papers were corrected by two raters. They were supposed to correct them according to Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (as cited in Hughes, 2002, p. 104). Inter rater reliability was estimated by *Pearson Correlation Test*. Before running the Pearson Correlation Test, *Normality Distribution* was confirmed through running *Skewness Analysis*. To examine the relationship between EFL learners' impulsivity and reflectivity (nominal data) and their writing ability (interval data), the non-parametric *Chi-Square Test* along with *Eta* was administered for first research question. *Chi-Square Test* was also run for the second research question and to show the strength and direction of the relationship, *Phi* and *Cramer's V* test was run.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Findings of the Main Study

4.1.1. The First Research Question

Regarding the first research question and hypothesis, the following results were achieved:

First research question: *Is there any significant relationship between Impulsive - Reflective learners and Iranian EFL learners' writing skill?*

H0.1. *There is no significant relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity as cognitive style and writing skill.*

To the extent that the first research question is examined, i.e., whether there is a significant relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity and the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners, chi-square test along with *Eta* test was run to the results of the writing tests of impulsive and reflective EFL learners. It was applied to examine the relationship between EFL learners' impulsivity and reflectivity (nominal data) and their writing ability (interval data).

Table 4.1: Chi-Square for the Total Writing Scores of the Participants with Different Cognitive Style

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.792	32	.477
N of Valid Cases	36		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic (.477) was higher than (.05), so it could be concluded that the low relationship between these two variables (cognitive style and total writing scores) was simply due to chance variation, which implied that participant with specific cognitive style did not disclosed different writing proficiency. To show the extent and direction of this relationship, Eta test was run to the results of writing test and cognitive style.

Table 4.2: Eta Test for the Writing Scores of the Participants with Different Cognitive Style
Directional Measures

Nominal by Interval	Eta	Total writing score Dependent	Value
			.020

Based on the results of Eta test, there was not any significant association between cognitive style and overall writing test scores (Eta= .020). Thus, the first null hypothesis is supported implying that there is not any significant relationship between EFL students' cognitive style and their foreign language writing proficiency. See the following figure:

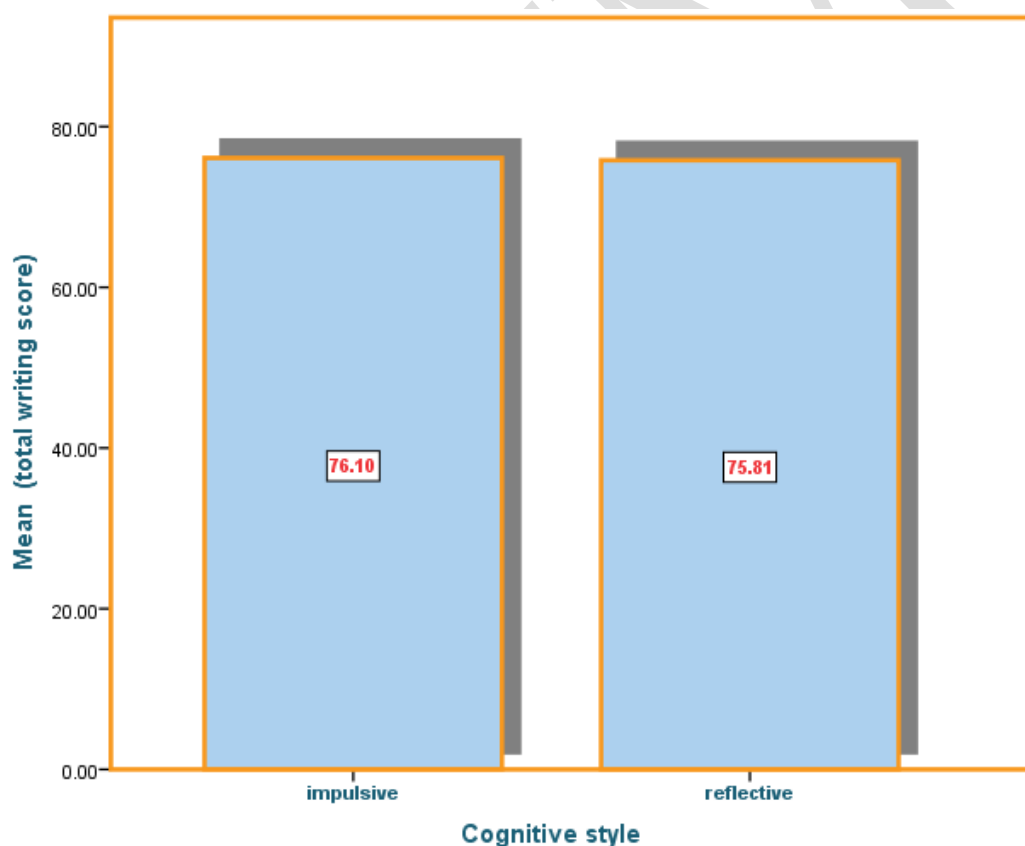


Figure 4.1: The Relationship between the Impulsive and Reflective Learners in terms of their Writing Scores

4.2.3. The Second Research Question

Regarding the second research question and hypothesis, the following results were achieved:

Second research question: Is there any significant relationship between Impulsive - Reflective learners in terms of their writing proficiency and gender?

H0.2. There is no significant relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity as cognitive style and gender.

In addition to examining the possible relationship between impulsivity and reflectivity of EFL learners and their writing ability, the relationship between gender and cognitive style was also examined. The results are available in the following section:

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Tests for Gender and Cognitive Style

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.152 ^a	1	.697	.738

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic for gender and cognitive style was higher than (0.05), so it could be concluded that the relationship between these variables was simply due to chance variation. To show the strength and direction of this relationship, Phi and Cramer's V test was run.

Table 4.4: Symmetric Measures for Gender and Cognitive Style

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.065	.697
	Cramer's V	.065	.697
N of Valid Cases		36	

Based on the results of Phi and Cramer's V, there was not any significant relationship between gender and cognitive style. The value of Phi came to (.065; sig. (.697) $\geq .05$). The following figure illustrates the relationship between gender and cognitive style.

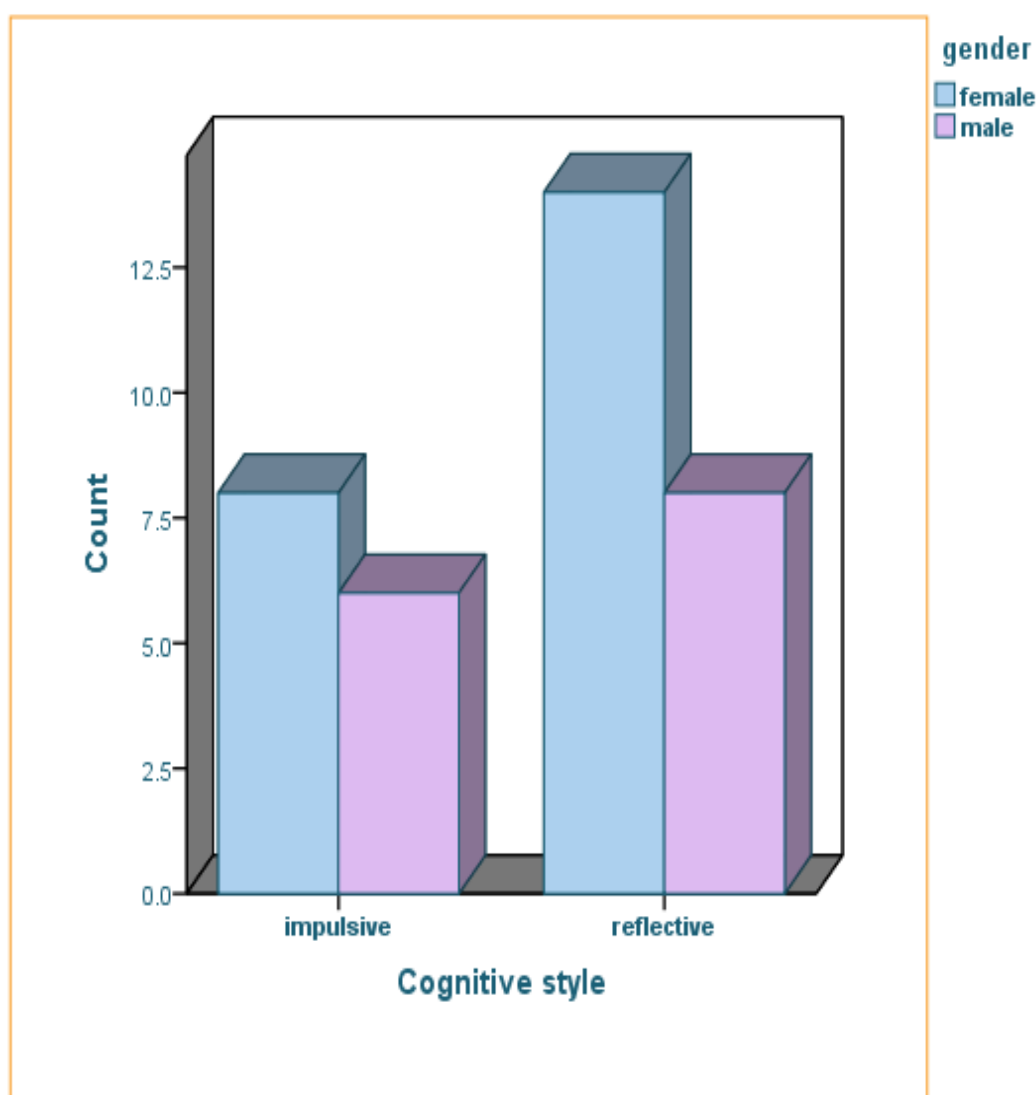


Figure 4.2: The Relationship between Gender and Cognitive Style

4.3. Discussion

Results pertaining to the two research questions are discussed below. With regard to the first research question, the null hypothesis of the study claimed that there would not be any relationship between the Impulsivity-Reflectivity (I/R) tendencies of Iranian EFL learners and their performance in writing skill. Referring to the collected data, the findings were not statistically significant (see table 4.2). The data analysis for the first research question revealed that there was not any significant association between cognitive style and overall writing test scores ($\eta^2 = .020$). In this regard, Jamieson (1992) indicated that Impulsives - Reflectives have more association with learning activities than language proficiency production.

The results of the present study were contrary to Azizi's (1990) study. Azizi (1990) stated that reflectives achieved better than impulsives in writing composition (as cited in Rezaei et al., 2003, p. 282). In addition, in writing area Michońska-Stadnik (2013) validated that there was a systematic relationship between impulsive-reflective style and success in grammar acquisition. Focused on two main factors in conceptual tempo, i. e., time factor and correctness factor, she reported that the reflectives tended to be slower at grammar processing, but accurate, whereas impulsives needed less time for an answer but with more mistakes in their tasks due to their rapid guesses. In addition, the

findings of the present study, in this respect, were contrary to the other research conducted by Mahdavinia and Molavizadeh (2013). They investigated the relationship between impulsivity-reflectivity and learners' use of idioms in composition writing among advanced MA learners. Their research revealed that there was difference between impulsive – reflective learners in number of idioms they had applied. Definitely, further research is required. The number of writing studies in Impulsivity- Reflectivity area is limited. Therefore, it is uncertain whether and how I/R plays role, generally, in writing skill and in writing dimensions as using idioms, grammar proficiency, word usages and the like in particular. Maybe the reason that the current study did not find a significant correlation is because sampling was not random, or the research instruments were not sensitive enough. But, in the end, the idea is that something is out there but we need to find it anyway.

With regard to the second research question, the second null hypothesis of the study claimed that dimensions of Impulsivity – Reflectivity does not correlate with the learners' gender differences. By running Phi and Cramer's V test, findings revealed that there was not any significant relationship between gender and cognitive style (see figure 4.2), since the value of Phi came to (.065; sig. (.697) $\geq .05$). Therefore, the present study uncovered no significant relationship between learners' personality type (Impulsive or Reflective) and gender across writing ability.

Apropos of the second research question, Kiany and Salimi (2004) reported that impulsivity and gender are significant factors in the subjects' performance. The result of their study was in sharp contrast with that of the present study. The findings of the study, in this respect, were consistent and in line with those obtained by Keshavarz and Cheraghy (2005) that they revealed no relationship between gender and impulsivity with subjects' performance in the proficiency test. In addition, Bazargani and Larsari (2013) indicated that test takers' sex does not affect their performance on multiple-choice items test.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the conclusion of Hansen – Strain (1987) study. Interestingly, they concluded that the cognitive tempo of ESL learners was related to their culture but not to their sexes (as cited in Razmjoo & Mirzaei, 2009, p. 15). However, the mentioned conclusion needs more investigations to prove the claim among Iranian learners. This area (i.e. gender as a source of bias) is open to further research. A different or larger sample will perhaps show other results.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this research revealed that there was no significant relationship between Impulsivity/Reflectivity dimension and subjects' performance in writing composition. The research made it clear that Impulsivity – Reflectivity do not play a basic role in writing composition. That is to say, the findings of the present study indicate that personality tendency does not facilitate composition writing among intermediate students. Moreover, the findings indicated that gender had nothing to do with Impulsivity or Reflectivity. The researchers can replicate the study to provide the explanation for lack of significant relationship between dependent and independent variables of the study.

5.1. Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The implication of this study first and foremost is theoretical. The construct (R/I) was found to have no relationship with writing skill of Iranian students of university. This finding questions the theory that individual differences, namely Impulsivity- Reflectivity play crucial role in EFL success. At least it is not possible to generalize the theory to all skills of language learning, especially writing skill which needs more investigation. The results of this study can be useful for other researchers to replicate in order to clarify and validate the level of significance, since conceptual tempo is a new concept in Iran which recently attracts the researchers' attention.

The material designers are the other group who can use the results to improve the practices and exercises in writing skill with respect to learners' different personalities. They can develop the writing exercises to attract learners to reflective tasks, so the impulsives can learn critical thinking. As Witkin, Moore, Goodenough and Cox (1977) stated that "of characteristics of cognitive styles is that they are stable over time. This does not imply that they are unchangeable; indeed, some may easily be altered" (p. 15).

The results may also be of great value for teachers to consider the learners' personality while making the learners conscious and aware of their behaviors and personality types. The tasks in which

the time is critical to fulfill, teachers need to stop and not to prejudge the learners' abilities. To put it simply, they should be careful about each individual's personality type.

Future studies can delve into the relationship between Impulsivity-Reflectivity construct in different skills of learning. The field is open to other variables, for instance, grammar acquisition, dictation problems, error detection and so on.

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THE EFFECT OF RECAST ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempted to investigate the effect of reduction recasts on the improvement of the speaking ability of Iranian intermediate level EFL learners. After administering a language proficiency test, 44 homogeneous students were randomly assigned to the experimental and comparison groups. During 10 sessions of instruction, the experimental group received reduction recasts and the comparison group received non-reduction recasts. After the treatment, both groups took part in the speaking posttest. The result of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups. Therefore, it was concluded that recast could improve the students' speaking ability.

Key words: speaking ability, recasts.

Introduction

Nowadays the need for communication taps on the social aspect of human beings realized in the two channels of oral or written language, but the emphasis is on oral communication as the best manifestation of language abilities (Celce-Murcia, 2001). From the viewpoint of teaching, speaking in a second or foreign language has often been looked at as the most demanding of all four skills (Bailey & Savage, 1994). Speaking as an important element of communication needs special attention and instruction in the domain of ELT. In order to provide effective instruction, it is necessary to examine the factors, conditions, and components underlying speaking effectiveness. Thus, away from approaches to improving the speaking skill which integrate the element of respect, such as finding a way to treat low status students and/or high status students who might take over the group (Cohen, 1996), or how to provide enough opportunities for students to become involved in different oral activities, the need for investigation in some areas like the types of the teacher's recasts in the classroom remains valid. This paper tries to discover the impact of recast on speaking ability of EFL intermediate level learners.

Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedbacks as one of the effective focus on form and meaning techniques have long been employed in L2 classrooms. Learning requires feedback. Otherwise, the learners have no means of judging the extent and appropriateness of their learning (Chastain, 1998). Within the field of second language research, an increasing number of studies are focusing on corrective feedback. Feedback is an important part of language pedagogy because through teacher's feedback students can know how far they have progressed and how they are doing. Among corrective feedback types, recasts have received the most attention from researchers. For example, Long (1996) argues that juxtaposition recasts created between learners' erroneous output and target forms aid language acquisition. He argues that the negative evidence provided by recasts facilitates the process of cognitive comparison

and is thus more effective than positive evidence in the form of models. There are several reasons why recasts have received so much attention from researchers. First, they have been found to occur more often than any other type of corrective feedback in natural second language classrooms (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Second, there are several theoretical reasons for assuming that recasts may be beneficial to students. Namely, it has been proposed that recasts provide positive evidence (Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001) and negative evidence (Leeman, 2003), increase the saliency of target forms (Nassaji, 2007), and promote interaction (Ellis & Sheen, 2006).

Recasts are just one of several possible corrective strategies that teachers employ to deal with learner errors. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified five corrective strategies other than recasts (i.e. explicit correction, clarification request, metalinguistic information, elicitation, and repetition), whereas Panova and Lyster (2002) added one more: translation. Although these other strategies have received attention from researchers, none of them has received the same intensity of attention as recasts. One reason is that recasts generally occur with great frequency in interactions with second language learners, especially if they occur inside a classroom. Sheen (2004), in a study that compared the frequency of recasts in immersion, communicative English as an L2, and English in foreign language contexts, found that, on average, 60% of all the feedback moves involved recast.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined recasts as “the teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, minus the error” (p. 46). This definition points to the fact that the reformulation can involve either the entirety or a part of the original erroneous utterance. The latter is what Roberts (1995) calls partial recasts, when the teacher only models the segment of the utterance in which the error occurs. Lyster (1998) calls this type reduction recasts. According to Sheen (2006), in reduction recasts the reformulation is shorter than the learner’s erroneous utterance. This is the opposite to non-reduction recasts in which the reformulation repeats the learner’s entire utterance. Other researchers have distinguished specific

types/categories of recasts: e.g. isolated/incorporated recasts (Lyster, 1998), corrective recasts (Doughty & Varela, 1998), and intensive recasts (Mackey & Philip, 1998).

With regard to the effectiveness of recasts, in their own research, Mackey and Philip (1998) also concluded that recasts might be effective for motivated adult learners despite the absence of any immediate response. Furthermore, Lyster and Mori (2006) investigated two immersion settings, and found that recasts generated learner uptake more often in the Japanese immersion classrooms (61%) than in the immersion French setting. Actually, these findings led to the confusion concerning the effectiveness of recasts that different factors such as instructional context, age, and motivation among other possible factors could perhaps trigger different findings. One of the criticisms toward Lyster’s findings was that his studies took place in immersion classrooms, and that his results have not been obtained in other

instructional settings. On the effectiveness of recasts and its relatedness to the instructional contexts, Oliver and Mackey (2003) and Sheen (2004) confirmed Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) findings that recasts are the most common form of error correction used by language teachers. However, they interestingly found that the discourse context of foreign language classroom plays an important role in whether or not a recast results in the learner’s uptake of correction. Accordingly, Sheen (2004) also claims that the instructional setting can be regarded as a factor that contributes to whether or not recasts results in learner uptake. This researcher

concluded that the rates for uptake and repair were greater in some contexts than others. In line with these researchers, Long (2006) asserts that foreign and second language teachers should not reject the use of recasts in their classrooms simply because they have not been found to be useful in some immersion classroom settings.

Speaking Skill

Speaking has been regarded by many scholars as a highly demanding and complex cognitive skill that involves several different mechanisms (Levelt, Roelofs, & Meyer, 2000). Levelt (1989) proposes a model of L1 production that shows how speaking follows a series of processes, from the intention to speak to articulation of overt speech.

A number of empirical studies have also addressed the teaching of speaking strategies. Cohen, Weaver, and Li (1998), for instance, conducted an experimental study seeking to investigate the role of speaking strategies in the teaching of L2 oral competence. The results of the study suggested that the use of strategies enhanced speaking performance.

With respect to teaching L2 speaking, McCarthy (1998) analyzed the features of speech in context, distinguishing the act of speaking from the act of writing, and thus giving speech a new perspective with its own peculiarities. He described the spoken genre, stating that, "Spoken language has its own grammar and lexicon" (p. 47) and arguing that, "The best data for pedagogical theory of spoken language is everyday, informal talk" (p. 47). McCarthy argued that the spoken genre must be taken into consideration when the speaking skill is being targeted in the classroom and suggested that the first step in building teaching syllabuses and materials is to observe examples of real encounters by participants, thus focusing on real interactions and authentic language.

However, few studies have been conducted on the effect of various forms of recasts on speaking abilities of EFL learners. Accordingly, the present study attempted to discover the impact or reduction/ non-reduction recast on the improvement of the speaking ability of the intermediate level EFL learners.

Methodology

Participants

Participants of the study comprised of 44 students from one language institutes with intermediate level of language proficiency in Mashhad. They had been selected through a PET language proficiency test and randomly assigned in two independent groups; the experimental group and comparison group. The experimental group received reduction recast, while the comparison group received non-reduction recast. They had four hours of English per week and totally they took part in 10 sessions of treatment. They were EFL learners with homogeneous language proficiency. Since the gender was not considered as a moderator variable for this study, only male students were chosen.

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to gather data at different stages of this study:

- A Preliminary English Test (PET) was used for homogenizing the subjects of this study in terms of their general English proficiency. It was published by Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL, 2006). The PET test consisted of four sections: reading (35 items), writing (eight items), listening comprehension (25 items), and speaking (four subparts).
- To make sure the participants in the two groups belonged to the same population in terms of speaking ability, the researchers utilized the speaking section of the PET as the pretest.
- After the instruction, another speaking posttest; similar to pretest, was administered to both groups.

Procedure

At the beginning of the study, researchers had administered a PET as a proficiency test to make certain of the homogeneity of the students. Since they had to employ the treatment on two groups, they assigned the participants in two groups. To ensure that two groups were homogeneous in terms of speaking a speaking test was administered to both groups. The speaking pretest started with a two-minute interaction of candidates with the interlocutor. Each interviewee had to respond to general questions about himself on topics such as job, family, sport, hobby, etc. during this part. Next, there was another two-minute interaction, during which the testees had to interact on a visual stimulus. They had to use functional language to make and respond to suggestions, make recommendations, and negotiate agreements. By the end of Part Two, a photograph was given to each of the candidates in turn as a verbal prompt to talk about a particular topic. During these three minutes, the subjects' speaking ability was assessed through describing photographs, managing discourse, and using appropriate vocabulary in a longer turn. All photographs used in this part were related to the same topic. The last three-minute discussion of the speaking part was a general conversation. The students interacted with each other in this phase on the topic established on the theme of Part Three. Their discussion was about their opinions, likes/dislikes, preferences, experiences, habits, etc.

The treatment consisted of 10 sessions of 60 minutes. Both groups were taught based on the same teaching method and activities. At the beginning of each session every student had to prepare a

report, when one read his report others listened to him and their teachers recast carefully. After a student was finished, others exchanged their opinions about what they had heard and they added their information related to the topic. The teacher provided comments on the erroneous utterances of the students through reduction recasts in the experimental group and non-reduction recasts in the control group during the treatment. The teacher's reduction recasts included reformulated phrases shorter than the erroneous utterances produced by the learners. They were usually made up of a verb and a content word or a combination of two words in length. The teacher used non-reduction recasts through repetition of the reformulated error in the form of a statement, a tag question, a clarification request, or a confirmation check. After 10 sessions instruction, the speaking posttest was administered to both groups to track any possible improvement in their speaking ability.

Results

After administrating the PET to 44 students, descriptive statistics was obtained. Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the language proficiency test that was used for the homogenization of the participants. The mean and the standard deviation equaled 47.21 and 7.05, respectively. They were then randomly divided into experimental and comparison groups.

Table 1.Descriptive Statistics of the Homogeneity Test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Error
Total	44	44	48	82	47.21	7.05	90.52	.26	.18
Valid	44								
N									

Since the study concentrated on speaking ability, a speaking pretest was administered to both groups and an independent *t*-test was performed on the two groups test scores. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Table 2.Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Speaking Pre-test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	Comparison	22	10.21	3.85
	Experimental	22	13.30	4.01

Regarding the mean scores of two groups there was no significant difference, but in order to be sure of close homogeneity of two groups, a *t*-test was run. It showed that there was no significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups in terms of their speaking ability. Table 3 manifests the results:

Table 3.Comparison between Variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Speaking Pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	t critical	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	99	.001	0.59	42	2.02	3.09	0.16	-1.04	2.12

Table 3. Comparison between Variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Speaking Pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	t critical	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.99	.001	0.59	42	2.02	3.09	0.16	-1.04	2.12

As it has been shown in table 3, the *t*-observed value for the comparison of the means of two groups was 0.59 at 42 degrees of freedom, which was lower than the *t*-critical of 2.02. Thus it could be claimed that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of speaking ability before undergoing the treatment.

After ten sessions of instruction, both groups were given a similar posttest. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the two Groups on the Speaking Post-test

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Comparison	22	14.22	4.25
	Experimental	22	17.66	6.03

To see whether the treatment was effective or not, the means of two groups were compared through a *t*-test. As it has been shown in table 5, the *t*-observed value was 7.10 at 42 degrees of freedom which was higher than the *t*-critical of 2.02. Thus, it was concluded that the students' achievement of vocabulary in the experimental group was significantly greater than that of the comparison group.

Table 5. Comparison between variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Speaking Post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	F critical	t	df	t critical	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	0.02	5.203	7.10	42	2.02	3.44	1.78	-5.31	3.65

Discussion & Conclusion

In this study, the impact of reduction recasts, as one type of corrective feedback, on speaking ability was investigated. The results indicated that reduction recasts did significantly improve the speaking ability of the experimental group. This is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Iwashita (2003) who found that recasts are more salient to second language learners than other types of positive evidence from native-speaker interactional moves.

Reduction recasts are advantageous, since they build up communication

and provide a rich environment for the learners in the classroom. They are mediums of increasing reflection in students although using them is not without drawbacks. Recasts were of benefit to students in terms of their ability to detect and correct errors in their own speech. Specifically, when presented with errors in their own speech and in written form, students were able to detect, as well as successfully and partially successfully modify, more of the errors that had received recasts during the interaction than those that had not received recasts.

The present study proves that reduction recast improved EFL learners' speaking ability, especially among intermediate learners. For future studies researchers suggest exploring the effect of other types of recast on other skills.

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THE EFFECTS OF USING BI-LINGUAL TASKS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PREPOSITION ERRORS

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ABSTRACT

The current study falls into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part introduces a general background to prepositions where they are classified according to form, function, and position and the problems that EFL learners deal with while using prepositions. The Contrastive Analysis background is also discussed. In the practical part a representative sample of fifty homogenous Persian EFL learners has been chosen using the proficiency test of OPT. They were divided into control and experimental groups. Both groups received a pretest of prepositions. Then the experimental group received bi-lingual tasks based on contrastive analysis hypothesis as treatment. The control group did not receive any treatments. Then both groups took part in a posttest of prepositions. By analyzing differences through Independent-sample T-test and Pearson Product Correlation, it was indicated that the instructions has put a positive effect. This study is expected to be valuable to both EFL learners and instructors on one hand and translators to and from English and Persian on the other.

Key Words: Contrastive Analysis, Bi-lingual Task, Preposition, L1 Transfer, Second Language.

Introduction

In English there are about 124 prepositions. In numerous studies, past and present, prepositions are reported to constitute a hurdle in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) even at high proficiency levels. The main problem for Iranian learners lies in the fact that not every Persian preposition has a definite equivalent in English and vice versa. For example, the Persian preposition "dær" – is used as an equivalent of "in, into, at, on, during, within, inside" and also the zero equivalent (?) in English. Another problem is that Iranian learners use or omit certain English prepositions according to Persian usage. So, by literal translation, we notice that when the Persian context requires a preposition (or requires none), learners make wrong responses accordingly.

Keshavarz (1994) discusses that during the 1950s and 1960s, CA was considered as the ultimate panacea for language teaching problems: predicting and solving learners' errors and difficulties. Based on the assumption that second/foreign language learners tend to transfer the formal features of their L1 to their L2 utterances, structural linguists set out to identify areas of difficulty for second language and produce appropriate teaching materials to overcome these linguistic obstacles. In effect, on the one hand, the task of a contrastive analyst was to pinpoint the items in learner's L1 which are in line with the similar items in learner's L2 (*positive transfer*) so as to facilitate language learning process. On the other hand, the contrastive analyst identified the areas of asymmetry between the learner's L1 and L2 (*negative transfer*) and predicted the areas of learning difficulties and thus avoided the probable linguistic phenomenon of *interference* which was believed to seriously hinder the process of second language learning.

In recent years, studies of foreign language acquisition have tended to focus on learner's errors since they allow for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a foreign language. In this way, teachers can be made aware of the difficult areas to be faced by their students and devote special care and emphasis to them. Prepositions, on which the present study focuses, are one of these difficult areas.

widdowson (1978, p.159) calls our attention to the fact that in the process of learning a foreign language, there's an inevitable association in the mind between the new language and the one we already know, an assumption that was also defended by contrastivists.

Review of the Literature

Several studies (e.g. Jimenez Catalan, 1996) have been conducted thus far exploring the cross-linguistic transfer of English prepositions across different languages. For example, in Arabic language, Hamdallah and Tushyeh (1993) and also Hasan and Abdullah (2009) have examined the cross-linguistic influence of prepositions across English and Arabic languages.

However, only a few studies have been carried out so far investigating the use of English prepositions among EFL learners in the Iranian context. For example, Delshad (1980) conducted a contrastive study of English and Persian prepositions and found that Iranian EFL/ESL students have difficulty in the use of English prepositions. According to Delshad, Iranian EFL learners seemingly tend to misuse or omit English prepositions (as cited in Jafarpour & Koosha, 2006). Likewise, in an endeavor to determine the extent to which Iranian EFL learners' knowledge of collocation of prepositions is affected by their L1, Jafarpour and Koosha (2006) conducted a study in which the errors of the collocations of prepositions turned to yield the significance of Iranian EFL learners' L1 transfer. That is, Iranian EFL learners tend to carry over their L1 collocational prepositions to their L2 production.

Theoretical Framework

The role of the native language (L1) in the process of learning a second language (L2) has been often discussed. A number of recent publications in second language acquisition and contrastive studies (CS) have given evidence of a movement to re-assess the potential contribution which L1 can make to second language teaching by incorporating CS in the classroom.

As for the first point, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), after an analysis of the main findings in interlanguage studies, concluded that the role of the L1 is considerably more complex, but not as negative as was first thought by proponents of the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis, but it works in cooperation, rather than in conflict, with universal developmental processes. The students, consciously or not, look for similarities and differences between languages. And it seems that to contrast both languages can be useful at those stages when they master the grammar of the foreign language.

Considering these alarming figures together with the contrastive methodological discussion and research tendencies in SLA as well as the real situation of our ESL students, the need for new approaches seem obvious and contrastive studies undoubtedly has an important role to play in connection with new development in grammar, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and cultural studies as well as with new tendencies in training of SL teachers.

Method

Participants

In this article, the present researcher considered Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level as subjects of the study. The number of subjects was fifty; twenty five were male and twenty five were female learners studying English at a Foreign Language Institute in Chalous, Mazandaran, Iran. The criterion used to select the subjects in question was an OPT tests which was administered to select fifty homogenous subjects.

Materials

The instruments used in this study include:

- The proficiency test of OPT was administered to select 50 homogenous students. The test contained 60 questions (20 grammars, 20 vocabularies, 10 reading comprehension and 10 writing).
- To determine the preposition knowledge of the participants, a completion test in the multiple choice format was given to the students as pretest. This test comprised thirty items, and its reliability was estimated to be 0.79 via an inter-rater calculation by three experts. The test was given to fifty participants. After the specific treatments were given to the participants in experimental group, this test was administered again to both control and experimental groups as the posttest in order to determine the impact of the specific instructions the participants received.

- Testing and teaching materials were taken from some grammar books such as Practical English Usage by Michael Swan (1995), TOEFL Grammar by Milada Broukal (2002), Dictionary of Common Errors by Turton and Heaton (1996) and Fundamentals of English Grammar by Azar and Hagen(2011). And some items were made by the researcher based on the experience of the errors her students made.

Procedures

At first an OPT test was administered to select fifty homogenous students. Then the participants were randomly divided into control and experimental groups. In the next step they were pretested by a completion test of prepositions in multiple choice format. They were asked to complete the English equivalence of the given Persian sentences with one of the four given prepositions. The reliability of this test was determined to be 0.79 via an inter-rater calculation by three experts. At the third stage the participants attended the English classes three hours a week(two ninety minutes sessions) for four weeks. The structures which were taught to the students were prepositions in English which were thought to be troublesome for Iranian EFL learners because of L1 transfer. Then the Persian equivalence of the prepositions and the sentences were given and compared to the English ones. It was explained for the students that several prepositions in English may have the same equivalent in Persian. Consider these sentences: "I enjoy ϕ watching TV" "I'm pleased with my new apartment" "she's angry at him" "we should apologize to them". ϕ , *with*, *at*, *to* in these sentences all mean /æz/ in Persian, which in the Iranian EFL learners' mind is the meaning of "from". It was explained that it is possible that different location prepositions which collocate with different places may have the same meanings or same prepositions may have different meanings in different positions. Different examples of these kinds were explained in both English and Persian. Then students were asked to read some sentences in Persian and complete the English translation with the correct preposition. Then, the pretest was administered again as the posttest to both experimental and control groups. The scores were calculated and analyzed using Independent-sample T-test scores of the groups and Pearson Product Correlation between the pretest and the posttest.

Data Analysis and Findings

Descriptive Analysis of the Data

This section focuses on the descriptive analysis of the obtained data in this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS software. Table (5.1) shows the descriptive analysis for the preposition variable of the study:

**Table 5.1. Descriptive analysis of the data of the experimental group of the study
(PR= Pretest; PO= Posttest)**

Bi-lingual task	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing Value
Preposition Error +BT	25	13.5600	4.18410	.83682
-BT	25	10.0400	3.14219	.62844

As indicated in table (5.1), the number of participants has been 25 in each group ($N_C=25$; $N_E=25$), the mean for bi-lingual task variable of experimental group scores was shown to be 13.5600 ($X_E=13.5600$) as compared to the mean for bi-lingual task variable of control group scores which was 10.0400 ($X_C=10.0400$). The standard deviation of the experimental group was shown to be 4.18410 ($SD_E=4.18410$), and the standard deviation of the control group was shown to be 3.76251($SD_C=3.14219$).

The missing value of the experimental group was 0.83682 and the missing value of the control group was 0.62844.

Inferential Analysis of the Data

This section focuses on the inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) which was selected and used to calculate t-test and correlation coefficient.

Table 5.2. The T-test Results for the Preposition test

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
PREPOSITION ERROR	Equal variances assumed	3.364	48	.002	3.52000
	Equal variances not assumed	3.364	44.538	.002	3.52000

As is indicated in table (5.2), the t-value of the study was calculated between the posttests of preposition knowledge of the experimental and the control groups. The observed t was calculated as to be 3.364 ($t_{obs} = 3.364$) and the degree of freedom was 48 ($df = 48$). The t -observed value 3.364, at 48 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical value of t , that is, 2.021. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the two groups mean scores in the experimental group and the control group. Finally, the level of significance was calculated as to be 0.02 that is used in interpreting the data for the rejection or support of the hypothesis of the study in the next session.

The next inferential analysis of the data of this study was related to the degree of the relationship between the pretest and the posttest of preposition in each group of the study. This was indicated by calculating the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the pretest and posttest scores of preposition test of the experimental group of the study have been illustrated in table (5.3) below:

Table 5.3. Results of Correlation Between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Experimental Group
PREEXP=pretest of experimental group, POSTEXP=posttest of experimental group

		PREEXP	POSTEXP
PREEXP	Pearson Correlation	1	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.846
	N	25	25
POSTEXP	Pearson Correlation	.041	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.846	
	N	25	25

Table (5.3) indicates that the correlation between the pretest and the posttest of the control group is $r = 0.41$ that is a representative of low relationship between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group, thus it shows that there was a significant progress in the experimental group.

The hypothesis of the study which targeted that using bi-lingual tasks does not affect Iranian EFL learners' written preposition errors was rejected. The results of the analysis of the study (see tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) could be employed to confirm this analysis; accordingly, the mean scores of the preposition test in the pretest and the posttest of the experimental group of the study were shown to be different. However, the degree of progress from the pretest to the post test of the study was not identical in the both groups: the experimental group participants outperformed in the posttest of preposition and as compared with the control group participants.

Discussion

By definition, Richards and Schmidt (2002) concisely state that contrastive analysis is based on the following three maxims: "a) the main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from L1; b) the difficulties can be predicted by CA; c) teaching materials can make use of CA to reduce the effects of interference".

Each language has its own set of grammar rules, so there are points of conflict when someone wants to learn a second language (James, 2007; Jie, 2008). Prepositions are frequently the most important aspect of these clash points. Usually prepositions come before the noun in English, but in some languages they come after, making them postpositions (Samara, 1999).

When it comes to the usage of prepositions students try to translate the English preposition with the equivalent in his/her mother tongue. So beginners in English are likely to use a preposition which they translate from their mother tongue to the target language (English) and this is rarely the right one.

Based on the findings of the present study L1 transfer has an influential role in preposition error of the Iranian EFL learners. So, the need for new approaches seems obvious and contrastive studies undoubtedly has an important role to play in connection with new development in grammar generally, and prepositions specifically with new tendencies in training of SL teachers.

Through the analysis of scores in this study the practicality of using bi-lingual task was proved

Based on the findings of this study it seems that not only the selection of preposition but also their teaching should be with reference to first language. Fisiak (1981) claims that Contrastive Analysis needs to be carried out in spite of some shortcoming because not all Contrastive Analysis hypotheses are wrong.

Limitations of the Study

The present study suffers from some limitations. One limitation of the study is that the small sample size restricts the generalization of the achieved findings. Thus, there is a need for further research to cross-validate finding from the present study to a different and larger sample. In addition, Iran is not the only Persian speaking country in Asia and other language varieties of Persian are spoken elsewhere so that further similar cross-linguistic studies are called for the investigation of language prepositions among other Persian-speaking Asian EFL learners.

Moreover, the study was limited to one category of errors, which is interlingual errors. Finally, the results of the study were based on errors extracted from participants' written papers, while the rate of their productivity might vary in different situations and at different times; Therefore repetition of the same study with more participants is suggested.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study are of theoretical importance to the EFL practitioners in the teaching of pedagogic grammar to the EFL students. It seems that bi-lingual task can influence EFL learners' overall language ability. Bi-lingual tasks have an effective role in the successful use of preposition of Iranian EFL learners. Since teaching prepositions is of outmost importance to the EFL students, a conscious knowledge of those prepositions will help them in their struggle towards the acquisition, manipulation and production of English as a foreign language. There will be an ongoing challenge on the part of the educators, researchers and teachers working in the EFL paradigm to find better methodologies to teach prepositions to Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, the findings of the present study should shed some light on the teaching and learning of grammar in our country.

The pedagogical implications of this study can in part inform Iranian syllabus designers and material developers to consider the level of cross-linguistic difficulty in use of prepositions in selection and grading of materials such as the unit organization of course books. Likewise, another implication is to enlighten the knowledge and understanding of Iranian language teachers as how to provide learners with more efficient corrective feedback while treating preposition errors made in the classroom.

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THE PROMISING FUNCTION OF CULTURE INCLUSION IN ELT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the relationship between language and culture is crucial in the process of learning another language. Using a language in authentic contexts is not only a matter of merely using linguistic forms, but rather it is a means of conveying meaning for actual communication and interaction. It is language in its cultural context that creates meaning. In other words, creating and interpreting meaning is done within a cultural framework. This article provides an overview of culture and its relevance in the context of language teaching. In this article, the place of "culture" in the foreign language classroom and the importance of culture inclusion in language education have been highlighted. This review suggests that language and culture are interwoven, and as such it becomes extremely essential and relevant to include cultural side of the work into language classes; a practice which capture individual differences of language learners to enhance optimal learning .

Key words: Cultural inclusion; Second language learning; Educational context.

Introduction

Language learners and teachers all over the world have become more aware of the value of foreign language competence and cross-cultural understanding. With population diversity, a growing number of educators and students recognize the significance of multiculturalism. The need for developing cultural understanding within the language program is evident. The importance of cultural inclusion in academic syllabi must be a main concern in education as our students learn to live in an increasingly interdependent world.

Knowing a language without having information about its culture does not make sense (Pulverness, 2003). Bennett (1993) calls a person who speaks a foreign language well but does not understand the culture of that language as a "fluent fool", an expression which implies the importance of culture inclusion in language learning process. Therefore, the role of foreign language teachers has gained importance since they serve as a medium to teach both the language and the culture of the foreign language. There are also some researchers who think that learning dynamic and actual culture does not take place inside the classrooms. Krashen (1982) argues that neither language nor culture can be learnt in classrooms since they are not suitable places for this aim. Damen (1987) claimed that classrooms are only appropriate for language rules.

The incorporation of elements of the target language culture in foreign language teaching has gained lots of attention in recent years. McKay (2003) maintains that culture influences language teaching both linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. For example, while some textbooks provide examples from the target culture, some others use source culture materials.

Cultural literacy is a need for both language learners and teachers. Teachers must be familiar with the differences among linguistic cultures.

Omaggio (1993) asserted that although teaching culture is considered important by most teachers, it has remained insubstantial in many language classes. An investigation of teachers' understanding of the culture, as well as the difficulties and challenges they face in their implementation, can provide guidance as to how to incorporate culture into their language teaching more effectively. Incorporating culture into language teaching classrooms and activities is thus vital as it will bring about positive changes in foreign language teaching. Furthermore, some teachers have reported several challenges in implementing culture into their classes and activities.

Meaning of Culture

Certainly many definitions of culture exist. Some people consider food, clothing, music, art, or literature as culture while others associate culture with conventions such as social interaction patterns, values, ideas, and attitudes.

Teachers need to define what culture is before students can engage in interactive cultural discussions. According to Cohen, et al. (2003), culture is recognized as the beliefs, values, customs, products, and the communication styles of a given society. Bodley (1994) describes culture simply as "what people think, make, and do." It is worth saying that instead of feeding the students what culture is, teachers can first brainstorm.

Interaction between Culture and Foreign Language Teaching

According to Zhao (2011), there is a strong link between culture and language learning and teaching. Byram and Kramsch (2008) asserted that language is functionless without its proper cultural context. Teachers believe that familiarizing students with the daily lives of the target culture paves the way to an understanding of the target culture. Teachers should keep in mind that both local and target cultures are of great importance, in this way students can compare and see the differences between the target and their own local cultures.

Language teachers are recognizing the need to incorporate sociocultural factors into their classrooms (Palmer and Sharifian, 2007); however, they do not possess a method on how to introduce cultural elements into the lessons.

Culture offers several benefits to language classes. It can extend students' language proficiency. Culture teaching is an essential supplement for language teaching which enables students to enjoy their language learning. Obviously learning target language culture can reinforce students' understanding of the world and cultivate the cultural awareness. Culture learning is informative, as well as interesting, which covers language, culture, customs, ethics, science, social issues and so forth. Students are exposed to various information which appeals to their taste. What they learn will be of great use in their daily lives.

Teachers' Familiarity with the Target Culture

It is emphasized that without the insights into the target culture, foreign language teaching is inaccurate and incomplete. Acquiring a foreign language means a lot more than studying grammatical structure and vocabulary in isolation. Teachers must be acquainted with the differences among linguistic cultures. An effective method and practical technique of teaching culture is very important in language teaching, so every teacher should realize its importance and necessity and find some practical techniques to carry out culture teaching in language teaching. Teachers can provide cultural information, and teach students to express themselves correctly in different occasions. Teachers' cultural competence includes having some aspects of cultural knowledge such as having an idea of how to use culture for different purposes, being able to use culture based on the setting and the students' needs, and showing creativity in the production and understanding different types of texts conveying cultural information, in addition to knowing how to preserve communication in spite of insufficiency of cultural knowledge.

Activities to Make Students Culturally Aware

Learners cannot communicate with people in the target language appropriately unless they are aware of the target language culture. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes that target culture instruction facilitates learners' target language proficiency. Culture-based activities can be used to develop and enhance not only students' language skills but also their awareness of various culture-sensitive issues. Teachers should create useful and practical cultural contexts. Culture can be pushed forward through communicative activities inside classrooms. Games, role plays, conversations, video clips, discussions

and comparisons of local and target cultures are examples of culture-based activities. A strategy to encourage students to explore and use new knowledge of a culture to simulate authentic situations is the use of role plays. The activities can vary from warm-ups to homework tasks in the units. Various culture-based tasks and exercises help the students to improve their communicative and linguistic competences in English.

Teachers should apply an effective method to teach culture in their language classes. Teachers need to teach the “cultural texture” stated by Oxford (1994) to their students. In order to meet this texture, Dai (2011) suggests that teachers should vary among three different parameters including **Information Sources** (the Internet, Films and TV, Encyclopedias, Literature, Background Information, Anecdotes, Fieldwork), **Activity Types** (Conducting Topic-oriented Activity, Taking Activity Log, Selecting Authentic Materials, Employing Prediction, Doing Research-based Learning), and **Positive Classroom Interactions**.

According to Cullen (2004), deliberate contrasts within a culture should be taken into consideration. Teachers must create cultural texture in a way that both positive and negative aspects of the culture are covered simultaneously. The classroom interaction creates a positive mutual learning environment.

Challenges to Implementing Culture into Foreign Language Teaching

Different researchers have identified different challenges that teachers face when attempting to implement target culture in their language classrooms. The main problem in foreign language education is that the students are not able to use the target language effectively and appropriately for intercultural communication. Culture-based activities have not been designed in course books efficiently enough to be able to put target culture issues into practice completely. Many teachers fail to recognize the interface between language and culture. It is shown that teachers experience certain problems while teaching since they either cannot deal extensively with the target language culture or it has been ignored completely (Sercu, 2005).

To Gonen and Saglam (2012), one of the problems teachers can face is lack of time to teach the target language culture due to the intensive curriculum. Teachers believe that students can learn the culture later namely after being mastered over the four immediate skills of the target language (listening, speaking, reading and writing). However, this ‘later’ never seems to come for most students. Another problem deals with the teachers’ fear of not having enough knowledge of the target culture.

The third problem is the fact that teachers are not sufficiently trained to incorporate culture into their language teaching classrooms and activities. The fourth problem can be defined as the students’ misunderstanding of the target culture since they seek the target culture only within their own framework of local and native culture. The context of learning, the large number of students in classes, the wrong system of the educational system, and the nature and structure of the language books are the constraints some other teachers point out as impeding the incorporation of culture into their teaching within their classrooms.

Students who may never travel abroad or even meet an English native speaker might question why they need to study culture. However, as the world becomes more interconnected, we must help our students understand that it is more important than ever for them to be able to activate their cultural literacy to understand not only other cultures, but their own as well. Teachers must also stress that culture is just one of the many aspects of human behavior.

Conclusion

Culture has a great influence on the language learning process and the way people use the language. The concept that learning a language is not only learning the linguistic knowledge but also its culture has been greatly emphasized. The incorporation of language culture into language learning was indicated to enhance learners’ international understanding, reinforce their communicative competence, and raise their learning motivation. If students are not exposed to the target culture, they may have difficulties in their relations with people from other cultures.

The language classes which incorporate culture aim at improving one’s understanding of the language and the people who speak it. Therefore, studying English culture is not an arbitrary but a necessary activity for ELT educators as prospective language teachers.

Teachers use the culture as a tool to highlight the differences and similarities among different cultures and the speakers of these cultures. Teachers use varieties of culture-based activities in their

classrooms. Games, role plays, conversations, video clips, discussions and comparisons of local and target cultures are examples of culture-based activities.

A number of constraints are pointed out by the teachers as impeding the incorporation of the target culture in their language classes. Such constraints include lack of time, teachers' fear of not having enough knowledge of the target culture, insufficient training for teachers, the students' misunderstanding of the target culture, the context of learning, the large number of students in classes, the wrong system of the educational system, and the nature and structure of the language books.

The findings of this study suggest that a culture-inclusion class can be significantly helpful in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession. This study has implications for a culture class in the curriculum of language teaching departments due to its contributing role in the development of communicative competence as well as other skills in the instruction of any language.

The findings can also be informative to administrators, educators, curriculum designers and syllabus planners in discovering the challenges language teachers face in implementing culture in their language teaching. With this information in mind, they can take steps to remove the difficulties to the extent possible and thus prepare the ground for more successful language teaching. Teachers should be given more opportunities to implement culture into language teaching by flexible Curriculum developers and syllabus planners.

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TASK SELF- ASSESSMENT AND READING SKILL OF EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female students among 160 learners of English as a foreign language. The main purpose of the paper is to find out the role of task self-assessment in EFL learning and then improving reading ability. In this study, Oxford placement test, TOEFL test, task self-assessment Questionnaire were used to assess the relationship between task self-assessment and reading comprehension score. One hundred and thirty participants were chosen based on oxford placement test. Reading test was run. A questionnaire was given to students to measure their level of task self-assessment. Spearman rank- order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test by using SPSS 22 to answer the research question and to investigate the possible relationship between task self-assessment, and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners. The finding of the study revealed that there is a medium relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female student.

Keywords: Self-evaluation - Reading skill - Intrinsic motivation - Task self-assessment

1. Introduction

Self-assessment practices in the classroom has an effect on teachers in that they involve “making explicit what is normally implicit” and required the students to become more active and aware of their own learning, as noted by Black et al (2003, p. 60; 2004, p. 16). According to Crooks (2001) explained assessment is “any process that provides information about thinking, achievement or progress of students” (p. 1). Blanche and Merino (1989) summarized the literature on self-assessment of foreign language skills and pointed out that self-assessment accuracy would lead to learner autonomy and help teachers to become aware of learners’ individual needs.

Also, they reported that self-assessment practices “appeared to have increased the learners’ motivation” (p. 324). According to Sullivan and Hall (1997) students who overestimate their performance are not clear about the standard of judging their work and there should be some guidance about the teacher’s expectation. She also found that self-assessment process leads to learners’ autonomy but she did not mention that self-assessment can be useful for employing it in class or not. Brookhart (1997) suggests that self- evaluation encourages students to think of what is important for them in the process of learning.

According Oskarson (1978) Self-assessment which is also known as self-evaluation is a process in which students estimate their own knowledge and skills. Self-assessment is the ability by which students can judge their performance and make decision about themselves and their abilities. Students’ involvement in the teaching-learning process is important for there is much evidence to suggest that students’ self-assessment helps improve their performance. Assessment has “the most powerful influence on student learning” (George & Cowan, 1999, p.8). Reading comprehension strategies help readers get meaning from text. Readers employ prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading.

Yu (2003) states that a good summary can prove useful for assessment of reading comprehension since it contains the relevant important ideas, distinguishes accurate information from opinions, and reflects the structure of the text itself. The implications for this line of research are that children view pictures in books and construct meaning according to (a) their ongoing construction of a sensible story schema from the pictures and (b) their previous experiences with similar pictures, schemata, and stories. Additionally, comprehension requires the application of a variety of strategic processes

(Paris, Wasik, &, 1991; Pressley et al., 1994) that include making inferences, identifying main ideas, summarizing, predicting, monitoring, and backtracking.

These processes of comprehension may be influenced by vocabulary and language development to some extent, but according to Bransford and McCarrell (1974), "Comprehension results only when the comprehender has sufficient a linguistic information to use the cues specified in linguistic input to create some semantic content that allows him to understand" (p.204). The term "task" is often used interchangeably with activity or process. Tasks may be identified and defined at multiple levels of abstraction as required to support the purpose of the analysis. L2 reading research has shown that learner's performance on comprehension task also varies according to the task used.

Wolf (1993) investigated that such variation can be attributed to two factors: the type of task used to assess comprehension and the language in which the task is presented and carried out. In a study where she examined the effects of task type, language of assessment, and target language experience on learners' ability to demonstrate comprehension on post-reading tasks, Wolf found that subjects at both the beginning and advanced levels performed better on selected response tasks than on constructed response tasks. She argues that tasks requiring construction of responses in the target language have a debilitating effect on test-takers' performance.

According to Baniabdelrahman (2010) teachers assess whether students are able to comprehend the general idea of a text; recognize the type of a text, e.g. interactive, informative, narrative, or evaluative; arrange the sequence of information in a text; use pre-reading activities to predict what a text would be about; guess the meanings of particular words from context; extract specific information from a text; and use different reading strategies, e.g. skimming, scanning, speed reading, paced reading, or timed reading. There has been previous work on scoring summaries as part of the automated document summarization task (Nenkova and McKeown, 2011).

In that task, automated systems produce summaries of multiple documents on the same topic and those machine generated summaries are then scored by either human raters or by using automated metrics such as ROUGE. (Madnani, Burstein, Sabatini & O'Reilly, 2013) investigated Automated Scoring of a Summary Writing Task Designed to Measure Reading Comprehension. They introduced the Reading for Understanding cognitive framework and how it motivated the use of a summary writing task in a reading comprehension assessment. They described a preliminary, feature-driven approach to scoring such summaries and showed that it performed quite well for scoring the summaries about two different passages.

The present study has educational significance and extends professionals' understanding of possible relation between task self-assessment and reading skill. This paper makes an attempt to consider the following question: Is there any relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian students?

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the participants were 160 students who were learning English as a foreign language at institute in Iran. They were female students. They were from five different classes and had the same teacher. Their ages varied between 14 to 18 years old. In order to choose a homogenous group the researcher used an oxford placement test. Among these, 130 students who had one SD below the mean and one SD above the mean were selected. All these 130 students involved in the study and took part in all the task self-assessment research.

2.1. Instruments

The instruments for data collection were consisted of oxford placement test, TOEFL test and task self-assessment test. First, The Oxford Placement Test measures students' proficiency. And it was designed to assess students' knowledge. According to Dave Allan (1985) it is designed to measure a test taker's ability to understand a range of grammatical forms and the meanings they convey in a wide range of contexts. Second, TOEFL is a trademark of ETS (Educational Testing Service), a private non-profit organization, which designs and administers the tests. In the present study, the reading test was chosen from Broukal (2005) Published by Peterson's test book.

The reading comprehension test included ten passages, with reading comprehension questions in multiple choice formats. The students had to read a given text then to select the correct item. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was (.742) which means that the test was reliable. The result of reliability indicates that the instrument could be considered as a reliable tool for the main study.

Third, Task self- assessment included the items of self-assessment in the class. This questionnaire was organized by the researcher. The content validity of translation was ensured by two EFL, PhD instructors. In order to check the validity of items, the back translation process was done. The test included 20 questions. It was given to the students and asked them to select the correct item. The scale for task self-assessment questionnaire was five points ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly disagree". The time allotted for the test was 30 minutes. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was (.761) which means that the questionnaire was reliable.

First, in order to select the students among 160 students of five classes, an oxford placement test was run. 130 of them with intermediate level of proficiency selected as a homogenous group. Then the reading test was conducted by the researcher. The time allotted for the test was 60 minutes. After that the task self-assessment questionnaire was run. Spearman rank- order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test using SPSS 22 to answer the research questions and to investigate the possible relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners the output generated from this procedure (Spearman results) was presented below.

Table 1: Correlation between Task Self-Assessment and Reading Skill of Iranian EFL Students

		reading scores
Task self-assessment	Correlation Coefficient	-.300**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	130

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The spearman rank- order correlation test measured the association between task self-assessment and reading skill. The correlation reported in the table ($Rho = -.300$) was negative due to the nature and direction of the items used in the questionnaire and indicated the strength of the relationship between these two variables. The value of correlation was statistically significant because the p-value of (.001) was lower than (.01). The result of the Spearman Rank-Order was interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) classification. Cohen (1988, pp. 79-81) suggested the following guidelines for interpreting the results of the correlation coefficient:

Table 2: Cohen's Guidelines for Interpreting the Results of the Correlation Coefficient

Interpretation	Correlation value
Small correlation	.10 to .29
Medium correlation	.30 to .49
Large correlation	.50 to 1.0

The result of the Spearman Rank Order was interpreted based on Cohen's classification .There was a Medium correlation between the two variables ($\rho = .300 \leq .5$), suggesting "Medium" relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

3. Discussion

According to the result of this research, we conclude that when the students' task self-assessment increases, their performances in English reading comprehension increase and vice versa. These findings are consistent with Madnani, Burstein, Sabatini & O'Reilly (2013) investigated Automated Scoring of a Summary Writing Task Designed to Measure Reading Comprehension. They investigated a cognitive framework for measuring reading comprehension that included the use of novel summary writing tasks.

Their results showed that the automated approach performs well on summaries written by students for two different passages. This finding of this thesis are compared with Bagheri and Faghih's (2012) study which was about the relationship between self-esteem, personality type and reading comprehension on both males and females, which showed a positive relationship between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension, and overall self-esteem and personality type, in general. Likewise, positive relationships between situational and task self-esteems with reading comprehension were shown but there wasn't a significant relationship between global self-

esteem and reading comprehension. There wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension.

4. Conclusions

This study investigated the relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female students among 160 learners of English as a foreign language. Then 130 students were chosen based on Oxford Placement Test. The task self-assessment questionnaire used for data collection and reading test was run. Based on the information obtained from the study, there was a significant correlation between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

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WORDS OF DOOM IN WINTER POEMS AKHAVAN SALES

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ABSTRACT

Words in everyday language have their dictionary meaning. But as they pass through normal norm, begins resurrection of words. Literature, especially poetry, is associated with deviating from the norm. This feature in the contemporary literature is analyzed in different ways. Akhavan that is from showbiz and popular poets has done most resurrection in his poems. The most important aspect of the resurrection of words in poetry ancient potand benefit structures of ancient poetry is with an array of spiritual and imagery. Omid in contemporary poetry is made construction that is rooted in times past. Words khorasani style has novel poem. And could use every day words and phrases create. new compounds cause them to be resurrected. And there by make a major contribution to the enrichment and development of the Persian language. in this paper an attempt has been the factors in the field of linguistics and the new stylistics are made resurrection words in poetry akhavan, should be identified and analyzed.

Key words: akhavan, resurrection words, escape norm, defamiliarization, contemporary poetry

Introduction

Belief in the resurrection of words originates from Russian Shklovsky views and Czech portraitists particularly Mocarovsky and Harrahek. Russian portraitists recognized two language processes from each other and named these two processes automatization and outstanding. Ninety-five years have passed since the publication of the thesis entitled "The Resurrection of the words" by Shklovsky, but still rereading their theory with respect to the evolution of twentieth-century literary theory of formalism to structuralism and structuralism to post-structuralism is essential. Russian structuralists say when every word goes away from his vocabulary field and is used in a new form and in a virtual concept, resurrection of words have been begun. At the present time, the resurrection of words echoes widely in Akhavan works. He selects a word based on aesthetic and semantic approaches and his beauty switching abilities not merely based on principals and certain rules. Apparent form and music of the words and letters and modulation way of them and their real and virtual meanings and also order of syllables (rhythmic) and phonetics of words (rhyme) have been considered by the poet. Akhavan utilizes his mental power integrity for protecting Persian language and reviving timeworn words and creating new combinations. The most important characteristic of Akhavan's poem is his language that talks with today language while adhering to the traditions. Akhavan has applied a type of historical language instead of another type of live language. It means he has given resurrection to historical and old Iranian words. Akhavan could make his own new thoughts in form of poet by finding independent language. Horras, the famous Roman poet and verbalist, says: "the language is like woods trees that is a collection of old and new leaves" (Shahindezhi, 1999: 134). He has could use words from today spoken language such as *damet garm*, *tipa khordeh*, *najoor* besides communicative and old words and make consistent these types of words and communications skillfully. Akhavan firstly said classic poems imitating Khorasanian poets' style. His first collection entitled Arghanoon has been written in this way. But his poetry path was changed after familiarizing with Nima. He started poetry with new style in winter notebook and in this way he went to where he could found a new style in Nima poetry. Akhavan is both modernist poet and innovator. Many of poets such as Shiraz Khajeh, Khayyam, Molana, and Sanayee have started innovations in their era. But their

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innovation, quantity, and quality are different. Therefore, innovation is not against the tradition but it is besides the tradition that has been a new concept in its era. He says in introduction of *Winter* collection: ((I have tried to go from Khorasan to Mazandaran through a shortcut, from yesterday Khorasan to today Mazandaran. I try to link nerves and healthy and correct vessels of a clean and common language that often is a live fabric of a stable bone of the past to today blood, beat, and feeling (Akhavan Sales, 2011: 13). Akhavan turned to innovation through old traditions. This Akhavan's innovation was not a return to the past but his intention was resurrection of Iranian tradition. M. Omid started familiarizing with Nima poetry that is clear at first poem of this collection (*Winter*) of course which is one of his raw experiences:

I never forget, never

That night, the world was world of grace and peace

I was and Tooran and the world had the pleasure

And it blinked eagerly and its face was toward us

The moon through the scrappy clouds (Akhavan Sales, 2011: 21)

The geometrical shape of this poem is as same as Nima fiction shape. However, five hemistiches that second and fourth hemistiches have a same rhyme but third and fifth hemistiches are free. The content is descriptive and romantic. Gradually, the poet learns four pieces and enters to Nima poetry field by saying *Satarvan* poems. *Satarvan* poems are the first Nima poetry of Akhavan. To *Winter* poet, his language does not have necessary stability but in *Winter* poem that we read it with a torrent of words, a impact music, and its up righting end, we see some attempts for achieving a particular procedure in some places. Sometimes a purpose is delightful in the poem that causes hopelessness. Gradually and with a caution we see an attitude to broken rhythmic which its perfection is observed in *Winter* poems. Saying *Winter* poems was simultaneous with the failure of August 18, 1953 (Mordad 28th, 1332). Undoubtedly, this poem was the most successful attempt of this poet until January 1956 (Dey 1334). Akhavan language in this collection is clean and refined. He utilizes a wide range of words and is never affected by a impasse (Shahindezhi, 1999: 155).

Resurrection of words in Akhavan's poetry

Some papers have been written according to investigations conducted about norm escaping and outstanding in Akhavan's poems. But it seems applicability of the word in Akhavan's poems needs more investigations. We try to investigate the various types of word resurrection in Akhavan's poem regarding Dr. Shafiee Kadkani's ideas about resurrection of words to find out in what fields, most resurrection has been performed and what useful effects it can have on our literary society. For this purpose, only collection *Winter* poem has been investigated as a sample. Before investigating the various types of word resurrection, it is necessary to state Dr. Shafiee Kadkani's idea about resurrection of words. He says: ((words are used in daily language in such a way that they are additions and dead and do not attract our attention but in a poem these dead are revived just through a brief displacement of words and a word placing in center of a hemistich also results in life of the other words. Dr. Shafiee Kadkani classifies the resurrection of words in two categories:

- a) Musical group including rhythmic, rhyme, row, and audio synchronizations
- b) Linguistic group including metaphor, figurative language, sensory, metonymy, briefness, omission, archaism, language combinations, defamiliarization, and saying paradox.

From view point of Dr. Shafiee Kadkani, if we say "it's raining", it is a usual application of the language. But if we say "I went to the desert, the love has been rained", the love word has been resurrected because this is an application against the general and usual application of the language (Shafiee Kadkani, 2010: 5-38). Akhavan is one of slight poets that vocabulary field of his speech is to extent of Persian literature history from third century to the contemporary age. And this extent of his vocabularies has been obtained under the effect of research and investigation in works of old poets especially Khorasanian style poets. The art of Akhavan is in this that he selects the words according to initial materials of Persian language and enters them in his own poem as though he causes the resurrection of these vocabularies and has revived them. Selection of these vocabularies has been done in an artistic way that not only does not cause boredom and disgust in the audience but also excites them. Forough Farrokhzad says about the art of Akhavan in applying words: ((he particularly pays attention to purity and originality of words and perceives real concept of words and places each of them in such a way that we cannot replace them with any word else (Nouri Ala, 1969: 204).

Akhavan pays attention to all semantic, musical, and emotional aspects of the words and makes them consistent with the other words as though these words have been revived. Akhavan applies various types of ancient and old words, Persian language contemporary words, slang words, and local dialects and languages with each other and makes intimacy and affection among them. Thus, we can consider Akhavan one of a few Persian language poets. Now, we investigate various types of resurrection words in Akhavan's Winter poem:

1- Word resurrection

The purpose of word resurrection in Akhavan's poem is innovative words that are a mental figment of Akhavan. Akhavan never has a lack of words in his own poems and invents new words against rules of word construction wherever it is necessary that components and elementary materials of all of them are available in Persian language. This type of pattern can help development and richness of Persian language and even can also be a good pattern to construct a word in the other sciences. Russian structuralists has named this type of word construction, word norm escaping. Kourosh Safavi says about word norm escaping: ((this type of norm escaping is one of methods that a poet highlights his own language through it. Thus he/she creates new words and applies them based on escaping from normative word construction)) (Safavi, 1994: 49). The order of word construction in Akhavan's poem is as follows:

1-1 Construction of combined words

1-1-1 Noun + verb stem

It is hidden into sturdy coffin of the darkness, not into **death-line** (*Marg Andood*) (Winter, 2010:109)

Or he says in the other place:

Like the **world rounding** (*Donya gard*) eagle

Its hunt in culmination of ether

Seeks and does not seek (Winter, 2010: 49)

1-1-2 Adjective + verb stem

Distressing (*parishan gard*) poet

Takes home way

With a rapider step (Winter, 2010: 50)

Mohaymeni says: ((poetry language does not comply from available order in its own different aspects and creates a new world, namely poetic world)) (Mohaymeni, 2000: 45). Akhavan has created this world in his own mind. He has constructed a place for a mythical creature, demon, in his own poetic world by adding suffix "*lakh*". Pay attention to the following hemistiches:

And that your clean spring from this plain full of demon (*divlakh*)

Was so distant and nobody knows

that mountains had generosity or it was Toor mountain (Winter, 2010: 90).

2- Resurrection of ancient words

Akhavan's interest to Iranian cultural heritage and his study and investigation in works and poets of the ancients result in development of his word field. One of important indices of Akhavan's poetic language is that he could revive the culture of Iranian original words and give them resurrection. He selects words among old synonym words and places them besides today words as though these words have re-risen and have born again. In selection of ancient words, he chooses words that can induce his expected meaning well. Akhavan creates a new poetic language for himself based on old language tradition and combining ancient words with today ones that are production of his unique mentality and individuality. Akhavan's poetic language is the field of innovation and reviving words. Every artist presents his/her own selections and secessions resulted from facing with outside world and reflection of his/her inside worlds in form of a new and innovative design in artistic raw material that is a portray of his/her art. Akhavan's portray of art is the resurrection of words, the words that are very structured, targeted, complicated and systematic that are originated from today language and even spoken language and dialectic ones. Akhavan is a linking ring between old words and today language that Bahar quotes about it: ((it has found cripple tone and closed, oppressed, and cagily forms after Mongol invasion)) (Bahar, 1991: 198). Akhavan refers to this case in one of his interviews and says: ((I bring the cultured language before Mongol decline into the poet essence and

these new approaches and this language became full of perfect novelty for me and placed old rhetorical features from view point of simplicity, health, accuracy, and correctness and the power of this force disposal to this sense and today beat and hesitation (Tahbaz, 1968: 16, 17). A service that Akhavan performed for Persian language words and revived them is very valuable, because he has amplified treasure of Persian language words to create friendship between old words and today ones. Abdul-Ali Dastgheib says: ((he greatly hoped to revive old words and was rightfully very strict about Persian literature heritage. His researches in Iranian literature and recognizing its delicate species and his commitment for keeping prosodic and Nimaian weight makes him different from the other new poets (Dastgheib, 1994: 31-32).

We can classified the ancient words used by Akhavan in his poems: 1- noun 2- verb and 3-letter

2-1-Noun

Ancient and old nouns that Akhavan used them in his poems and revived them are classified into two groups: 1-dead words 2-low usage words.

2-1-1-Resurrection of dead words

The purpose of resurrection of dead words is to use words that are not applicable in contemporary Persian language but Akhavan revived them and entered them into Persian language. The use of ancient words also exists in works of the other poets such as Nima, Shamlou, and Shafiee, but Akhavan selects words so artistic due to his perfect familiarization with rich culture of Persian words and places them beside today words that these forgotten words suddenly change their identity, became alive, grow longer, and construct a live and integrated unit with today words. Igelton says: ((the poem makes implication active and places the words in such situations that present their own extreme performance under pressure of around words and release the richest talent of themselves (Igelton, 2001: 140-142). Indeed, the words show their superior performance in Akhavan's poem. Pay attention to the selection of ancient words in the poem below:

Low-spirited earth, short-ceiling sky

dusty Sun (*Mehr*) and moon

it's winter (Igelton, 2001: 109)

the word *Mehr* is an ancient word that has been placed besides today words. If Akhavan used today meaning of *Mehr*, namely sun (*Khorshid*) instead and said:

Low-spirited earth, short-ceiling sky

dusty Sun (*Khorshid*) and moon

it's winter

the order, arrangement, and music of the other words were disrupted and the poem missed its own attraction, but the word *Mehr* has been revived and has caused revival of the other words. Also, pay attention to the resurrection of *Ghariv* (scream) in the couplet below:

I heard a scream (*Ghariv*) in my ears

The timpani with infelicitous and irritant song

is the cursed bell of the low-spirited,

have risen from the graves for subsistence motivation (Igelton, 2001: 33)

Some of the other ancient words have also been resurrected in this collection: *Blour Ajin* (p. 109), *Dakhmeh* (p. 37), *Zamharir* (p. 178), *Safir* (p. 64), *Sala* (p. 64), *Zarvash* (p. 163), *Boghnoudeem* (p. 163), *Hamgenan* (p. 179), *Dorj* (p. 30), *Sarir* (p. 30), etc.

2-1-2-Resurrection of low-usage words

Some of words are not dead words but do not have any application in our contemporary language. Dr. Shafiee Kadkani says: ((the concept of archaism in our viewpoint is not related to the usage of dead words even selecting older pronunciation of a word is a type of archaism, however, the poet can utilize various forms of a word according to his/her musical and mental need that only one of them is applicable for public in usual norm of a live language (Shafiee Kadkani, 1991:25).

Akhavan's familiarization with old texts and his domination on Persian words had caused he necessarily revived these low usage words in his own poem and solved some of word needs. Some of these words are:

Lik (but) (p. 116), *Nac* (now) (p. 196), *Inak* (just now) (p. 163), *ze ensan ke* (from human that) (p. 200), *Bedan san* (so that) (p. 200), *Alak* (p. 69), *Besan* (like) (p. 142), *Bedin san* (so this) (p. 160) ...

A typical usage of these words in Akhavan's poem:

I prostrated against his/her height but (*lik*) my heart was beating

I saw him/her that slowly laughed for my unobtrusiveness (same: 29)

The word *lik* (but) is a low usage one, but correct selection has also caused the resurrection of this word.

Or he says in another place:

Nac (now) I had a gift for you from love city

To be your confidant in separation-night sorrow (same: 30).

2-2-Resurrection of ancient verbs

Akhavan revived the ancient verbs and used them besides today Persian words as though they have resurrected again. In a usual language, a sentence finishes with a verb but in poem language, a sentence starts from the other side of the verb. Akhavan selects these verbs with enormous obsession. One of the reasons of Akhavan's attitude to the selection of ancient verbs is his tendency to mythologies and Iranian epic soul. In importance from aspect of verb archaism, that is enough that the phrases without old structural verbs are less capable to show their own archaistic face, however it is possible to have heavy words and structure (Alipour, 1999: 316).

Some usages of these words in Akhavan's poem:

We have slept (*bogh nou de im*) in vicinity of the sky's untrue mercy, man

That there is not any memory of them

If there is, it is only in ominous deception of the other clean lives (same: 63).

Akhavan creates an epic space in his own poem like Khorasanian style poets by selection of the verb *baramad* (rise).

The darkness rose (*baramad*) from fume straw back of the seas.

Following it, the other darkness rose with a tricky glance, with a hanging tear (same: 53)

One of the significant points in Akhavan's poem is the applying old verbs besides slang words. He applies them besides each other in such a way that both slang words and old ones resurrect together. When Akhavan says in his famous poem of the Winter:

I have come (*amadastam*) tonight to pay back the loan (*vam gozaram*)

And to put your debt besides the cup (*hesabat ra kenar jam bogzaram*) (same: 109)

Vam gozardan (Payin back the loan) and *hesab ra kenar jam gozardan* (put the debt besides the cup) are slang words that Akhavan has applied them with Neishabour old verbs, *amadastam*, and has given these words an epic space. Akhavan sometimes takes apart the verb to create resurrection and put the main part of the verb at the beginning of the poem and revives the verb in this way. Furthermore, he gives his own poem a kind of archaistic identity. Pay attention to a sample about that in this collection.

He takes apart the compound verb *natvanad deed* (cannot see) and to emphasize on the meaning of the *deed* (see), he used it before helping verb, *natvanad* (cannot). The other samples of the ancient verbs in this collection:

Nemiyarast goft (p. 29), *sar bar keshideh and* (p. 33), *baramad* (p. 53), *nahadastand* (p. 67), *bararad* (p. 71), *sar bar niarad kard* (p. 107), *ardha bikht parvizan avikht* (p. 38), *yazi* (p. 108), *bogh nou deh iem* (p. 163).

2-3- Resurrection of words by selecting ancient letters

Akhavan has also used ancient Khorasanian style letters to resurrect his own words. As well as emphasis on complement, he has given his own poem an epic space. Akhavan has applied ancient and old letters in following forms in this collection.

2-3-1-Applying old preposition alone:

I remember from (*ze*) that day and time well

Every peace and happiness was with (*kandar*) you (same: 90).

2-3-2-Applying two prepositions for a complement

Akhavan like Khorasanian style poets has applied two prepositions for a complement to emphasize on the complement and its resurrection.

In to (*dar be*) pelican beak

a soft green leaf full of dew (same: 39).

2-3-3-Applying preposition at beginning and the end of the complement

**Written on the stone
that you don't read a Hadith (same: 154)**

3-Resurrection of slang and colloquial words

Yadollah Royaee, a contemporary poet, says: ((one who is busy on the words, a preoccupation before words, has an eternal preoccupation and the word is our eternal guest. Each of us, poets, has a language in the language)) (Royaee, 2002: 25). Akhavan's language is similar. It means slang and colloquial words accompanying with contemporary Persian words and ancient ones also resurrect in his poem. Akhavan's language is not a language in the streets and markets, but there are street and market colloquial words in his poems. Akhavan has applied slang and colloquial words in following forms in this collection: 1-slang words 2-slang sounds and 3-interjection noun

3-1-Resurrection of slang words

One of the Akhavan's innovations is the selection of colloquial words in the poem. Akhavan has stated this issue in this form. ((I have taken interests from slang language of the time. I have placed the words that are used in the slang language besides old ones but the incorporation type of them is without any intention)) (Kakhi, 1992: 465-466). Some colloquial words in Akhavan's poem are as follows:

**Your breath be warm (*damet garm*) and your head be good
you answer my hello (same: 108)
in place of harp and wail of reed *Ya Abalfazl*
or the wail of the paupers and the poor (same: 67)**

3-2-Resurrection of words using slang sounds

Akhavan applies his inducing ability of language and whole of his artistic creation to communicate with the readers by reviving words. He sometimes selects a sound came from public slang language. He has known this ability and uses it well. Some samples of sounds in this collection are: *ve, vay, ey, hoom...*

**Wow (*vay*) do kind neighbors wake up to help?
This tyrant fire burns my foundation
I scream hey! Hey! (same: 86)**

3-3-Resurrection of interjection noun

In Akhavan's poem, language phonemes also play a role for inducing meaning, space, emotions, and feelings. Substantially, mysterious and artistic attitude of Akhavan such as world's mysterious one is in inducing property of their points, latency and veils. Phonemes and points are exactly similar to clearness. Interjections indicate sounds such as the special sound of a human or an animal and or colliding something to another thing.

**There is no sound except *pet pet* of a wretched candle in vicinity of the death
glum and close to morning and its hand is busy on the death (same: 157)
or he says in another place:
the thirsty fell in whisper (*pech pech*)
this is that same cloud having thousands of light (same: 54)**

4-Resurrection of dialectal words

In order to use a huge treasure of Persian words, Akhavan also applies words and dialectal words that are special for a region. He takes great care and delicacy and gives resurrection to these words. Examples of dialect words are:

and we throw our own boats into the endless, green and velvet-like sea such as almond *kol* (same: 160)

akhavan says in one of his interviews that ((*kol e badam*)) is a Yazdi dialect and I heard it from Yazdi people. Another sample of dialectal words, *khosbideh* (asleep), is given:
on the asleep ground (*khosbideh*), the picture of willow branches (same: 28)

5-Semantic resuurection

The purpose of semantic resurrection in Akhavan's poem is artistic usage of types of simile, metaphor, irony-diagnosis, paradox, and creating sense that are stated in spiritual and novel frame. A

poet or a writer do not disrupt usual system of word or sentence construction but states an issue by using usual words and imperative sentences which its context is against tradition and habit (Shiri, 2001: 13). Akhavan is also an innovative poet in applying spiritual techniques. He uses these literary arrays in such a way that gives his own speech meaning.

5-1-Simile

Simile remembers similarity that exists between two things from one or more aspects. It has been said that simile is news of likened thing and it is a sharing of two things in one or more adjectives and it has been said that simile is describing a thing to similar and close ones from one or more aspects (Shafiee Kadkani, 2009: 53).

Also, Akhavan such as Nima is of poet types who is modernist and tradition breaker in applying spiritual arrays. Similes used in Akhavan's poem are sometimes expressive and sometimes widespread that their element needs more mental attempts. Shamisa says: ((it is worth to think that strange similes against trite ones namely stereotypical and repetitive are resulted from poet's creative mind and show his/her novelty. Artists permanently increase world dimensions, fields, and meanings through this way and widen world (Shamisa, 1991: 108). Akhavan also has word resurrection in the field of simile. Pay attention to an example of simile in Winter poem:

Rival! Host! Your yearly and monthly guest vibrates like wave at back of the door (same: 108)

Akhavan similes the vibration of human body due to chill to the vibration of sea waves but he omits sea here and uses wave. The word ((wave)) remembers sea vibration and also vibration of human body. The word ((wave)) has been resurrected here.

6-Metaphor

Kazzazi says: ((one of the poetry techniques that using it a poet tries to place his/her own speech in the reader's mind more and more is the metaphor. The metaphor is tighter and more hidden than simile that a poet widens it against a reader or an audience)) (Kazzazi, 1994: 94). In contrary with simile that both sides are clear, in metaphor a reader should be able to discover hidden relations in the poet's words. More mental attempt for an audience to discover these relations, more literary pleasure will be provided. When Akhavan uses a meaning instead of another one, walk into a new field of speech, a speech that power of describing reality will be possible in it. Metaphor in Akhavan's poem is innovative, novel, and is accompanied by artistic creation, so that reader's mind achieves artistic meaning after an attempt and this meaning remains in mind. An example of metaphor in Akhavan's poem is as follows:

**a garden without leaves
its laugh is a tearful blood
gallop eternally on the yellow maned horse
fall is the king of seasons (same: 167)**

Yellow maned horse is a metaphor for yellow leaves of trees in autumn. Akhavan is innovative and well-known in constructing novel and new metaphors. Barahani says: ((tongue is forced to say something in a poem that never says them normally (Barahani, 1992: 55). We can see an example in Akhavan's poem.

**the wetted shadow in night beaches
an old and smoky tower (same: 43)**

He similes night to a sea that walls of a tall tower smoked and shadowed due to night darkness are wetted in night sea. It means they have had a greater darkness. About this poem it can be said that the poet has used soaking instead of darkness and has caused its outstanding.

7-Paradox

Paradox means nonsensical and contradictory speech and also means an idea or statement that is in conflict with publicly acceptable ideas. Idiomatically, it is a language containing a contradicted concept apparently so that it seems meaningless at first glance, but behind its apparently absurd meaning, a fact is hidden. This apparent contradiction of sentence concept attracts attention of audience or reader and results in discovering its beautiful hidden concept (Mirsadeqi: paradox). Akhavan has applied paradox in an artistic form that attracts the audience mind to challenge with the issue and forces him/her to exploration. More pleasure has been earned for the audience due to this mind attempt. Thirsty sea is a paradox used by Akhavan in the following poem:

**I come with a thousand great hopes,
and this my own tiny cup
I come to go on thirsty sea way
from this huge Beal ... (same: 45)**

Logically, a sea cannot be thirsty, but it can help induction of mental concepts from view point of a poet. Here, story has been stated by a small pelican that calls everyone toward own-self and is a guide for the others who have been neglected and while they have blessing are excluded from them. Here, paradox has been applied to emphasize this issue.

8-Making a sense

Making sense is the mixing two senses in the language in such a way it increases effectiveness of speech by creating spiritual music and causes its beauty. Making sense usually causes thinking about an issue. Akhavan has done this job very well and highlights his own favorite concepts.

**I thirsty of morning so that a world drowns
in clear lights of its mood, Ah!
death saddle is red and bitter, my life was on lips (same: 69)**

Akhavan mixes red color that is related to sense of sight with bitter that is related to sense of taste and emphasizes on the word (death).

Music resurrection of the words

Akhavan also has necessary skill and art in the field of poem music. He repeats a word in every where necessary and doing this he causes resurrection of that word as well as creating music in the poem. Repetitive words are divided into two groups in Akhavan's poem: 1-noun 2-verb

8-1-Noun

Akhavan sometimes causes resurrection of a word by repeating a noun as well as emphasis on it.

**Snow drink! Be flowered, burn
That this blood is our blood, the homeless
That this blood is hungry wolves'
That this blood is desert childrens' (same: 77)**

He repeats it in another place for emphasis and resurrecting time:

**Who was my enemy?
Only world's enemy
Both visible and hidden
A relentless soul
Time, time, time, time**

8-2-Verb

In following poem, Akhavan repeats the verb (come see) twice and causes more emphasis on it and highlighting it as well as creating music.

**Come see, come see
How I fight
How I make yellow the green blossoms**

9-Resurrectuion of words using language compounds

Shafiee Kadkani says: ((constructing compound is one of the factors that brings the language out of addicted state from view point of Russian formalists. The reader is already familiarized with the components of one compound and from view point of Russian formalists he/she is addicted with those components, but this compound may be in a form that creates wonder and defamiliarization in readers and outcome of this familiarization is that we discover the fact of things) (Shafiee Kadkani, 2010: 28). Akhavan who is an innovative and creative poet in applying types of new literary arrays also has skill in this field. He sometimes constructs new compounds using words that he is familiarized with them and consequently makes defamiliarization. An example of these compounds in Akhavan's poem is as follows:

**What does it say, with whom, Ah!
from that resultless flight in this poisonous ruin
like hell, four elements of fire and fire burned six directions and all of its clean feathers
where should distressed innocent bird land? (same: 148)**

Here, Akhavan is previously familiarized with the words (ruin) and (poisonous), but this word usually is used with the other nouns. He constructs a new compound through putting these two

words besides them that emphasizes on the word (ruin) as well as creating familiarization and resurrects them among hemistiches.

10- Symbolism in Akhavan's poem

Various definitions have already been presented for symbolism. These definitions are so disturbed that do not convince any thinkers. Symbolism means a thing that shows another thing through comparison. The relation between them is paraphrastic. In other words, a symbol is a kind of language marker that points to its own evidence with a paraphrastic relation. Akhavan believes that poem should be targeted and promising. He says: ((I always have given some duties to the literature and they have always been some social and ethical ones... I consider a work as following ones that have social and human being effects. My works are evidence that my purpose have been social, revolutionary, and human being ones)) (Pourjafi, 2005: 245). The hope in using symbolism language is greatly under effect of Nima, but the difference between symbols in Nima's poem with Akhavan's poem is that Nima's symbols are difficult and hard-understanding but Akhavan's symbols are intelligible with a little think. Akhavan has used symbols such as masticatory-Winter-barren in some his own poem in this collection. Some examples of symbols in Akhavan's poem:

My house has been fired, a heart-rending fire

This fire burns in every direction

Curtains and carpets with their warp and woof

I tearfully run in every direction

in fearsome and smoky fire.

Akhavan has used house as symbol of fatherland in this poem that has been burned by the fire of cruelty and burning warp and woof and curtains in that house are as symbol of destroying storages and properties of this land that were spoiled by foreigners. He resurrects them through applying them as symbol in his poem.

Conclusion

1. According performed investigations on words in Winter collection it can be said that Akhavan is of poets that his word range is extensive. He is an able poet in selecting words because he uses all of his mental ability to select the best word.
2. In selecting ancient words, contemporary Persian words, and dialectal and slang words, Akhavan artistically gathers them in a collection so that he has created friendship between them. He could greatly help treasure of Persian words in this field and revive contemporary Persian language again through Iranian original words.
3. By artistically selecting words, Akhavan revived them and caused resurrection of words in his poem. This resurrection of words can be a proper pattern for the other contemporary poets to use Iranian original words instead of using foreign words.
4. According to investigations performed in Winter collection, Akhavan has done most resurrection of words in the field of archaism. Applying these words is resulted from epic and national soul of the poet and his interest in Iranian nationality and culture. He could be as a connecting ring between old and today contemporary language and this is valuable for contemporary literature.
5. Akhavan never encounter with a lack of words as well as applying ancient and slang words besides contemporary Persian words and invents new words for induction of his mental concepts. The main material of these words is initial Persian language materials. Applying this type of innovation can be a suitable pattern for the other sciences.

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THE ROLE OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS' FEEDBACK ON TEACHING IN THEIR READING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the role of Iranian EFL students' feedback on teaching on their reading achievement. Marsh's (1982) Students' Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) questionnaire was translated into Persian and modified. Then it was administered to 20 high-school third graders for eight weeks to test the null hypothesis. In the control group no questionnaire was administered and there were no treatment. After eight weeks of teaching in both groups, students' reading comprehension skill was evaluated by administering a reading comprehension test taken from Key English Test (KET) twice, a post-test and a delayed post-test. The results indicated that getting students' feedback on teaching at the end of each session had a positive effect on their reading achievement and in fact improved it. But the researcher did not see any significant change in students' reading achievement in the control group.

Keyterms: students' feedback on teaching, reading achievement, and EFL learners.

1. Introduction

Few issues in education have been more controversial than the evaluation of teachers. Students' evaluations of their instructors have been considered to be a valuable source of information for educational researchers over many decades (Watchel, 1998). The use of student evaluations can provide instructors and administrators with both formative and summative information associated with instructor effectiveness (Murray, Rushton & Paunonen, 1990). Although most educators agree that the major purpose of teacher evaluation is to maintain and improve the quality of instruction, it nevertheless remains an emotional issue. It is said to have effects on the learning of students. This study aims to investigate the effect of students' evaluation of teaching not on improving teaching quality but on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Reflective teaching is a way through which teachers can look inward both within themselves and within the course they offer. One of the three fold purposes of reflective teaching is enhancing the quality of learning opportunities one is able to provide in the language classroom. One way to achieve this goal through reflective teaching can be students' feedback.

During the past decades lots of studies have been done in order to investigate the importance of feedback in second / foreign language teaching and learning. For example, the effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing by John Bitchener, Stuart Young, and Denise Cameron (2005).

One kind of feedback is student feedback which is an approach in reflection and reflective teaching (Bartlett, Leo, 1990). Getting feedback from students is very important for teachers for planning. When teachers are able to evaluate what went well and what did not, they can adjust and monitor instruction much more effectively.

What is missing here is the importance of getting students' feedback at the end of each session and its influence on the students' performances and more precisely their achievement. The researcher in this study wants to find out how getting students' feedback on teaching will affect their performance in reading comprehension of parts of the lessons.

The current study intends to investigate whether providing opportunity for students to give feedback on teaching at the end of each session has any influence on their reading achievement.

Many studies have been done regarding the importance and influence of feedback on teaching or learning a foreign or second language. The purposes of different scholars have been on different issues such as, influence of written feedback on writing and so on.

As the researcher found no empirical research in this regard in an Iranian context and among Iranian EFL learners, he was motivated to examine the effects of students' feedback on teaching on their achievement in reading comprehension.

Appropriate student learning outcomes focus on the results of effective teaching. Students report learning more in courses that provide an intellectual challenge, include meaningful learning experiences, and lead to an increased interest in the subject. Actively engaging students in the learning process stimulates their thinking and leads to learning that is "deeper" and more lasting. Additionally, when students understand that they are active participants in the teaching/learning process, their sense of responsibility for their own learning often increases, leading to greater motivation and enhanced learning. It is important, however, to ensure that student learning is consistent with course objectives. Furthermore, flexibility in teaching approaches permits faculty to enhance student learning by responding to diverse student backgrounds and learning styles.

1.1 Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following question:

Does students' feedback on teaching at the end of each session improve their reading achievement?

2. Background

In different studies and literature feedback has been defined in different ways, and there is no single accurate definition. Feedback used in educational contexts is generally regarded as crucial to improving knowledge and skill acquisition (e.g., Azevedo & Bernard, 1995; Bangert Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991; Corbett & Anderson, 1989; Epstein et al., 2002; Moreno, 2004; Pridemore & Klein, 1995). According to Cohen (1985) feedback "is one of the more instructionally powerful and least understood features in instructional design". Some of the scholars like Chamberlain, Dison & Button (1998), believe that the goal of feedback is acknowledging students' progress towards achieving the learning outcomes of a unit. They say that feedback can be good and helpful and also unhelpful.

According to Charles Juwah, Debra Macfarlane-Dick, Bob Matthew, David Nicol, David Ross and Brenda Smith (2004), the following list is seven principles of good feedback. Good feedback:

1. facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
2. encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
3. helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards expected).
4. provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
5. delivers high quality information to students about their learning.
6. encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
7. provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching.

In the process of evaluating teaching and teacher's work, first of all we should know why evaluation is needed and what is good of it. According to Hounsell (2003), the first stage in any evaluative process is to define the aims and objectives of the process itself in order that an appropriate strategy and tool be designed. This tool is then used to gather feedback, which must then be analyzed and interpreted with great care so that action, and ultimately improvement, can result from the process.

According to the literature (Marsh and Dunkin; 1992; Richardson, 2003; Chen and Hoshower, 2003), teaching and/or course evaluations can be used for four different purposes, including:

- as a formative and diagnostic feedback mechanism (for use, for example, in efforts to improve teaching and courses);
- as a summative feedback mechanism (for use, for example, in personnel and administrative decision-making);
- as a source of information for prospective students when selecting course units and lecturers; and
- as a source of data for research on teaching.

Evaluation in higher education can happen at various levels: at the level of the individual lecturer, the course unit, the course module, the semester, year of study, the subject, the entire program (e.g. the B.A.), the academic department, the faculty or even at the level of the institution (Brennan and Williams, 2004). The level at which one should collect feedback is dependent upon the purpose(s) of the evaluation.

Student's evaluations of teaching (SET) are the most common source used in the evaluation of teaching in higher education (Hoyt and Perera, 2000). However, as previously noted, students are not the only sources from which feedback may be obtained on teaching and course quality. There is a debate over this issue that how competent students are to make judgments on teaching and course quality. From John Murphy's view, students are involved in the process of reflective teaching and accordingly in evaluating the teacher's work in the classroom because the purposes of reflective teaching is threefold, and the third one is "to enhance the quality of learning opportunities one is able to provide in language classroom." (John M. Murphy 2000). But students are not necessarily qualified to report on all issues. For example, beginning students cannot accurately rate the instructor's knowledge of the subject.

The next issue in the process of teaching evaluation is the instrument needed for this job. Although questionnaires are most often used to collect student feedback, they by no means constitute the only method. Student feedback can also be obtained through student representation on staff-student committees and institutional bodies, structured group discussions and/or focus groups, one to one student interviews, e-mail, students' diaries and/or log books and informal comments. Again, the method selected will be dependent upon the purpose(s), level(s) and context of the evaluation. Generally it is recommended that a combination of mechanisms be used to gather feedback from students (Brennan and Williams, 2004; Richardson, 2003; Hounsell, 2003). The following list is five more formal, internationally validated questionnaires in use in higher education which deserves a close attention.

- The Students' Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ);
- The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ);
- The Module Experience Questionnaire (MEQ);
- The Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ); and
- The Experiences of Teaching and Learning Questionnaire (ETLQ).

In educational setting under each questionnaire lies some factors. Murray (1997) explains that it is important that factors underlying instruments such as SEEQ be examined to determine if they conform to principles of teaching and learning. Murray demonstrates that SEEQ factors reflect the general principles of teaching and learning.

Marsh (1987) described five instruments that had received some kind of formal evaluation and others have featured in subsequent research. The instrument that has been most widely used in published work is Marsh's (1982) Students' Evaluations of Educational Quality (SEEQ). In completing this questionnaire, students are asked to judge how well each of 35 statements (for instance, 'You found the course intellectually stimulating and challenging') describes their teacher or course unit, using a five-point scale from 'very poor' to 'very good'. The statements are intended to reflect nine aspects of effective teaching: learning/value, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, individual rapport, and breadth of coverage, examinations /grading, assignments and workload/difficulty.

Although the SEEQ has been most widely used in North America, it has also been employed in investigations carried out in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Spain (Marsh, 1981, 1986; Clarkson, 1984; Marsh et al., 1985; Watkins et al., 1987; Marsh & Roche, 1992). The instrument clearly has to be adapted (or translated) for different educational settings and in some of these studies a different response scale was used. Even so, in each case both the reliability and the validity of the SEEQ were confirmed.

Reliability and validity of student surveys are an important prerequisite for their inclusion in decision making processes on the development of teaching and learning. There are different views on gathering students' feedback on teaching. On one hand, Some scholars like Ferguson, 2012; Peterson, Wahlquist, & Bone, 2000 consider student perspective with skepticism; conversely, recent studies confirm the reliability and validity of student judgments regarding teaching and the use of those judgments as a formative evaluation of teaching (Balch, 2012; Ferguson, 2012; Kane & Staiger, 2012; Kyriakides, 2005; MET Project, 2010, 2012; van Petegem et al., 2008; Wagner, Go'llner, Helmke, & Trautwein, 2013).

Formal evaluation of teachers was virtually unknown until the turn of the 20th Century. In the early 1900s, even though there were no formal or written procedures to evaluate teachers, good teachers were viewed to have certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics included good personal appearance, as well as personal characteristics. It was assumed that a teacher who spoke well as well as maintained a good appearance, was enthusiastic, confident, and of integrity was a good teacher to whom students would respond by making pleasing progress (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995).

One of the important issues related to evaluating teachers and teaching is the source of data for teacher evaluation. Whether it should be single or multiple. Popham (1988) stated that no single source of data for teacher evaluation is sufficiently problem free to enable it to serve as a credible source of teacher evaluation. Similarly, any evaluation system is more likely to support the teacher and teacher growth if it provides opportunity to use multiple sources of data to ensure the fullest possible picture of teaching (McGreal, 1988). While educators continually strive for better teacher evaluation practices, one of the new directions suggested is the use of more than one person to judge teacher quality and performance.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 40 high school third graders. They were composed of two classes and studied in mathematics. All of the participants were boys and none of them had the experience of studying English in private institutes. All the participants are 17 years old. The researcher through convenient sampling selected his participants.

3.2 Instrumentation

In order to see whether the two groups (experiment and control) are homogeneous or not a 40-item version of a test based on reading comprehension passages taken from KET (Cambridge Key English Test, 2003) were prepared by the researcher under the supervision of the thesis advisor. This test was used as pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test for measuring reading comprehension ability and achievement of students. Another instrument is a Persian 39-item questionnaire based on Marsh's (1982) Students' Evaluations of Educational Quality (SEEQ).

3.3 Procedure

At first the reading comprehension test taken from KET was administered to all 40 students to see if they are homogeneous and can be used as control and experiment group. This test also was used as the post-test and delayed post-test. In order to grasp reliable and dependable test scores great care was taken during test administrations. For this purpose, the researcher administered the tests himself. The test takers were assured that the test results would have no negative influence on their scores of English exams. (The bias has been removed).

The researcher used Marsh's (1982) SEEQ as the base and translated it to Persian and changed the items to questions with the same five likert scale. He delivered it to the thesis advisor and with his help improved the questionnaire. Then the researcher delivered a copy of this questionnaire to other four professors of the faculty and received their comments on this questionnaire. Their comments were on the number of items, whether they were statements or questions, and its usefulness. It was concluded that this revised questionnaire is good to use. So after assuring that the two groups were homogeneous by pre-test results, the researcher started using it at the end of each session for eight weeks. (eight sessions this questionnaire was used)

After eight weeks the same reading comprehension test taken from KET was administered to both groups. After a two-week interval the same reading comprehension test was administered to both groups as the delayed post-test and the results were collected.

4. Data analysis

At first, test-retest reliability coefficient was estimated to see how consistent the results of the test were over time. Pearson correlation of pre-test and delayed post-test was estimated. Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (2-tailed). $r = .714$ and $p = .00$, $p < 0.01$.

The mean of the control group in pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test is 26.4, 29.45, and 29.8, respectively. The mean of the experimental group is 27, 33.85, and 33.85 in pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test, respectively.

Next, the assumption of sphericity was checked. As it can be seen from Table 1 below, the assumption of sphericity is violated $\chi^2 (2) = 26.109$, $p < 0.05$. The classroom is seen as a contextual variable where students are clustered within it. In addition, the data gathered for the purpose of this study are of within people type. As such, the person acts as a context within which knowledge and/or ability is assessed. It follows that the measurements done on such classes are dependent. Hence, the assumption of independence of measurement behind ANOVA is not met (Field, 2009). Following Tabachnik & Fidell, and Field, multilevel model of repeated measures ANOVA is used here.

Through estimation of fixed effects (experimental effect) and random effects (sample of possible treatment conditions) the dimensions of the model were assessed. To this end, the researcher tested the dimensions of the model from the change in the $-2 \log$ -likelihood. In our old model (fixed effects model), the $-2LL$ is 728.763 based on a total of seven parameters. In the new model (random effects model), the $-2 \log$ Likelihood was 754.598, based on six parameters. Therefore:

$$X^2_{\text{change}} = 754.768 - 738.675 = 25.835$$

$$DF_{\text{change}} = 7 - 6 = 1$$

There is a relation between the value of the log-likelihood and the likelihood so the smaller the value of the log-likelihood is, the better the model is.

Table 1: Mauchly's Test of Sphericity

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Time	.494	26.109	2	.000	.664	.697	.500

Looking at Table 2, one can see that the independent variable (group) is statistically significant: $F(1,116) = 9.138$, $p = .00$. This means that there is a significant difference between the two groups. We can conclude that there is a significant difference between the three means in both groups.

Table2: Type III Tests of Fixed Effects

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	116	3628.815	.000
Group	1	116	9.138	.000
Time	2	116	11.335	.003
Group *Time	1	116	1.476	.023

As the reader can see in Table 2, the interaction between the independent variable (group) and the covariate variable (Time) has turned out to be statistically significant: $F(1,116) = 1.476$, $p = .023$. It can be concluded that variation in groups' means in different times is different. The covariate variable (Time) is statistically significant: $F(2, 116) = 11.335$, $p = .003$.

In order to find out whether students in the experimental group did better than the students in the control group, the researcher conducted a pairwise comparison. Mean difference showed that students in the experimental group did much better than the students in the control group did. This difference was $= 3.017$ (df_1 , $p = .040$, 95% CI $[.132, 6.165]$). CI (Confidence Intervals) denotes that the

mean difference of the population, if available, would be 2.88 above or below the present mean difference.

Table 3: Pairwise comparison of control and experiment group on reading Comprehension

(I)Group	(J)Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
control	experiment	-3.017*	1.555	184	.040	-6.165	.132
experiment	control	3.017*	1.555	184	.040	-.132	6.165

This study had two post-tests. So the researcher is supposed to run linear analysis. In other words, the researcher tests the growth model. To do so, first the linear trend of the two groups is examined. The linear trend of both groups is significant: experimental group: $F(1, 19) = 53.94, p = .00$ and control group $F(1, 19) = 16.22, p = .001$.

4.1 Discussion

The aim of this section is to explain the effect of giving feedback on teaching by students on their reading achievement. The results of posttests and delayed posttests mentioned before demonstrated that providing opportunities for students to give feedback on teaching improved their reading achievement. According to John M. Murphy (2000), one of the threefold purposes of reflective teaching is enhancing the quality of learning opportunities one is able to provide in the language classroom. In this study the researcher tried to provide opportunities for students to enhance their learning. The researcher did so by letting students evaluate the teaching process by filling out a questionnaire at the end of each session.

5. Conclusion

The results showed that providing opportunities for Iranian EFL students to give feedback on teaching at the end of each session improved their reading achievement.

They also indicated that this effect of feedback and consequently improvement in reading achievement was not a short-lived outcome. Findings of this study showed that by providing opportunities for the students to think about their teacher, his or her behavior and teaching method, classroom atmosphere, and even themselves could help them become more self-confident and find a sense of importance in themselves. As a result they tried harder to achieve their goals.

In Jolgeh region, where the researcher teaches English, students feel lack of self-confidence and demotivation. Studies like the current study can help build self-confidence in the students in all fields in order to become successful in their work.

The last point that the researcher wants to put forward here is that getting feedback from students and making them use their brain for thinking is one reason for improving their skills, especially in the current study. Certainly there are other ways that can be used to achieve the same goal as Popham (1988) stated that no single source of data for teacher evaluation is sufficiently problem free to enable it to serve as a credible source of teacher evaluation.

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FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE AND THE LEARNING OF COLLOCATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Research in second language learning and language teaching is recognizing the increased attention paid to lexicon. Collocations as one form of lexicon can be learned as word groups which can predict the presence of each other (Durrant, 2008) in the task of language learning. The process by which collocations are learned however may be obscure to some extent. Implicit theories of language learning (Ellis, N. 2006) suggest that frequency of occurrence is one of the main factors deriving language learning. The present study aimed at applying the concept of frequency of occurrence to the learning of collocations by Iranian high school students. Two intact classes each consisting of 20 students were selected as participants for the study. One class received the treatment which was making collocations frequent in their learning materials and the other class received no treatment. Results of the teacher-made test of the collocations showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Results suggest that frequency is one of the important factors affecting learning.

Key Terms: Collocations, Frequency of Occurrence, Implicit learning, Lexicon

1. Introduction

"Traditional descriptive grammars focus on constructions, that is, recurrent patterns of linguistic elements that serve some well defined linguistic function" (Ellis, 2003, p.66). As Robinson and Ellis note "constructions are form- meaning mappings, conventionalized in the child L1 learner and adult L2 speech communities and gradually entrenched as language knowledge in the child L1 or adult L2 learner's mind" (2008, p.4). Constructions can be at different levels. For example they can be at sentence, phrase or word level (Ellis 2003).

Collocations are one type of constructions. In collocations words can predict one another, that is, when there is one, we can predict the other (Durrant, 2008). "It is this idea of mutual expectancy which lies behind the influential modern formulation of collocation"(Durrant 2008, p.6). Hoey defines the collocation as "the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its textual context" (1991, p.7, as cited in Durrant 2008).

But how are the collocations learned? "Constructivist views of language acquisition hold that simple learning mechanisms operating in and among human systems for perception, motor action, and cognition while exposed to language data in a communicatively rich human social environment navigated by an organism eager to exploit the functionality of language are sufficient to drive the emergence of complex language representations"(Ellis 2003, p. 63). As is clear from this definition, we can infer that these views consider language learning (the terms learning and acquisition will be used interchangeably here) the same as other kinds of learning. Frequency of occurrence is an important factor, that is the more often a collocation is repeated in the environment (the input here), the more likely that collocation will be learned.

In a study of the effect of repetition on vocabulary knowledge Webb (2007) found that increased repetitions led to greater gains in knowledge of vocabulary. In addition, he found that if unknown words are encountered ten times in a context, stable learning may occur. Also results of another study by Chen and Truscott (2010) supported the findings of Webb's (2007) study. Moreover, the results of their study showed that with repetition, productive knowledge was more affected than receptive knowledge.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Most studies thus far have been done to test the effect of frequency on learning vocabulary items. They have also focused on the effect of frequency of occurrence on learning in reading. Some other studies have focused on the number of repetitions in learning. This study however, focuses on the effect of frequency on learning the collocations in listening.

1.2. Research Question

In this study the following question was directed:

Is there any relationship between frequency of occurrence and the learning of collocations?

1.3. Research Hypothesis

Based on the mentioned question of the study this null hypothesis was generated:

There is no relationship between frequency of occurrence and the learning of collocations.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The results of frequency studies are important for second language learning theories. For example by using the results of these studies language teachers can use reading and listening material that expose the learner to high frequent words and syntactic structures. Collocations, too, are important in comprehension and production. When we know what word comes with another word, then we can process or produce language faster and so we are more fluent. Therefore, the result of this study is important for second language acquisition theory, teachers and material developers.

2. Literature Review

"Humans are sensitive to the frequencies of events in their experience" (Ellis 2002a, p.145). As Ellis notes, "It does not seem like we spend our time counting the units of language. We are instead conscious of communicating, and yet in the course of conversation we naturally acquire knowledge of the frequencies of the elements of language and their mappings" (2002a, p.146). So frequency of occurrence of linguistic units is important in acquiring those linguistic units. In order for something to be acquired, it must be encountered (or deduced from something encountered). Something that does not occur, or occurs only rarely, is less likely to be encountered and "noticed" than something that occurs frequently. Bley-Vroman and Yoshinaga cite the interpretation of Yoshinaga's study in their (2000) study. In English, multiple wh-questions are grammatical when the subject and an argument of the verb are questioned, whether the argument is a direct object or an expression of location, for example, who saw what? or Who sat where? A subject and an adjunct adverbial, however, cannot be questioned in a multiple wh-question, for example, *who came why? or *Who came how? Interestingly, learners of English whose native language is Japanese (in which all these sorts of questions—both argument and adjunct—are equally grammatical) found examples of the type Who saw what? to be grammatical, but, in an analysis of judgment patterns, grammatical types such as Who sat where? Clustered with ungrammatical *Who came why? and *Who came how? Why is this? They concluded that frequency of occurrence of subject-object questions was the reason. Bley-Vroman (2001), in an analysis of the Bank of English, found that subject-object questions were more frequent than subject-location questions and that was the reason of judging subject-object clusters ungrammatical (cited in Bley-Vroman, 2002). Psycholinguistic research shows how the processing of language is sensitive to the frequency of input at levels of linguistic knowledge. The levels of phonology and phonotactics, lexis, morphosyntax, spelling and so on (Ellis, 2002). Ellis and Collins note that "sensitivity to input frequency entails that language users must have registered patterns of occurrence in processing. These frequency effects are thus compelling evidence for usage-based models of language acquisition, which emphasize the role of input" (2009, p.330). Ellis and Ferreria-Junior (2009) examined effects of frequency, frequency distribution, and prototypicality/generality of meaning on the L2 acquisition of three verb-argument constructions in the European Science Foundation ESL corpus. The samples of the study were gathered from L2 learners and native-speaker interviewers. The L2 learners were learning the language naturalistically without any instruction. The results showed that the verbs in the most frequent constructions were learned first. Moreover, frequency of usage also determines fluent language processing (Ellis, 2008b).

Collocations

"Collocation is concerned with how words typically occur (or do not occur) together" (Flowerdew 2009, p.331). Collocations as one type of constructions according to Construction Grammar (noted in the previous section) are sensitive to frequency effects, too. Collocations are determined based on corpus studies. "A corpus is a large database of language" (Flowerdew 2009, p.328).

Different studies have been done to show the effect of repetition and frequency on learning the collocations. Results of a study by Saragi, Nation and Meiser (1978), showed that high frequency words were better remembered by the subjects. The subjects in their study were 20 native speakers of English who were working on different projects in Indonesia. They were asked to read a novel by Anthony Burgess (*A Clockwork Orange*). After the experiment, 49 words that occurred more than 18 times in the novel were tested and the results showed that they were better remembered by the subjects compared to the 41 words that had a low frequency rate. These low frequency words were repeated only one or two times in the novel.

In another study Webb (2007), investigated the effect of repetition on vocabulary knowledge. The subjects were 121 students learning English in Japan. The subjects were randomly assigned to four different groups. The study wanted to test the effect of repetition on different aspects of vocabulary knowledge such as orthography, meaning, syntax, association and grammatical functions. After the experiment, ten tests were used to measure the effect of repetition on vocabulary knowledge. The results showed that, the more the words were repeated, the better they were remembered.

Moreover, repetition had positive results on vocabulary learning in Sheen and Truscott' (2010) study. They tested the effect of frequency on vocabulary acquisition through reading. The subjects were 72 college students in Taiwan. They were all studying English as a foreign language. The subjects were divided to three groups and each group received a different type of exposure to the target words. The results showed that scores on post-test increased with the number of exposures suggesting that frequency had positive effects on vocabulary learning.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 40 high school students in Iran. They were male students who had a two-hour English course a week. The students were chosen randomly out of the whole population of a high school in one school in Tehran. Then these forty students were divided based on odd and even numbers. After that, one group received the treatment, experimental group, and the other group was considered as the control group.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. Materials

Reading comprehension texts were used as the material for teaching in this study. One reading comprehension text was used for each session.

3.2.2. Tests

The Interchange Evaluation Test Level for *Interchange 3* (test 1A) from The *Interchange Placement/Evaluation Package* was chosen to be used as both the pre-test and the post-test. These tests are based on the students' course books. Each test is based on 8 units from each book, *Interchange Intro*, *Interchange 1*, *Interchange 2*, and *Interchange 3*. They are parallel tests. Therefore, for *Interchange 3*, there are 4 tests. These are tests A and B, which are parallel, for units 1 to 8 and also tests A and B for units 9 to 16. The tests consist of listening comprehension, reading comprehension and vocabulary sections. The materials used in this study were reading comprehension exercises. The purpose of the pre-test was 1) to make sure that the two groups did not have much knowledge about the collocations in the reading comprehension tests, and 2) to ensure that the two groups did not differ from each other regarding their knowledge of the collocations. Students were supposed not to have much knowledge about the words in the pre-test. So, the purpose of the post-test was to assess students' knowledge of the words after the treatment.

3.3. Procedure

In the first phase, students took the Interchange Evaluation Test 1A of *Interchange 3* as the pre-test. The purpose of the test was to determine students' knowledge of the collocations in the reading comprehension tests. After the results of the pre-test, and when the researcher was sure that the

students did not have much knowledge about the collocations in the exercises, the second phase began. This phase lasted 8 weeks because *Interchange 3* consists of 16 units, and the reading comprehension texts of the first half of the book were chosen as the material for the treatment. In each session, a reading comprehension text was taught and worked while focusing on collocations. The reason behind this was that, the students were going to learn the collocations based on their frequency of occurrence. Therefore, they were exposed to the repeated occurrence of the collocations. In addition, they received no explicit instruction regarding the collocations. The students in the control group, however, followed their normal instruction. In phase 3 and after the treatment is done, the students again took the *Interchange Evaluation Test 1A* but this time as the posed-test. The purpose of this test was to assess the effect of the treatment.

4. Data analysis

The statistical analysis for this study was a t-test formula for comparing the means of the two groups. This formula was used twice, once at the beginning of the first phase, and the other time at the end of the last phase. When the pre-test had been done at the beginning of phase 1, a t-test was run to compare the means of the two groups. The purpose of this t-test was to know if there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding their knowledge of the collocations in the test. Once again, at the end of the experiment, the same pre-test was given to the students, this time as the post-test and again another t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups. The purpose of using this t-test formula was to know if there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding their knowledge of collocations included in the test.

Table 1. Results of the Pre -test

Group Statistics					
	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
sum	CONTRO L	20	14.2000	1.28145	.28654
	EXP	20	13.7500	1.11803	.25000

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
sum	Equal variances assumed	.435	.513	1.183	38	.244	.45000	.38027	-.31982	1.21982
	Equal variances not assumed			1.183	37.314	.244	.45000	.38027	-.32028	1.22028

As the results show there was no significant difference in scores for the control group ($M= 14.20$, $SD= 1.28$) and the experimental group ($M= 13.57$, $SD= 1.11$) regarding their knowledge of preposition prior to the treatment phase ($p \geq 0.05$).

Table 2. Results of the Post- test

Group Statistics					
	GROUP	N	Mean	Std.	Std. Error

				Deviation	Mean
sum	CONTRO L	20	14.5000	1.14708	.25649
	EXP	20	15.5500	1.09904	.24575

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Sum	Equal variances assumed	.083	.775	-2.956	38	.005	-1.05000	.35522	-1.76911	-.33089
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.956	37.931	.005	-1.05000	.35522	-1.76916	-.33084

The results of the post-test showed that the two groups differed in their knowledge of collocations after the treatment. The difference between the control group ($M = 14.50$, $SD = 1.14$) and the experimental group ($M = 15.55$, $SD = 1.09$) was significant ($p \geq 0.05$).

5. Discussion

The results of the present study concur with those Webb (2007) and Sheen and Truscott (2010). Results of their studies indicated that frequency had positive effects on learners' knowledge of vocabulary. The present study however differs in that it focused on collocations, that is words that co-occur together frequently and the effect of frequency of occurrence on learning those collocations.

Emergentist theories of language acquisition (Ellis, 2002) suggest that language learning arises from language use is repeated usage event. There is no difference between language competence and language performance, and language structure reflects language use (Ellis, 2002). Therefore, repeated use of certain structures leads to the establishment of that structure in the mind of language users. These structures called constructions (Goldberg, 1995) in emergentist theories of language acquisition vary from word level to sentence level. It is believed that Collocations as one kind of constructions go through the same process of repeated use and frequency. As the results of the present study showed the experimental group of the study was capable of recognizing collocations in the teacher made test. One possibility could be the frequency with which these words (collocations) occurred together. Therefore, the ability to understand which words occur together depends on the frequency of occurrence of those words in the input received. This has important implications for learners, teachers and materials developers.

5.1. Implications

Learners can pay more attention to the frequency with which certain words occur together and note them in order to use them in future language use. This way learning can be more goal directed language use can be more native like.

Language teachers can organize the material in way that frequent collocations are encountered by the students more often. This could be done through selecting reading material that contain some important and frequent collocations. The collocations can be highlighted in the text so that students will notice them and this may help them commit those collocations to long term memory.

Furthermore, material developers can develop a general list of important collocations and right English course books based on the frequency of those collocations. However, more research is needed if English course books are supposed to reflect the broad range of collocations.

5.2. Conclusion

Overall the results showed that the relationship between frequency of occurrence and collocation learning was significant. This finding provides more evidence for the role of frequency in learning vocabulary in general and collocations in particular. In short, frequency of collocations in the reading material is useful.

Future research can be done for the development of a collocations list of the most frequent and important collocations for language instruction. In addition, further research can be done in order to explore the role of frequency and collocation learning in the development of productive skills such as speaking and listening. The present study investigated collocation learning in reading material which can be different from the other skills.

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ISSUES IN VOCABULARY LEARNING AND TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers some of the most important issues in vocabulary teaching and learning and a concise explanation of each of these issues. It also gives an overview of the position of vocabulary in the historical approaches to the present time. The paper, then, moves to the four major strands in vocabulary acquisition, meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development proposed by Nation (2001). It is argued that an even allocation of learning activities to these strands is essential for acquiring both breadth and depth of vocabulary items. Finally some of the techniques in vocabulary teaching and learning have been mentioned along with some of the studies supporting them. This study provides different viewpoints of vocabulary acquisition briefly and suggests that due to the incremental nature of words, one needs to know more than the word meanings to consider them learned words.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching; breadth; depth; incremental nature of words

"Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed."
David Wilkins (1972, p.111)

1. Introduction

1.1. The importance of vocabulary

Second language vocabulary teaching and learning can be considered as a crucial component of language acquisition. In the past, these significant building blocks of every language had been neglected considerably, but during the past decades, vocabulary teaching obtained much of its importance and became the focus of attention of many researchers and teachers (Decaricco, 2001; Laufer, 1986; Nation, 1990; Read, 2000; Schmitt, 2000; Singleton, 2000).

According to Stahl and Nagy (2006), our vocabulary knowledge involves all the words we know and use in listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. On the importance of the role of vocabulary in real life, Stahl (1999) noted that our vocabulary knowledge affects how we comprehend texts; how we define ourselves for others and how we define the way we see the world. Second language learners are typically aware of the notability of vocabulary knowledge; hence they know that limitations in their vocabulary knowledge can significantly affect their communication skills in view of the fact that vocabulary items encompass the rudimentary information they wish to comprehend and express (Nation, 2001). Furthermore, research investigated on English language learners demonstrated that our knowledge of vocabulary prophecies academic accomplishments (Snow & Kim, 2007). We may now come to the conclusion that what the goal of vocabulary

instruction is. Nagy and Herman (1987) noted that the aim of vocabulary teaching is to help students learn the meanings of a lot of words in such a way that they can communicate effectually.

The question that may come into mind at this point is that, what learning or knowing a word means. Is it just knowing the meaning of a word? Or are there other factors other than this one that comprise knowing a word?

2. What does it mean to know a word?

“A word is more than its meaning” (Cook, 2001, p.61). We may know the meanings of many words but still be unable to produce messages that look quite right. For instance, we may use a word which has a negative connotation in a situation which needs words with a positive connotation (Zimmerman, 2014). This indicates that there are other things we should know about a word to consider it a known or acquired word. Researchers (Nation, 2001; Read, 2000; Schmitt, 2008) note that learners must know a large number of vocabulary items; but more importantly, they have to acquire a great amount of knowledge about each word so that they can communicate well with them. We usually consider a word learned if the spoken/ written form and its meaning are learned (Schmitt, 2008). Schmitt (2008, p.333) contends that “while it is true that the form-meaning link is the first and most essential lexical aspect which must be acquired, and may be adequate to allow recognition, a learner needs to know much more about lexical items, particularly if they are to be used productively.”

Nation (1990, p 31) suggests that word knowledge includes the mastery of other factors as the following:

Meanings: we should know what a word means and if there are multiple meanings for a single word. We should also know whether or not there are connotations for a particular word.

Written form: knowing a word also involves knowing how it is spelled.

Spoken form: pronunciation of a word is also of high importance. Without knowing the correct pronunciation of a word, we may be unable to use it in our speech.

Grammatical behavior: we should know the patterns in which a specific word occurs. Having knowledge about the grammatical category of a word and also possible and impossible structures is necessary in acquiring a word.

Collocations: we should know what words go with a specific word, and if there are certain words we must or mustn't use with this word.

Register: it is important to know if a word is formal or informal and where this word is expected to be used or not to be used.

Associations: the way a word is associated or related to other words is also necessary for us to know. We also need to know what words can be used instead of this one.

Frequency: We should know if a specific word is common, old-fashioned or rare.

Nation (2001, p.27) presents an eloquent and vivid description of the knowledge learners have to learn about lexical items which is explicated in Table 2.1 below.

Word knowledge is a multidimensional and intricate construct. Knowing a word involves different types of word knowledge, such as meaning, form, register and collocation. According to Nacera (2010), an important aspect of vocabulary knowledge is meaning. He noted that the increase in meaning expands the vocabulary size of the learners.

Having different knowledge about a specific word is referred to as *vocabulary depth* as it is opposed with *vocabulary breadth* or *vocabulary size* (Bogaards & Laufer, 2004; Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000; Milton, 2009). These two dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, along with other dimensions are the topic of the following section.

Table 2.1. What is Involved in Knowing a Word

Form:	spoken	What does the word sound like?
	written	How is the word pronounced?
		What does the word look like?
		How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	What parts are recognizable in

		this word?
		What word parts are needed to express this meaning?
Meaning:	Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?
		What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concept and referents	What is included in the concept?
		What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	What other words does this make us think of?
		What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use:	Grammatical functions	In what patterns does this word occur?
		In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		What words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency...)	Where and how often would we expect to meet this word?
		Where and how often can we use this word?

3. Vocabulary breadth vs. vocabulary depth

It is necessary to make a distinction between two dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth. However, Milton (2009) empirically contends that these two dimensions are closely related to each other and they are not divisible.

Vocabulary breadth (vocabulary size) is the number of vocabulary items that learners know (Nation, 2001); however, vocabulary depth refers to how well language learners know a word (Read, 2000). As mentioned above, students need to have more knowledge about words than just their meanings. Although vocabulary size is of high importance for learners to be successful in communication, the role of vocabulary depth or the quality of vocabulary knowledge is even more important in letting students use the words well (Schmitt, 2008). According to Nassaji (2004), the complexity and multidimensionality of vocabulary knowledge have been demonstrated by researchers which corroborate that knowing a word well necessitates knowing more than its individual meaning in context.

4. Receptive vs. productive vocabulary knowledge

Two levels of vocabulary knowledge are usually distinguished in the field of vocabulary acquisition, receptive and productive levels of mastery of words. Receptive vocabulary (also called recognition vocabulary or passive vocabulary) is referred to as "the total number of words a person understands, either in reading or listening" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.447). However, productive or active vocabulary refers to the number of words a person can actively produce in their speech or writing (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Laufer (2005) noted that our receptive lexicon always exceeds our productive one. Correspondingly, our potentiality to employ words in writing in comparison with speaking is found to be in an imbalance situation (Milton & Hopkins, 2006). They conducted a research on the written and spoken vocabulary sizes of Greek and Arabic speaking students and observed that they used a larger size of

vocabulary items in writing than in speaking. Laufer (1998) maintains that the acquisition of productive knowledge of words is more complex than the acquisition of the receptive knowledge.

Native speakers of a language are able to understand more words than they can produce. Richards and Schmidt (2002) stated that some native speakers possess an estimated receptive vocabulary of 100,000 words; however, their active vocabulary domains contain between 10,000 and 20,000 words. In the present chapter, the detailed discussion of how many words an EFL learner should know in order to be a successful language learner will be presented.

As Meara (1996) and Nation (1990) put it, in most models of vocabulary instruction in second language learning, it is generally presumed that vocabulary acquisition moves from receptive to productive knowledge. That's why it can be deduced that receptive vocabulary acquisition is not of inferior importance in comparison with productive acquisition of words since the receptive knowledge is the prerequisite of the productive one.

5. How many words do learners need to know?

The results of many studies indicate that in order to attain higher success in the language learning task and language tests, we need to know a large number of words (Laufer, 1992; Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Alderson, 2005). In his research, Alderson (2005) concludes that the size of students' vocabulary is relevant to their performance in language tests. Schmitt (2008) contends that "language learners must learn a very large number of lexical items to be able to operate in English" (p.332). He noted that learning such a great number of words is a big obstacle in the way of language acquisition. Thus, it can be deduced that in order for students to improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, they should improve their vocabulary acquisition (O'Keeffe, 2012).

But the question still remained unanswered. How many words do learners need to know? There have been various answers to this vital question. However, the answer which may be sound enough for teachers to know would be that the number of words learners should know depends heavily on their needs (Thornbury, 2002). It is important to differentiate between the number of words someone studying at the Cambridge University should know, and someone working as a salesperson should know. However, research results illustrate that there is a set of core vocabulary contained about 2000 words which constitutes over 80 percent of the vocabulary items used in spoken and written texts (O'Keeffe, 2012).

This set of core vocabulary, according to O'Keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) is comprised mainly of the categories outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. What the Core Words Entail

Categories	Example
Basic grammatical words	Articles, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, etc.
Modal verbs	Can, could, should, would, etc.
Delexical verbs	Make (make a wish), do (do the dishes), etc.
Stance words	Words showing attitudinal stance (unfortunately, basically, actually, etc.)
Discourse markers	Well, okay, however, etc.
Basic nouns	Concrete and non-concrete nouns (person, life, door, key, problem, etc.)
General deictics	Words related to space and time (this, that, now, then, ago, back, etc.)
Basic adjectives and adverbs	Lovely, nice, different, eventually, always, suddenly, hopefully, etc.
Basic verbs for actions and events	Verbs referring to everyday activity (give, leave, stop, help, put, etc.)

O'Keeffe (2012) states that it is very essential for learners to know as many of the senses of these core words as they can which can highly affect the amount of vocabulary they can grasp from a text. So, such words can have an impact on our understanding of a given text. This can be accounted for by two reasons (O'Keeffe, 2012, pp. 239-240):

1. The ability of the same form to appear in many meanings (polysemy): for instance the word "rich" can appear in various meanings, such as *rich food*, *rich soil*, *rich in resources* and *a rich color*. We should note that none of these are related to money. According to O'Keeffe, coping with polysemy is a way of acquiring the "depth" or different senses of the ore words.
2. The ability of the same form to combine with other forms to make new meanings: delexical verbs just mentioned above can be referred to as a good example. The word "do" is semantically empty; but in combinations with certain nouns, it takes on new meaning, such as *do a favor*, *do a tour*, *do the dishes*, etc.

Schmitt (2008); however, got some different results for the number of words learners should know. He concluded that a great number of vocabulary items are needed to function in English, i.e. between 8000 to 9000 word families for reading; and 5000 to 7000 word families for oral discourse. We have to bear in mind that this number is much bigger that the aforementioned core vocabulary set of 2000 words. Here, Schmitt talks about 8000 word families rather than words.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) believe that an English native speaker has a passive vocabulary of up to 100,000 words; but the active vocabulary domain is between 10,000 and 20,000 words. They also noted that, in the context of" foreign language learning, an active vocabulary of 3000 to 5000 words, and a passive vocabulary of about 5000 to 10,000 words is regarded as the intermediate to upper intermediate level of proficiency" (p. 9).

What is crystal clear from these results is that students need to know a large amount of L2 vocabulary items in order to effectually function in a second language. It is also evident that the more words we know, the more successful we are in language learning and testing tasks.

6. A historical look at vocabulary teaching

Vocabulary in L2 instruction plays a very significant role. However, the level of importance and priority given to it, is widely attributed to various approaches and language teaching methods since the Grammar Translation Method to the present time (Zimmerman, 2014). In this section, a brief history of the status and role of vocabulary instruction is presented based on Celce-Murcia's (2001) classification of the major trends in language teaching in the twentieth century. She classified these trends into nine approaches namely: Grammar Translation approach, Direct approach, Reading approach, Audiolingualism, Oral situational, Cognitive approach, Affective-humanistic approach, Comprehension-based approach, and communicative approach.

6.1. Grammar-translation approach

The rudimentary goal of Grammar-translation was to prepare learners to read the literature of classical languages such as Latin and Greek. This approach was common from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Chastain (1988) noted that in Grammar-Translation approach the basis for learning theory was the Faculty Psychology. However, Richards and Rodgers (2001) believe that in this approach a justified theory of language or theory of learning is absent. Since the goal of language teaching was to make students ready for reading difficult literary texts, little if any attention was paid to oral and communicative aspects of language. Also, the evaluation of students' skills was mainly taken place according to their ability to translate written texts from Latin and Greek into their mother tongue, to anatomize the grammatical structures and to conjugate verbs (Zimmerman, 2014). Students had to do the gruelling task of memorizing a long, bilingual list of words whose content was chosen according to the occurrence of the words in the classics and also their benefits in explicating the grammatical structures. Translation of words into the mother tongue was also regarded as an advantageous action in language learning which resulted in the popularity of bilingual dictionaries during this time (Zimmerman, 2014). The Grammar-translation method, which dominated the language teaching era for nearly 100 years, found many critics. Prendergast (1864) challenged this approach on account of his observations on how children learn languages and high frequent words in ready-made chunks. Over a hundred years ago, he asserted that words should be taught in ready-made chunks; an idea that never attracted much attention then. To mention some other reactions to the Grammar-translation method, we can refer to the *reform movement* which was started in Britain and the *Direct Approach* which is the concern of the following section.

6.2. *Direct method*

As a reaction to the Grammar-translation method, the *Direct method* came into vogue by the end of the nineteenth century. In this approach, the emphasis was mainly on *using* the language to learn it and the aim was to tutor students to use the language fluently in real life communication with passable pronunciation. Since, according to Hubbard, Hywel, Thornton, and Wheeler (1983), the postulation of the Direct method was learning languages by hearing the spoken form and also taking part in conversations; vocabulary too, was believed to be acquired naturally through conversations and in an appropriate context.

6.3. *Reading approach*

The Reading approach emerged after the Coleman Report in 1929 which showed a great decline in reading scores of students in U.S schools (Zimmerman, 2014). As a result of the report's counsel, language teachers began to find some helpful ways to improve students' reading proficiency during a course of limited time span. Rivers (1981, p.35) noted that "in the reading approach, students were to be taught to read the new language with direct apprehension of meaning, without a conscious effort to translate what they were reading."

In this approach, it was claimed that reading knowledge could be attained through a gradual introduction of vocabulary items and grammatical structures used in simple and graded texts for reading. So in these texts the introduction of new words was carefully controlled at the beginning levels, and the selection of words was done according to their usefulness and frequency (Rivers, 1981; Zimmerman, 2014). Also, the words listed for learners at the beginning levels, were clustered thematically or according to the learners' interest (Rivers, 1981).

Reading approach became widespread in the U.S. until the late 1930s (Darian, 1972). Its popularity; however, waned by the start of the World War II. The U.S. army forces felt it incumbent upon them to develop a language teaching method through which their soldiers could be trained to learn to understand and speak foreign languages of their enemies and allies as native speakers of those languages do (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). On the other hand, the reading approach could not fulfill the oral-aural needs of language learners; hence, the development of a new approach to language teaching was ineluctable.

6.4. *Audiolingualism*

There is much to say about Audiolingualism and the Audio-lingual method; however, for this part a short introduction would suffice, and afterwards it is attempted to discuss the role and status of vocabulary in this approach.

Soon after the World War II broke out, The U.S army decided to use a new method through which their soldiers could speak some foreign languages as fluent and native-like as their own speakers. The Audio-lingual method, which was developed under the influence of the Structural linguistics (Bloomfield, 1933) and Behavioral psychology (Skinner, 1957), considered language learning as habit formation; and it was believed that language could be studied scientifically and bit by bit (Brown, 2007). In fact, the Audio-lingual method can probably be considered as the first language teaching theory that asserts to be originated in linguistics and psychology (Stern, 1991). This method, despite all the shortcomings attributed to it by its critiques, has shown that sheer theory can indeed become applicable in practical issues of language teaching. Stern (1991, p.465) noted that:

Audiolingualists did not only assert to have placed language teaching on a scientific basis; they endeavored to show that the principles derived from the scientific disciplines could be applied in concrete and usable form in language teaching materials and day-to-day practice.

Rivers (1981, pp.41-43), mentioned five important principles of this approach which have been characterized by Moulton (1961) under the name of *the five slogans*:

1. Language is primarily speech, not writing
2. A language is a set of habits
3. Teach the language and not about the language
4. A language is what its native speaker say, not what someone thinks they ought to say
5. Languages are different

These five slogans have a multitude of effects on the techniques through which a language and its components, including vocabulary, are thought in the classroom context. Brown (2007) stated some of the characteristics of the Audio-lingual method, which indeed show us what effects these five tenets had on language teaching in this method. Some of these characteristics are a large amount of oral activity, learning via conversation practicing, pronunciation and oral drills, over learning, little

grammatical explanation, successful responses and an immediate reinforcement of them, no tolerance of errors and limited vocabulary (especially in the initial stages) which are learned in context. Audio-lingual method also makes an effort to develop language skills with no reference to students' mother tongue (Stern, 1991). Vocabulary, in this method, is presented to the students in dialogues; however, they are "severely limited in the initial stages of learning" (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.7). Charles Fries, who is the founder of the Audio-lingual method, believed that "syntactic structures was the starting point of language learning, and he saw vocabulary as objects used to illustrate grammatical points" (Zimmerman, 2014, p.290). In spite of the criticisms the Audio-lingual method faced, Coady (1993) stated that vocabulary acquisition was very fruitful in this method.

6.5. *The oral situational approach*

This approach was developed by British applied linguists as a reaction to the reading method in which little attention had been paid to listening and speaking skills (Howatt, 2004). The oral situational approach and the Audio-lingual method have many things in common; however, the former as Celce-Murcia (2014) stated, is "less dogmatic than its American counterpart" (p.7). This approach was popular in Britain during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and was developed from the reform movement and the direct approach; however, many features have been added to it from the works of British linguist J.R. Firth (Firth, 1957).

In this approach, structures and words are organized and practiced around situations, such as the pharmacy or the restaurant (Celce-Murcia, 2014), so the words are selected according to the situations in which they are used.

6.6. *Cognitive approach*

Influenced by the cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1967) and Chomskyan linguistics (Chomsky, 1959, 1965), this approach was developed as a response to the criticisms attributed to the behaviorist features of the Audio-lingual method. This approach has been given different names by different researchers. It has been mentioned as a "modified, up-to-date grammar-translation theory by Carroll (1966, p.102) and a modified direct method by Hester (1970) and Diller (1971). According to cognitive psychology, learners do not learn the intricate language system through the process of habit-formation supported by behaviorism, but "through the acquisition of patterns and rules that they can then extend and apply to new circumstances or problems" (Celce-Murcia, 2014). In Chomsky's generative linguistics (Chomsky, 1965), language is represented as the mental grammar of a speaker, which is an assortment of abstract rules for generating grammatical sentences. Hence, as Stern (1991) put it, cognitive approach does not reject the conscious or explicit grammar teaching nor does it keep away from the instruction of speaking or listening. Stern (1991, p.469) contended that:

Cognitive theory is less concerned with the primacy of the Audio-lingual skills. Instead it emphasizes the control of the language in all its manifestations as a coherent and meaningful system, a kind of consciously acquired competence which the learner can then put to use in real-life situation.

Cognitivism has four characteristics which have been formulated by Diller (1978) as the following:

1. A living language is characterized by rule-governed creativity (Diller, 1978, p.23).
2. The rules of grammar are psychologically real (Diller, 1978, p.26).
3. Man is specially equipped to learn languages (Diller, 1978, p.29).
4. A living language is a language in which we can think (Diller, 1978, p.34).

It is clear that these principles influence the teaching methods in the Cognitivist approach. For instance in all of these methods learning a language is viewed as rule acquisition, not habit formation. Grammar must also be taught deductively, pronunciation is deemphasized because it is believed that perfection is unrealistic; vocabulary learning is emphasized especially at intermediate and advanced levels (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

6.7. *Affective-humanistic approach*

This approach emerged as a reaction to the drawbacks of Audiolingualism and Cognitivism which lacked the affective consideration (Celce-Murcia, 2001). It is rooted in the Humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers who had "more of an affective focus than a cognitive one" (Brown, 2007, p.97). Rogers's ideas focus on moving away from teaching and toward learning (Rogers, 1983); this is what O'Hara (2003, p.64) termed as "transformative pedagogy". Brown (2007, p.98) noted that Rogers "is not concerned about the actual cognitive process of learning because he feels, if the context for learning is properly created, then human beings will learn everything they need to".

The affective-humanistic approach emphasizes on a positive relationship between the teacher and students and also it respects learners' feelings while learning a foreign language (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Teaching methods which seem to have been derived from this approach are Lozanov's Suggestopedia (1978) and Curran's Community Language Learning (1976). In the former, memorization of vocabulary pairs and lexical translation are stressed. The latter, which considers learners as *whole persons*, does not take advantage of a specific syllabus to specify the grammatical structures and vocabulary items in advance; rather, as Larsen-Freeman (2000) stated, grammatical structures and vocabulary items are chosen according to the sentences students have created.

6.8. *Comprehension-based approach*

In this approach it is believed that the process of first and second language acquisition are very similar and second language learners should be exposed to a large amount of authentic language input with listening comprehension preceding the production (Asher, 1996; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Postovsky, 1974; Winitz, 1981). This approach had some implications in language teaching classrooms. The emergence of Asher's Total Physical Response (1977) and Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach (1983) are some of these implications. In Total Physical Response (TPR), Grammar and vocabulary are emphasized a great deal. The emphasis on grammatical structures and vocabulary is accompanied by attention to meaning rather than the form of these items. The prominence given to the status of vocabulary in language learning seems to be increased ever since the cognitive approach and the comprehension-based approaches came into vogue; however, as Carter and McCarthy (1988) pointed out, even in these eras the priority given to grammatical structures led vocabulary to be in a secondary position. Yet, after the emergence of the Communicative Approach in the 1970s, vocabulary instruction attained an important position in language teaching.

6.9. *Communicative approach*

Communicative approach proliferated as a result of the works of anthropological linguists such as Hymes (1972) and Firthian linguists (e.g. Firth, 1957; Halliday, 1973) who considered language as a system for communication. The goal of language teaching in this approach is to prepare learners to communicate in real life situations and in the target language (Celce-Murcia, 2014). Hence, there is a shift from an attention to forms and accuracy to communication and fluency. Vocabulary items to be taught are chosen from the authentic materials being used in the communicatively oriented methods. However, as Schmitt (2000) stated, vocabulary still remained in negligence as it was believed that there was no need for direct vocabulary instruction and it would take care of itself.

7. How should vocabulary items be taught and practiced?

It was mentioned earlier that there are breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. This shows that vocabulary learning just like language learning in general, is multifaceted. As Zimmerman (2014) stated vocabulary learning is incremental, i.e. each word has depth knowledge and information about it is gathered gradually. This is very important for material developers to know in order to take the aforementioned various aspects of knowing a word into account in writing their materials. Four major strands have been proposed by Nation (2001) and Nation and Gu (2007) that include the vocabulary component of a language course. As Nation and Chung (2009, p.549) puts it, "there must be a roughly even allocation of learning activities to each of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development".

7.1. *Meaning-focused input*

This strand involves learning vocabulary via comprehensible input attained through reading and listening activities (Schmitt, 2008). Extensive reading is considered a very important part of this strand (Nation & Chung, 2009). However, research reveals that extensive reading cannot be an absolutely convenient way to learn vocabulary. As Nation (2002,) puts it, "learning words through meaning-focused input is fragile" (p.267). This fragility is due to three reasons (Nation, 2002, pp.267-268):

1. Research shows us that only a small amount of vocabulary can be learned through reading (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). Nation (2002) noted that reading can be useful for learning the most frequent 2000 to 3000 high-frequency words; however, there is a rapid decrease in the frequency of occurrence of words beyond these two or three thousand words in different texts. Hence, it is not expected to see less frequent words in reading passages repeatedly.
2. Learning words through readings depends to a large extent on the ability and quality of the students' control and mastery of the reading skills.

3. The type of reading will affect vocabulary learning strongly. For instance, if students read in a familiar content area about which they have a lot of background knowledge, they easily deal with unknown words in context and consequently they will not learn them. However, if they read in an unfamiliar area, there is a greater chance of learning new vocabulary items because they pay closer attention to them.

7.2. *Meaning-focused output*

The second strand deals with learning new words through speaking and writing, i.e. through communicating messages to other people (Nation & Chung, 2009; Schmitt, 2008). As Joe (1998) stated, memory for new words is reinforced if they are used in generative and productive ways. This strand involves activities like role plays, retelling, rewriting, etc. (Joe, Nation, & Newton, 1996).

7.3. *Language-focused learning*

Language-focused learning entails explicit and deliberate attention to language forms for the purpose of gaining knowledge about them as a part of our language system (Nation, 2002). In vocabulary teaching, this strand dovetails nicely with traditional vocabulary teaching since it emphasizes direct focus on lexical items (Schmitt, 2008). As Schmitt (2008, p. 345) puts it:

The reasoning behind this strand is that some vocabulary (particularly high-frequency items) is absolutely necessary for any kind of language use, and so is worth the effort of teaching and learning explicitly, especially as intentional learning is much more effective than incidental learning.

Nation (2004) noted that deliberate instruction of vocabulary items is not a very efficient use of class time; however, it can be useful in intensive reading when a new word occurs while reading. In order to mention some of the language-focused instruction techniques we can refer to focusing on the pronunciation and spelling of a vocabulary item, intentionally learning a word meaning, memorizing collocations containing a word and finally, as Nation (2002) contended, *negotiation of vocabulary* i.e. discussing the word's spelling, pronunciation and meanings. Nation (2001), proposed the use of *small word cards* on which the target word is written on one side and its first-language equivalent on the other. Nation and Chung (2009) claimed that using small word cards is the most effective deliberate vocabulary learning. They also contended that strategy training can be a very effective way of language-focused instruction in second language classrooms.

7.4. *Fluency development*

This strand deals with fluency. Here, as Nation (2002) stated, fluency means "making the best use of what you already know, and fluency development tasks have the characteristics of involving no new language items" (p. 269). Our vocabulary knowledge is valueless unless we are able to recognize and produce words in a real communicative situation (Schmitt, 2008). For instance, reading process would become too laborious and slow if learners' vocabulary recognition speed is low, which leads to the incomprehensibility of the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Schmitt and Chung (2009) noted that fluency development is a neglected strand in most language classes; however, it is a very important trend because it enables learners to access and use vocabulary items fluently. Besides, enhancing the automaticity of vocabulary recognition and production, leads to a boost in vocabulary proficiency.

8. **How should students understand and acquire vocabulary items?**

Understanding the meaning of a word is the first important step in the process of vocabulary acquisition. This is what Krashen (1982) stated in his Natural Approach that comprehension or comprehensible input is a very important prerequisite of acquisition. Cook (2001, pp. 66-70) mentioned some useful strategies for understanding and acquiring words.

8.1. *Strategies for understanding the word meaning*

There are various strategies for understanding the meaning of words in different language teaching methods. Some methods take advantage of word lists (GTM) and some others use context and real-time communication as a means of word understanding. Four strategies have been mentioned by Cook:

1. Guessing from the context
 2. Using a dictionary
 3. Making deductions from the word form
 4. Link to cognates
- #### 8.2. *Strategies for acquiring vocabulary items*

Understanding the word meaning would not suffice for being a successful language learner; however, we must attain the potency to use the words in our speech and writing in cases it is necessary. Some of the strategies that learners employ are as the following (Cook, 2001, pp. 69-70):

1. Repetition and rote learning
2. Organizing words in the mind
3. Linking to existing knowledge

9. Different methods of teaching lexical items

Due to a large number of studies conducted in the area of vocabulary acquisition, various methods and techniques of engagement with vocabulary items have been compared and analyzed empirically. Schmitt (2008) noted that the amount of engagement of a learner with vocabulary items is of high significance i.e. the more engagement you have, the more likely you are to learn a word. But the questions that come to mind here is that, how this engagement should be done? Do we have tasks or methods which can be called more effective or less effective? Table 9.1, extracted from Schmitt (2008, p.339), gives us an eloquent picture of what methods these studies worked on and presents their findings.

Table 9.1. Different Vocabulary Learning Methods and their Effectiveness

The more effective task	The less effective task	Study
Meaning selected from several options	Meaning explained by synonym	Hulstijn (1992)
Meaning looked up in a dictionary	Reading with/ without guessing	Knight (1994); Luppescu and Day (1993)
Meaning looked up in a dictionary	Meaning looked up in a marginal gloss	Hulstijn <i>et al.</i> (1996)
Meaning negotiated	Meaning not negotiated	Newton (1995)
Negotiated input	Premodified input	Ellis <i>et al.</i> (1994)
Used in original sentences	Used in non-original sentences	Joe (1995, 1998)
Used in a composition (L1-L2 look up)	Encountered in a reading task (L2-L1 look up)	Hulstijn and Trompetter (1998)
Interactionally modified output	Interactionally modified input	Ellis and He (1999)
Reading and a series of vocabulary exercises	Reading only (and inferring meaning)	Paribakht and Wesche (1997)
Reading, words looked up in a dictionary	Reading only, words not looked up	Cho and Krashen (1994)

By examining Table 2.3 we can conclude that some methods of engagement are more effective than others. The results of these studies indicate that overall, methods whose focus is on output and interaction, and also take advantage of authentic texts and dictionaries for reading have better results in learners' vocabulary acquisition.

10. Conclusion

In this study, some of the most important issues in vocabulary acquisition have been discussed. Over the years, there have been various perspectives in how to teach and present words to language learners; and the main reason behind this multiplicity of viewpoints is the existence of multiple teaching eras and language teaching methods. Each of these methods had its specific construal of the status of vocabulary in language teaching syllabus. The task of language teachers is to take advantage of the best and most appropriate techniques depending on the goal of students' language learning. Generally, as the studies outlined above suggest, the techniques which utilize an integration of the four major strands in learning, focus on output and negotiation of word meanings and also pay attention to interaction between a proficient language user and a less proficient language user (a

student) have gained more achievements in helping learners obtain the breadth and depth of vocabulary through language classes.

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THE EFFECT OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES ON SPEAKING ABILITY OF IRANIAN FEMALE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of information gap activities on developing speaking skills of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL female English learners. In order to conduct this study, 56 pre-intermediate female students were selected based on their marks on proficiency test. The sample divided into two experimental and control classes randomly. Prior to the research, all the students took pre-test to ensure they have similar speaking ability. The researcher used five different information gap activities for the experimental class to investigate learners' developing speaking ability. Finally, the researcher administered post-test to the learners. Based on the findings of the study, there was a statistically significant difference in the speaking ability of both groups and the results showed that experimental class which received information gap activities outperformed the control class.

Key words: Communicative language teaching, Cooperative leaning, Information gap activity, Interaction, Speaking

Introduction

Speaking is an interactive process of communicating meaning which involves producing, receiving and processing information (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning depend on the context such as the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking (Cunningham, 1999).

According to Richard (2008), speaking has a prominent place in language classes all over the world. He claims that needs for speaking English as an international language intensified importance of finding more effective ways to teach English (Richard, 2008).

At the same time, fads and fashions affected approaches of teaching speaking in ELT. For most of the English teachers who were followers of traditional methodologies of the 1790, speaking usually meant repeating after the teacher, memorizing a dialogue, or responding to drills, all of which reflect the sentence-based view of proficiency prevailing in the audio-lingual and other drill-based or repetition-based. The communicative language teaching emerged in the 1980 and led to change views of syllabuses and methodology which are continuing to shape approaches to teaching speaking skills today (McCarthy & Carter, 1997).

English classes in Iran can be categorized as a foreign language learning context rather than as English as a second language situation. That is, outside the classroom, English is rarely used and the classroom instruction is most likely the only input for language learning. Learners, therefore, receive limited target language input and have limited language learning time, unlike the second language learning situations where the target language is used outside the classroom. Hammerly (1991) stated that "classroom instruction is an artificial environment, and the time of teaching and learning is limited" (p.36).

In recent years, the spoken language emphasized to be the principle objective in language teaching due to the methodologists and linguists argument. Therefore, developing speaking skill require to identify, practice and improve the use of various methods and strategies of teaching speaking skill. Communicative language method (CLM) is viewed as the most effective and widely used approach

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in EFL/ESL teaching, and most modern methods and techniques emphasize it (Cook, 2001; Savignon, 1991). Most textbooks and materials are designed in line with it. The goal of language teaching in CLM is not be translating and learning a set of rules but should be the goal is communicative competence. Communicative competence is defined as "the ability to create meaning when interacting with others in the target language" (Brown, 2007, p. 52). Thus, the focus in CLM is on communication in authentic situations. Since the 1970s, this approach has been expanded on and has come to play a central role in most contemporary language teaching situations.

The teacher has two main roles in CLM: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom and between these participants and the various activities and the text used, while the second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning teaching group. The last role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it (Savignon, 1991). Teachers are expected to plan group and individual instructions that respond to the learners' needs. CLM procedures often require teachers to acquire less teacher-centered classroom management skills. It's the teacher's responsibility to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and the communicative activities (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

In the language classroom, the aim of a communicative activity is to get learners to use the language they are learning to interact in realistic and meaningful ways, usually involving exchange of information (Scrivener, 1994). Therefore, information gap activities should be created for students to promote real communication. An information gap activity, in class terms, means that one student must be in a position to tell another something that the second student does not already know (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

Through recent decades, students graduated with fair knowledge in English language in Iran by means of structure, vocabulary and grammar, yet with low speaking achievement rate. Learners are incapable in speaking and expressing in their own words which is an essential skill when communicating with people in many fields of life such as work, travel, relations, etc. The need of this study arises from the importance of speaking skill in learning English language in Iran, and the low achievement rate of this skill among students. So there is a critical need for teachers to apply strategies and techniques that enable students to acquire language oral skills effectively. Learners who have ability in speaking will receive the information better. Therefore, students of English must be able to speak English well because people identify the English mastery with their English speaking ability. Researcher noticed that the problem dealt with a passive class, where students did not response and avoided interaction with teacher and other students, were tried to be solved. Teachers let the students only memorize the vocabulary, ask the students to open the exercise book, read the task, and then do the exercise. Then the teacher asks the students to write the words without asking the student to use it in real communication. Hence some students do not know the function of this language exercise. As a result, the students are not interested in the English learning process. They become passive in English learning and they are not able to speak. Therefore, this English teaching/learning process is not effective. According to the proponents of Communicative Language Teaching, effective communication is the ultimate goal of language learning (Littlewood, 1991). Therefore the ultimate goal of language teaching should be to teach the language based on the communicative principles. It means that some communicative activities should be carried out in English classrooms in order for the students to develop their communicative competence, and to make them able to communicate through using the language. This is what has been ignored to a great extent in Iranian English classrooms. There are various types of activities and tasks assigned to communicative language teaching which make students communicate with one another in order to exchange their ideas or some information. Some of these tasks are based on the information-gap principle. Information gap is an interesting technique and it can improve students' ability. In this respect, the researcher tries to propose a solution for the teachers to implement information gap activities and help students to develop their oral communication skills in English.

The present study may help teachers adapt techniques that make teaching speaking more effective, communicative and interactive. Also, it can be useful to language teachers because it may raise teachers' awareness regarding their own teaching methods. The current research may benefit supervisors by choosing the information gap activities to be used in teachers' training courses and workshops, and encourage engaging in further researches and field studies to measure the effectiveness of these methods in teaching the speaking skill.

This study intended to address whether information gap activities have any significant effects on the speaking ability of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL female English learners.

Participants

The population of the study consisted of 97 female learners in Novin Language Institute in Golestan province that enrolled at the pre-intermediate level. They were native speakers of Persian language. Their age ranged from 14 to 27. All the population took the Oxford Placement Test to choose pre-intermediate level learners. A sample of 56 female students took part in the study due to their score range. The sample was equally divided into two groups (each group 28 learners), experimental and control. A t-test ran on the proficiency scores to make sure there is no difference between groups in terms of language proficiency. The research project lasted five weeks. The classes met one hour and thirty minutes, twice a week. Some of the students missed some tests and treatments. In such conditions, they were kept in their classes; their scores were not considered in the data analysis. Consequently, the final numbers of participants in the participating groups were 24 and 26 in experimental and control groups respectively.

Materials

Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

Test included 50 multiple choice vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing questions. The questions were from simple to difficult and from elementary to intermediate levels. All the students who were volunteer took it. The participants who scored 30 to 47 out of 50 questions were considered at pre-intermediate level and those who scored below 30 or above 47 were excluded.

Pre- and Post-test

The oral speaking test was prepared by the researcher to measure the students' performance level in the speaking. The researcher referred to many experienced teachers in designing the test. Finally, he designed the test with different types of questions which were based on information gap activities.

Treatment Materials

The researcher gave different forms of information gap activities during five treatment sessions. The teacher administered them in the order of 1) question and answer, 2) jig saw puzzle, 3) role play, 4) spot the difference and 5) asking for missing information.

Procedure

97 female learners took Oxford Placement Test. Learners whose score were from 30 to 47 took part in the study and were known as the pre-intermediate learners. The pre-test of speaking was prepared by the researcher. The instructions were clearly written on the test. The learners' speaking was recorded then two raters scored them based on using oral speaking rubric. Both experimental and control groups had the same pre-test. A t-test run on the scores obtained from the pretest revealed no statistically significant difference among the groups.

The teacher gave five information gap activities to the learners in the experimental group. In the other words, the teaching method was communicative one. Prior to the actual research the researcher prepared all the materials for the class. During all five sessions the researcher was present in the class to observe the teacher and learners. The researcher checked the teacher's guidance and teaching methods. While observing the experimental group, a checklist was filled by the researcher to make sure of applying all the suggested method and techniques. The teacher gave a handout based on information, language structures, and vocabulary the students have been working on. Some pieces of information were deleted from two sets of handouts. For example, Handout "A" had some information deleted that handout "B" provided. Handout "B" had other pieces of information deleted that handout "A" provided. Then, the teacher explained the information-gap procedures by modeling a sample gap activity with an able volunteer from the class. The teacher made students work with a partner. One student in each pair got handout "A" and the other gets Handout "B". Learners asked and answered questions until both form "A" and form "B" have been completed. Students compared their papers with each other. At the end the teacher asked some learners to come up to the board to talk about the information she gathered from her partners. When the teacher gave the tasks to the learners divided them into groups of two, she circulated around the class to make sure the learners were working on the tasks. It gave a chance to know how well individual learners use and

understand English in the activity they are working on. Each information gap activity took 45 to 60 minute to work on.

During five sessions, the learners in the control group got the same method of teaching conversation or speaking in the institute. They did no work on the information gap activities. Finally, the post test of speaking was applied upon the experimental and the control groups. The results were recorded and statistically analyzed.

Data Analysis

As it was mentioned before, a proficiency test was administered to make sure the participants in both groups were homogeneous in terms of their English proficiency. Table 1 presents mean scores and standard deviations of experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Groups on Proficiency Test

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	28	35.57	4.84
Control	28	37.10	4.28

As it can be seen from Table 2, the means of experimental and control groups are 35.57 and 37.10 respectively.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-Test on Proficiency Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. 2 tailed
Equal variances assumed	.502	.481	-1.257	54	.214
Equal variances not assumed			-1.257	53.201	.214

Table 2 indicates no difference between two groups in language proficiency before teaching the speaking through information gap activities.

The results of the pre-test, on the other hand, were put into SPSS, the descriptive table of which appears below in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Mean Scores of Speaking on Pre-test

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	28	10.96	2.68
Control	28	11.57	1.98

As it can be seen from Table 3, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups are 10.96 and 11.57 respectively. To determine whether there is difference between groups, an independent T- Test was run on the pre-test scores of the two groups.

Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test on Pre-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. 2tailed

Equal variances assumed	.622	.434	-.961	54	.341
Equal variances not assumed			-.961	49.760	.341

Table 4 indicates that the two groups did not perform differently. The results of the post-tests, like the other tests, were put into SPSS, the descriptive table of which appears below in Table 5.

Table 5. Students' Mean Scores of Speaking in Post-test

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	24	15.50	3.33
Control	26	10.73	2.05

As it can be seen from Table 5, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups are 15.50 and 10.73 respectively. To determine whether information gap activities have affected the learners' speaking ability, an independent T- Test was run on the post-test scores of the two groups.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-Test on Post-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.2 tailed
Equal variances assumed	.515	.476	6.143	48	.000
Equal variances not assumed			6.030	37.628	.000

Table 6 indicates that the two groups performed differently. The experimental group outperformed the control group of the study. In the other words, the information gap activities were effective.

Discussion

The results showed using information gap activities improved students' speaking ability. The finding of this study also strengthen the result of previous studies conducted by Liao (2001), Klanri (2007), and Jondeya (2011) which investigated the use of information gap technique toward students' speaking ability. The result of those studies revealed that information gap technique is an effective technique to be used to improve students' speaking ability. According to Defrioka (2009) student-student interaction occurred in communicative tasks such as information gap activities were effective in speaking. Information gap activities help the learners to "listen, imitate, express an idea, ask questions and even correct their friend's mistakes. These conditions empowered the students to develop their English communication abilities" (p. 43). Also, Tsui (1996) claimed that the learners enjoy participating and sharing ideas. They do not have stress and hesitate to express their ideas. Therefore, the students became active participants in the classroom speaking activities. Besides, student-student interaction increases confidence because it allows students to talk freely without any authority judging their ideas.

Previous studies indicated the overall positive effects of information gap activities for students speaking ability. Basturkmen (1994) believed that information gap activities let the learners to get more acquainted with authentic language use in the language classes. There is another study by Raptou (2002) in which the information gap activities applied in French language classes. He concluded that the learners were enjoying while working on information gap activities and they were creative in speaking too. Furthermore, the information gap activities were helping the learners to increase their confidence in speaking French. Rosmaliwarnis (2007) found that information gap activities motivate the learners to ask many questions to know more as if they are in real

communication. The communicative or collaborative tasks can motivate the students to speak because they can be free to respond the missing information without memorizing the dialogue.

Hess (2001) confirmed that information gap activities can provide a comprehensive feedback from the learners, such as a wide diversity of opinions, references, and values, many different experiences and styles of learning. Then, he also adds that information gap activities can foster a learner-autonomous learning style. Also, Karimi (2010) revealed that the EFL learners' degree of learning increases when they learn new words by the use of information-gap tasks in the classroom. Also the learners in the experimental group – taught through the use of information-gap tasks – were gradually seen to become less dependent upon teacher's assistance. So, the findings of this research recommended giving students opportunities to develop strategies for interpreting and comprehending language as it is actually used by native speakers.

Speaking research in the L2 fields has shown that information gap activities can be used in English classes, and when applied, they enhance student performance on speaking (Kayi, 2007; Zhang, 2009). Although these studies have claimed the positive effect of information gap activities in the L1 or ESL settings, there have been relatively few studies to investigate the effect of information gap activities on students' speaking ability in Iran situation.

The purpose of this study was to use information gap activities and subsequently investigated its effects on the EFL female students' speaking ability. The results of this study reject the hypothesis that information gap activities do not have any effect on the speaking ability of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL female English learners.

The results support the results obtained by the previous research studies in terms of positive effects of using information gap activities on the students' speaking ability (e.g., Basturkmen, 1994; Defrioka, 2009).

Pedagogical Implications

The findings and discussion showed that information gap activities have significant effects on the speaking ability of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL female English learners. Therefore, the teachers can use such communicative tasks in their teaching speaking. The learners in experimental group become independent in speaking and did not need the teacher assistance which was in the light of using information gap activities. So, it is recommended to the teachers to use information gap activities to grow self-dependent learners. This strategy of teaching speaking can save time and energy of the teacher and is more practical as far as it is close to the real communication and is strongly supported by many other disciplines, such as psychology, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. Besides, there are various types of information gap activities, such as problem-solving, role play, jig saw puzzle, picture description, spot the difference, etc. Therefore, students rarely get bored and tired. During information-gap activities students are not under pressure. Moreover, they expressed their joy and happiness when they all participated in each activity. These kinds of tasks encourage the learners to cooperate with their partners in learning. On the other hand, when students work in small groups, they have more time to practice their speaking or negotiate the meaning. There is still another advantage to information gap techniques. That is, these activities teach students to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The findings of this study implicated that syllabus designers should integrate the information gap activities into the speaking class tasks. The learners are encouraged to interact actively in group work. Training courses, conferences or workshops can be provided for English language teachers to show the new findings of the use of information gap activities and encourage the teachers to develop and use such tasks. Syllabus designers and book publishers should develop and integrate lots of information gap tasks in conversation books and also provide good descriptions for the tasks to the learners.

The speaking teachers should be very selective. They should suggest books that stress speaking through the use of information gap activities. In order to create more authentic environment for the learning, the teachers should use group tasks like information gap activities. Teachers can provoke the learners' interests with information gap activities to speak in the class.

The learners may work on information gap activities outside of the classroom with their friends as assignments which will help them to have a good result in speaking; such activities let the learners to make themselves ready especially before joining the class.

Moreover, teachers need to get familiarized with such techniques which keep the communicative nature of language classes. So, it would be reasonable to allot some time to the training of teachers in this regard.

Suggestions for Further Studies

It is necessary to add here that the same results may not be found in other contexts with other participants. Great care needs to be taken in future studies in the design and implementation of the procedures, and the selection of information gap activities. More research is needed to validate the results of the present study.

The other researchers may conduct other studies related to information gap activities in other skills of language such as listening, reading, and writing. Ideally, longitudinal designs with a wider range of information gap activities would shed more light on the issue. Further research can investigate the effect of information gap activities on the learners' speaking ability in relation to individual differences such as their proficiency level, language aptitude, level of motivation to learn English, etc. Another choice can be the investigation of the effect of training the teachers how to develop information gap activities for their classes. Also, it is recommended that a replication of this study can be done by a group of male students or by comparing a female and a male group results.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO AUTHENTICITY OF IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

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1. Introduction

Until the mid of nineteenth century, the education in Iranian society was done under a religious system. It means the clergy men were responsible to teach children reading and writing. After learning the basics of literacy, the students were taught famous poets books and poems and literal knowledge was considered as valuable and effective. Knowledge of reading and writing was not a necessary skill for the public and people in middle class of society, and thus education generally was restricted to social and political elite. Years later in the early twenties during the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-79) the government implemented a number of policies in order to modernize the country and consequently expanded the educational system and made it more similar to European educational system. The entire public system for many years was based upon the French model of education. In this new system the education became more formal in the form of two different types of schools as primary school and high school including 6 years of education in each. The subject matter included languages as English and French and Arabic. So the history of teaching English in Iranian school context goes back to about a century age.

Learning a foreign language depends on a variety of different factors, some of which are; the learners, the teachers, and the environment in which the learning experience takes place, the aim of learners for learning, and more importantly the textbooks. There is by no means any doubt that textbooks are the most significant, inevitable resource for teachers to help students learn a language. They are the fundamental for basing the school instruction and also they are the primary source of information for students and teachers with which teachers based their instructions. Nooreen & Arshad 2010, claims that materials and textbooks serve as one of the main instruments not only for shaping knowledge but also to construct attitudes, and moral, cultural principles of the students.

In Iran, textbooks are used as the basis and the main part of the language input learners receive as well as the language practice that takes place inside the classroom. As in Iranian context of English learning there aren't many chances of collaboration with native speakers. There neither are any English programs on the Iranian media. Therefore, learners do not have any exposure to English language out of classroom setting. For majority of school teachers, textbooks is the main provider the foundation for the content of lessons, as well as the balance of the skills to be taught, and also the types of language activities the students engage in during their class. In this case in EFL settings, the textbook becomes the major source of exposure they have with the target language along with the input provided by the teacher.

Iranian student have the opportunity to study English for seven years in their education until Diploma which is 3 years in junior high school, 3 years in high school and 1 year in Pre-university, however after all these years of studying English, they neither attain an acceptable competence in using the English language nor can interact with confidence. In this research three English textbooks which are used in three grades of the Iranian high schools are under careful consideration. The framework of each book includes eight main parts (New Words, Reading, Write It Down, Speak Out, Language Functions, Pronunciation Practice, Vocabulary Review, and Vocabulary List). In current study the aim is to investigate to what extent students studying these course books are capable of

using English in real contexts. For achieving this purpose the text books are analyzed regarding authenticity of the material being used.

2. Literature Review

The relation between textbook design and language teaching goes back to far far age in the history of this filed as this relationship is of strong and has always been of interest to many teachers and educators. In order to keep the textbooks up to date educational material should go under persistent evaluations and revisions. In a study conducted by Sheldon (1988), he has identified some main reasons for textbook evaluation. He claims that the choice of a specific language textbook tells you a lot about administrative and educational policies applied in that special setting. A detailed research and a careful evaluation would enable the managerial board and teaching staff of an institution to have a brighter view in order to choose between all of the available textbooks on the market.

Moreover, research in the area of textbook evaluation could facilitate identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in a particular textbook already in use. Hutchinson and Torres (1994), introduced three ways in which textbooks can be helpful in times of educational change: firstly, use of textbooks as an instrument for teacher training and learner education; secondly, they supply the necessary support and they free teachers from the burden of looking for suitable materials; and finally, they provide a complete picture of what the change will look like (pp. 232).

Textbooks evaluation can also be considered as a kind of tool for educational judgment. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 96) argue that evaluation means the judgment of the fitness of something for a particular purpose. Cunningsworth (1984), proposes a useful checklist containing the questions in which he summarizes the criteria for evaluation of textbooks. One part of the questions in the aforementioned checklist can be replied in polar terms or on a five point scale. Others questions need an evaluative and essay type descriptive comment. Breen and Candlin (1987) provide another questionnaire for evaluation of textbooks which they called the Guide. It is divided into two phases; the first introduces some primary questions regarding the usefulness of the materials applied in teaching process and the second poses some more specific questions which needs more in depth analysis of the materials.

The authenticity of material in textbooks is an important issue which is pinpointed in a large body of literature. Peacock, M. (1997), suggested that one of the main features of communicative language teaching is using authentic materials. Communicative language teaching approach has changed the view of syllabus designers dramatically in recent years. Now English is not just a language to be learned similar to other school subjects, it has gained importance as a very important tool of communication inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, the syllabus designers are recommended to consider the learners' needs at first and then provide them with the chance to communicate the learned language in real situations outside the school setting. In more recent years, use of authentic materials in teaching English in EFL classes, has gained much attention from teachers and education administers. Furthermore, (Kilickaya, 2004) claims that these days there are a lot of voices suggesting in order to facilitate the learning process of the learners authentic material should be applied. In ELT literature one can find a considerable growing interest to the use of authentic texts. What is meant by authentic texts inn this article is the texts which are genuine instances of language use. It is opposed to those texts which devised especially for language teaching purposes. The issue of authenticity as mentioned earlier emerged as an important element within communicative language teaching (CLT) and advances in sociolinguistic and vygotskian philosophy. Also with emerge of notional/functional syllabuses, where an emphasis was placed on making sure that the classroom activities contained natural language behavior. Furthermore, it is believed that a text should present to the students the same language exposure native speakers experience (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, pp. 24). In this regard Amalsaleh (2004), has examined the representation of social factors in Iranian high school English textbooks in all three grades applying Van Leeuwen's model (1996). It was found that, the books demonstrated a deferential representation of social factors in the way that they represented female as performers of tasks related to home context and pictures them with limited job opportunities in the society. Specifically, the Iranian English textbooks has proven to tend to illustrate normative views of gender and class division in which a middle-class urban male was considered as stereotypical. According to the findings of previous studies these books seem to generally lack the principles of CLT. At last, according to evaluation conducted by Yarmohammadi's (2002) which was

based on a revised version of Tucker's model, the Iranian high school textbooks are not found to be authentic; it has been reported that English and Farsi names have been used interchangeably and oral skills are highly ignored.

3. Objectives

This study aims to investigate the authenticity English text books high schools in Iran. These books are authored by Birjandi *et al*, 2009a; 2009b; 2009c. They have been used at three grades of state high schools since many years ago. In this study the aforementioned textbooks were approached in terms of content and presentation based on the framework, units, subject-matter and form on Dougill's (1987) model (cited in Sheldon, 1987, pp. 29-36).

4. Method

As evaluation of a textbook a matter of teaching and re-teaching the very text several times as well as getting continuous feedbacks from various teachers and learners, in the present research, skilled, experienced teachers were asked to help conduct the study. These participants were selected out of English teachers in 5 high schools of Rasht among those teachers with more than 5 years of experience. Dougill's textbook evaluation checklist was employed. It was distributed between 30 English teachers who have already had the chance of teaching all the three books of three levels of high school. They were asked to give their opinions regarding the books based on the checklist as well as their own personal comments and suggestions. In addition to teachers, some of the items from the checklist were selected and were given to 200 students randomly in all three grades. Afterwards the data was collected, compared and analyzed, and finally was classified into two main groups: content, and presentation.

5. Findings

A. Content

One part of the current evaluation regarding content of the text books. That is meant by content is all of the materials used to present new vocabulary items, grammar, as well as reading comprehension texts. On important criteria which in a main concern Dougill's evaluation is regarding the use of subject matter that may not be interesting enough for the learners. In the analysis of reading passages in these three textbooks, majority of the texts lack adequate attraction for the learners and they do not appeal to the students so that they motivate learners to "want" to discover things. When one takes into consideration the age of the addressees of these books who are aged 14 to 17, one can understand the material is not of the interest to this age group. They would prefer their readings to be full of fun and interesting topics. Based on analysis done on the findings of the study, about 85 % of the female learners favored to read about topics related to music and film stars, and other celebrities. However, almost 90% of the male students preferred to read texts about football players, online games, and action movies.

There is no need to say that one of the main criteria of appropriacy of knowledge to be presented in the classroom lies in the context in which it is being introducing. Unfortunately the Iranian students are reading many passages in their textbooks without actually diving in them. This diving-within requires a great deal of research and careful selection of the material to be employed. Learners need to identify themselves with at least some elements of the content so that they can clearly grasp the message of the texts. This issue is so much missing in Iranian textbook, however. There seem to be no real sign of interaction between people. The interactional patterns given in the texts are limited to very short dialogs. The section which related to so called Language Function which is supposed to be the conversation part is purely mechanical that it by no means can lead the students into production of speech in natural setting. One interesting finding in these books is that you can find no interaction between a boy and a girl as part of a natural daily communication.

The names which are used for the dialogs in the books are mostly Iranian or Arabic, which obviously doesn't induce a sense of intercultural understanding and prevents the learners from developing the sense of understanding and feeling of studying a foreign language and also a foreign culture. According to Wardhaugh 2010, the sense of solidarity and integrative motivation is an essential element in learning a foreign language. Another problem with Iranian high school books is that there are no, professional careers, or authentic events which indirectly emphasizes the importance of learning a language to help the learners identify themselves and be motivated in language learning.

B. Presentation

How the material is presented is an important aspect of learning because it allows the reader to accompany the book. Based on Dougill's (1987) framework for evaluating English language teaching materials a clear presentation of material is emphasized. The clarity of the activity students are expected to do and the task they are to perform at the end of each lesson is of vital importance. The aforementioned framework also elaborates on how convenient the material is for the learners to carry out what they are asked to do in each lesson. In these textbooks which have been under investigation, the purpose the lessons lack preciseness and it seems that the purpose of the lessons have not been predetermined. Neither the students and consequently nor the teachers explicitly know where they are going to reach at the end of the book.

Griffiths (1995), claims that the language used in classroom material should prepare opportunities to divide the class into groups or pairs and plan pair and group activities. He also believes that it is important to have role-play or dialogue activities, and to give learners chances to interact with each other. In the textbook there should be enough attention to include suitably-designed warm-up tasks, pre and post listening and reading sections to assist the teacher in the management of the textbook. But these very important parts are generally missing in the Iranian high school English textbooks.

Widdowson (1980) believes that, acceptable and appropriate interaction between learners and class materials will not happen unless the learners are able to respond to the materials 'appropriately'. This view pinpoints that the only way to achieve authenticity is the existence of an agreement between the intention of material writer and the interpretation of the learner. As an example when the language skill to be focused on is reading, the selected activities should be adopted from authentic materials such as magazines, newspaper articles, journals, etc. accompanied by colorful, eye-catching, intriguing visuals aids so that the teenager high school learner can connect with the material. However, these qualities are missing in the textbooks under investigation. One can infer that the presentation of these books gave the impression that the material was not reader-friendly.

According to Ansary and Babaii (2002), the first thing to be taught is simple sentence patterns, it then should be followed by the introduction of new structures which are based on the simpler patterns which have been mastered already. Krashen (1982) also suggests that the linguistic features of the input given to students namely, comprehensible input should be just a one step beyond the learner's current linguistic ability. However, in these books we could observe that mostly harder grammatical features were introduced before the easier ones. For instance, based on the result of the survey, language learners could understand the concept of third form of verb (past participle of the verb) in present perfect tense much easier than the same concept when learning passive voice, but they are taught the former earlier. Another example is that embedded structures which linguistically is a difficult concept to grasp introduced in the first grade of high school in which the students are not familiar enough with English language. This load of cognitive complexity is hard for students to handle.

Another important issue in attracting students' attention is the visual appeal of the material. It can also help maintaining the interest of students. However, what is not very much considered in designing and preparation of Iranian English high school text books is giving enough attention to the quality of paper used, the design of pages of lessons and also the variety of colors. Normally young students are easily entertained by using colorful pictures and glossy paper, but in the case of their textbooks in Iranian high schools, you cannot find anything more than some pages with faded gray pictures and clumsy drawings on the recycled paper.

C. Audio-visual Aids

These days with the advances in technology, solely teachers cannot be very efficient. They need to be equipped with some sorts of audio visual aids to add more variety and flavor to their classes. Unfortunately, in Iranian school settings textbooks are not accompanied by officially approved audio resources such as CDs and if so schools are not equipped enough to give this opportunity to teachers to employ such material. There are very few freelance materials available which mostly skip the normality of natural English. The reader reads aloud the text too slowly which doesn't give a natural tone to the message in the format of a unified text. In addition, almost every audio-visual material is started with the explanation of vocabulary items with insufficient illustration. These explanation deals with only one aspect of the items of vocabulary and that aspect is the meaning. They fail to

provide a clear clarification on other components related to the phonological, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, and collocational properties of the words.

D. Balance of the material

In Iranian high school English text book the reading skill comparing with other skills seems to receive a high priority in the design of the books. However, a considerably big share of the lessons is devoted to grammar drills. Grammar drills occupy about 60% of the content of each lesson. This allocation and this much of emphasis on grammar solely seems not to be justifiable based on the findings on second language learning research. Researchers have stressed the need for extensive vocabulary teaching to serve for the sake of improvement of reading comprehension ability, and normally grammatical knowledge is of interest in more advanced levels of language proficiency. Lewis (1993: 17) said, "Vocabulary carries more of the meaning of a text than the grammar does."

Pollock (1997, pp. 5) claims that "Grammar rules do not tell you what to say. Grammar rules tell you how to say something correctly". It is the knowledge of vocabulary which is the in the heart of language and makes the events sensible. Wilkins (1972, pp.111) suggests that "Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". The ability to choose appropriate words in the proper situation requires an acceptable knowledge of vocabulary so that one can speak naturally and in a sensible manner. This issue seems to be one of the most important shortcomings of the English books in which the learners cannot find any words relevant to daily communication in order to express themselves.

According to Garinger (2002), there should be sufficient amount of practice included in a textbook, these exercises ought to be balanced in their format. They should also contain both mechanical controlled as well as free practice. The involvement of the students in doing the tasks in the book must be more than just mechanical ones. Students need to improve this ability to generate language on their own out of the classroom setting as well. Having this point in mind in the Iranian English textbooks, the practice of grammar not only lacks uniformity, but also supersedes the focus on vocabulary which is the heart of language.

In general, the exercises in the textbooks are mostly mechanical ones. These kind of mechanical tasks do not go even one step beyond the classroom context. The content of the textbook is mostly filled with activities such as fill in the blanks, true or false tasks, and simple yes / no questions as well as some easy comprehension tasks in which no room is left for production of language outside the classroom.

After the advent of the Lexical Approach by Michael Lewis in 1993, integrating collocations in the language syllabi has gain a great importance. Therefore, many textbooks in the world received reforming revisions on order to cope with the new-coming approach. However in Iranian English textbooks no change has been applied. Surprisingly these books were published first in 1991 and from then on they have been just re-publishing without any substantial revision.

6. Discussion

Krashen (2004) first introduced the term Free Voluntary Reading as the main basis for improvement of reading proficiency. He believes that it is very significant to motivate the learners to free read as much as they can. It should be also considered that learners should be free to choose the material they want to read, there also should be supplied by a large data base of interesting books by their teachers in order to give them proper chances of selection out or the presented material. In general, according to Dougill's checklist, as well as the data collected from the survey, it was observed that the final aim of the curriculum approach in Iranian text book is not clearly set. There is no explanation of explicit specification of short and long term objectives of the book. The teachers in fact find it hard to come to an agreement about what teaching methodology they should employ, which skills and psycholinguistic abilities they should emphasize on, and what they should include in their exams (Jahangard, 2007).

The framework of the books fail to clarify what the students are expected to do in each lesson, and what goals they should be able to achieve in the long run. As mentioned earlier the students do not find the passages appealing enough neither in terms of the content nor with respect to the appearance. The texts are found to be too monotonous and the content lacks modern, up to date genres. The students are confused why they are reading a certain text when the classroom tasks and objectives are not in correspondence with the ideas in the passages. There are some grammatical features which have not already been introduced in the passages. It means there is no chance of

exposure to grammatical items before studying them. Consequently these features are addressed in isolation and discretely. Some teachers use their initiatives to improvise an appropriate situation to teach those points. However, as generally teachers are not trained to do so, most of them are not capable of handling such a thing.

The conversation section which is in form of some artificial dialogues are so dull and also mechanical that both the teacher and the students wish to skip it. However, an important principle in teaching English specifically in EFL context is keeping a balance in presentation of a wide variety of language skills at once and the integration of all the four language skills (Gower et al., 2005), because learning a language is anything but learning skills separately and in isolation from each other (Littlewood 1981). On the contrary, learning a language means learning a combination of all of the necessary skills. These books under investigation are, however, short of offering some of the skills. There is no instance of listening and writing activities. Furthermore, merely mechanical drills has proven to be ineffective to equip the learners to communicate in natural settings. Learners need to be provided with opportunities to employ the language creatively (Nunan, 1999). In addition, according to Harmer (1991), the most effective way of presenting a new target form is to give the students a chance see/or hear the language, and drawing their attention to the grammatical feature later on with a number of different ways such as, highlighting, underlying, boldfacing, etc. this was completely missing in the aforementioned text books.

Regarding vocabulary it is necessary to mention that very few of the vocabulary items introduced in the texts are fully practiced in the exercises following, so generally there is no reinforcement to help the learners acquire the new words. Advocates of CLT strongly recommend that in introducing new words practice within a known context is a must. If new items of vocabulary are embedded in a plausible context, there is a higher possibility for them be recognized, and consequently be related to the existing knowledge and also they will be accessed in memory more easily. One of the most suggested ways of teaching vocabulary is by presenting them within a proper context along with an appropriate illustrations which can make the process of learning more authentic (Dahmardeh, 2004). The other important issue worth illustrating in this paper is the concept of culture. There is high amount of debate among scholars such as Chastain (1988), McGrath (2002) and many others about the idea of teaching the culture along with teaching the language. However, Iranian textbooks do not include anything about the culture of English speaking countries. Even all the names or situations that are presented in the textbooks have been localized to Iranian names and tradition. Whatever the reason whether social or political, it is a major barrier to language learning.

7. Conclusion

Teaching a language is much more complicated than just coping with some tasks and activities in hoping to prepare the learners to overcome the real problems they may encounter in their real lives. researcher have proven it necessary to expose language learners to conditions in which the integration of language skills and the development of cognitive style can occur in order for them to achieve an acceptable degree of communicative ability . Unfortunately, according to the data retrieved from the current study, the main objectives of all three English textbook of Iranian high schools are to focus on reading comprehension tasks, to teach the students how to use the new items of vocabulary in new sentences accurately, and also to present some phonetic symbols and pronunciation (although pronunciation is left unpracticed).

In general, there are considerable inconsistencies between the learners' needs, and the materials prepared for them in their textbooks. When books haven't unchanged for many years, the students do not feel obligated to try to find the answers to the exercises of the book, because they can simply copy them from the old books available in nay school. So, any chance of practice and innovation and creativity in the teachers as well as learners is killed. On the side of teachers as well on the one hand, they do not need to design and thin about new genuine questions for testing their learners as the questions have already been available in the school archive from the past twenty years. On the other hand, the teachers do not even feel the necessity to become updated, because the knowledge they poses is more than enough to cover the material they ought to teach. They know every corner of the teaching material by heart. Their knowledge, however, is at high risk of decline now, because there is no opportunity of challenge for discovery and learning new things.

From the period in which these books were published first, the learners' needs and attitudes along with society have undergone dramatic changes. Therefore, it is suggested to include new texts based

on a revised form of needs analysis of the new generation. When the learners are interested in the content, they obviously can learn other issues related to it in a much easier manner, as the content is appealing they become eager to learn the language less stressfully. Furthermore, it is crucial for a language learner to know what is happening in other cultures, such as how people behave in different settings, how they react toward different problems, how they use different gestures to convey their messages and more importantly, what complications may occur if learners use a wrong system of communication with people from other cultures. A suitable, successful textbook is the one that can establish a proper connection between the world outside and the one inside the head of the learner. And this is the issue which the current Iranian English textbooks in use fail to fulfill.

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ANALYZING THE ROLE OF TEACHER FOLLOW UP MOVES IN CONTENT-BASED CLASSROOMS AMONG IRANIAN TEFL AND ENGLISH LITERATURE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Examining highly structured speech interaction between teacher and students through Sinclair and Coulthard's IRF (1975), initiation-response-follow-up, can seem contrary to real-world conversations. This study investigates teacher-talk in terms of follow-up moves, its different roles in content-based classroom discourse, and its impact on promoting student contributions. It draws on transcript data from classes held for three content-based courses of Linguistics, Seminar, and Syllabus Design in the department of English Language, Urmia University. Ninety minutes of classroom interactions were recorded and analyzed, 30 minutes from each class were transcribed. Two main roles of the teacher follow-up moves, namely discorsal and evaluative roles, were observed. Discorsal follow-ups prevailed over the evaluative ones in two of the observed content-based classes: Seminar, (discorsal follow-ups) 29 > 0 (evaluative follow-ups) and Syllabus Design, (discorsal follow-ups) 11 > 7 (evaluative follow-ups) while in the Linguistics class, (discorsal follow-ups) 3 < 20 (evaluative follow-ups), the evaluative type was dominant. It is, in particular, on discorsal follow-ups that the moves of the teachers build on students' contributions and develop a meaning-focused dialogue with the class which promote the students' initiation; class student initiation 12 > Syllabus design class student initiation 5 > Linguistics class student initiation 1.

Keywords: content-based classes, discorsal follow-up, evaluative follow-up, follow up moves

1. Introduction

Learning a language in the classroom setting is the result of the exposure of the learner to the linguistic environment revealed in the interaction between the participants in that context. This interaction is different from the real world exchanges and other varieties of talk in terms of form and function (Al-Grawi, 2005). Some researchers such as (Kurhila, 2004) have studied the differences between the institutional interaction and the natural type of interaction and found out that institutional interactions are goal-oriented and contain contributions shaped by institutional goals. Moreover, Heritage (1997) investigated this kind of institutional interaction and found it discussable in six places of turn taking, overall organization of structure and sequence, turn taking, lexical choice, and epistemological and other forms of asymmetry. As McCarthy (1991) stated, understanding spoken discourse in a class can be a valuable tool to prepare SL learners for real-life language interactions. "studying classroom interaction has helped in finding effective ways of preparing L2 teachers, evaluating teaching, studying the relationship between teaching and learning, and promoting teachers' awareness of their teaching and consequently improving it" (Al-Grawi, 2005). The I-R-F exchange structure that was applied in traditional teacher-based classroom contexts, has been criticized in communicative language teaching approaches; because it provided a great majority of the Initiation moves while it failed to give the learners opportunities for asking questions

themselves, nominating topics of interest to them, and negotiating meaning (Nunan, 1987, Thornbury, 1996 as cited in Cullen, 2002).

A common practice in classroom discourse is the IRF sequence (teacher initiation–student response–teacher feedback) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). In short, it is associated with a heavily teacher-centered classroom methodology. More specifically, the quality of teacher questions has been criticized by Van Lier (1988), who pointed out that some teachers use closed and inauthentic questions such as "Did you stay at home yesterday, Martha?" One reason is that teachers adopt an I-R-F mode of instruction because it is perceived to be a powerful pedagogic device for transmitting and constructing knowledge. It is the third part of this cycle, the F-move, which distinguishes classroom talk from many speech events outside the classroom, by pedagogical function it serves, that is providing feedback to the learner. If a class is reduced to silence by the teacher's deliberate to provide feedback, the students would not see the point of the teacher's questions. Feedback or follow-up is thus seen as an obligatory, inevitable feature of teacher-initiated classroom exchanges (Cullen, 2002). Outside the classroom, follow-up moves are always optional and unpredicted (Francis & Hunston, 1992).

This study aimed to explore the content-based classes IRF patterns, evaluative and discursial follow ups provided by the teachers in particular. It investigated the role it played in promoting student-initiated exchanges, with a view to determining how teachers can use it to the best effect. Research in the area of discourse analysis has been slow to take off. What all this background researches well illustrate is the lack of research into the more specific field of follow-up move, especially in the kind of teacher's feedback (discursial vs. evaluative) to the pupils in our country Iran, which will be contributing to the growing body of research in the field.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Classroom Discourse

A teacher's discourse which is the way in which they use language to make things done is unique in its setting on the account of the unequal power relationship between teacher and learner (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982). Class discourse mainly includes asking a question by the teacher to be answered by one or more learners and consequently to be evaluated by the teacher as in class, teachers mostly dominate the interactions and exchanges (Nunan, 1999). McCarthy (1991) believes that in classroom setting, aspects of natural discourse such as turn-taking is changed and is mainly teacher-controlled that is unnatural in comparison to the real world communication.

2.2. Questions and Feedback

In any discourse, as McCarthy (1991) states, participants, roles and settings are the criteria applied to evaluate the function of the language. In class setting, teachers usually ask display questions (to which they know the answer) rather than reference questions (to which they do not know the answer) in order to check the learners' progress on language structure and knowledge although many of these questions do not appear in the real world conversation (Seedhouse, 1996). Unlike the real world communication where feedback occurs after achieving the purpose of the exchange, in classroom setting feedback is provided to learners' responses, usually on form for both display and reference questions, as a teaching tool at any point regardless of whether the exchange has been completed (McCarthy, 1991). Therefore Initiation-Response-Follow up (feedback) is an unnatural structure in natural settings as follow-up moves that is necessary in classroom is not obligatory in real world exchanges (Willis, 1992; Francis & Hunston, 1992). However, according to Seedhouse (1996), EFL classroom discourse is institutional where the purpose of learning English is achieved.

2.3. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, which is the search for coherence in language, examines the function and form of written or spoken language. In the teaching field, Halliday (1961, cited in Brazil, 1995) used a ranking scale that shows the hierarchical relationship between a sentence and a morpheme in order to show how language is interlinked grammatically. Halliday's rank scale was adopted by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992) to help them define their descriptive classroom two party model.

In 1975 Sinclair and Coulthard suggested a descriptive system for the discourse of classroom that was known as the Birmingham model or, at the level of *exchange*, the Initiation-Response-Follow-up structure (IRF) and according to Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 9), "The basic 'IRF' exchange structure of Sinclair and Coulthard – an initiation by a teacher, which elicits a response from a pupil, followed by an evaluative comment or feedback from the teacher – is, once seen, impossible to ignore in any

classroom talk". Teaching exchanges consist of *initiation moves* (called the opening move in Sinclair and Coulthard's original model), *response moves* (the answering move), and *follow-up moves*. "IRF structure is characteristic of teacher-fronted discourse, in which the teacher asks a question or provides information, the student responds or reacts, and the teacher provides some degree of comment or evaluation" (Swift, 2012). As Brazil (1995) explains "the teacher knows what he or she wants to tell the class but chooses to do it by setting up situations in which they are steered- more or less successfully- into telling it themselves" (p.22).

Coulthard and Brazil (1979) looked critically at this model and improved the term "feedback" to 'follow-up'. According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), pupil initiated exchanges and teacher initiated exchanges are different in structure; they suggested pupils' initiation of an informing exchange was followed by feedback rather than a response, so the structure was IF rather than IR. This was because the teacher's reply was usually a comment on how they had performed, as is the case following a pupil's response to teacher initiations. However, Coulthard and Brazil (1979) believe that there are simply a wide range of items that can occur in a responding slot.

Sinclair and Brazil (1982) stated that teachers use discourse in order to tell things to their students, motivate them to do things and evaluate the things their students do. According to Sinclair and Coulthard's model classroom exchanges can be classified into three basic moves: "an *initiation* by the teacher, followed by a *response* from the pupil, followed by *feedback* to the pupil's response from the teacher" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992, p.3). The feedback move has since been acknowledged as a follow-up move (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982; Coulthard & Brazil, 1992). This three move IRF exchange was originally named by Coulthard as Opening, Answering, and Follow-up moves. Follow-up moves which realize the feedback element, let a learner know how well he or she has performed. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) define the act of *evaluate* as including "repetition of the pupil's reply with either high-fall (positive) or a rise of any kind (negative evaluation)" (p.21).

Example:

(Initiation move) T: Similar to morpheme, we studied? Phoneme. Phoneme ha? So you see that phoneme. So okay phoneme is the smallest what?

(Answering move) S: Sound

(Follow up move) T: Not sound morpheme

From an analysis of lesson transcripts made by the Cullen (2002) discursial roles of recordings of secondary school English classes in Tanzania, two broad follow-up pedagogical roles of the follow-up move emerged: an evaluative and a discursial role. The evaluative role's function is to provide feedback to individual students about their performance, and in particular, in the language teaching classroom, to allow learners to confirm, disconfirm and modify their interlanguage rules (Chaudron, 1988). The focus is on the form of the learner's response: whether, for example, the lexical item or grammatical structure provided by the learner was acceptable or not. The feedback may be an explicit acceptance or rejection of the response or some other indication that the response was not acceptable. Evaluative follow-ups typically co-occur with display questions in the initiation move, that is, questions that the teacher asks in order to elicit a pre-determined response. The discursial role of the Follow-up move is qualitatively different from its evaluative role: the purpose is to pick up students' contributions and to incorporate them into the flow of classroom discourse (Mercer, 1995), in order to sustain and develop a dialogue between the teacher and the class; the emphasis is on content rather than form. Discursial follow-up typically co-occurs with questions which have a referential rather than a display function (i.e. where there is no right or wrong answer predetermined by the teacher). Nystrand (2003) found that the more referential questions teachers ask, the more likely a classroom will be to show dialogic discourse as opposed to teacher monologue. Yanfen and Yupin (2010) in a two-step study analyzed teacher's talk and follow-up move among 29 English teachers and 350 students. Information was gathered by a questioner from teachers and students about their preferences to ways of teacher talk. When students produce no answer or an incorrect answer, teachers usually prefer not to tell the students directly (83%), but use ways of prompting to get students to work out the answer by themselves, and this is what teachers really did in class (54%). Forms of promoting, such as repetition of the error, requesting students to clarify what he had said or giving some clues to the answers can provide students with an opportunity to reformulate and improve their utterances and thus, serve as a means of promoting 'push out', which is believed to facilitate acquisition (Swain, 1995).

Edwards and Mercer (1987), describing research carried out in mother-tongue classrooms in the UK, saw teachers' follow-ups as a crucial element in the I-R-F exchange structure, where the teacher acted as a kind of gateway through which all knowledge had to pass in order to be included in the lesson as a valid or useful contribution. It can be seen from the above discussion that there is a significant difference in purpose between follow-ups which have a primarily evaluative function and those which have a mainly discursive one. In the former, support for learning is in the formal correction which the Follow-up move offers. In the latter, support for learning consists primarily in the teacher providing a rich source of message-oriented target language input as s/he reformulates and elaborates on the students' contributions, and derives further Initiating moves from them. The focus is on the content, not the form of the students' response moves.

3. The Lesson Data and Classroom Interaction

The data chosen for analysis through Sinclair and Coulthard's Initiation-Response-Follow up (feedback) discourse analysis model was gathered from 3 content-based classes held in Uremia University in which the students were majoring at TEFL and English Literature. These classes were held for content-based courses including: Linguistics, Syllabus Design, and Seminar. Data was gathered via a small mp3 recorder placed near the area where the lesson took place. Afterwards, the data was transcribed, and then analyzed using the IRF model. From each class, about 30 minute discourse is transcribed for the purpose of analysis. Both female and male students attended the classes, approximately 20 students in each class. The data transcription and analysis are presented in table format in Appendix 1.

4. Findings and Discussions

The data chosen for analysis comprises the 3 transactions occurring in classes for Seminar, Syllabus Design, and Linguistics courses. The first, second and third columns list the initiative moves, the response moves, and the follow-up moves respectively (Appendix 1). Analysis of the classroom exchanges show that discursive type of follow ups by the teachers dominates the exchanges. There are more discursive follow ups in 2 of the classes which are Seminar, and Syllabus Design. Only in the Linguistics class, the evaluative follow ups surpassed the discursive ones. The following table shows the number of discursive moves versus the evaluative moves ones:

	Seminar	Syllabus Design	Linguistics
Discursive follow ups	29	11	3
Evaluative follow ups	0	7	20

Despite long initiation moves provided by the teachers especially in the Seminar and Syllabus Design classes, the teachers' follow up moves were mainly discursive, i.e. promoting a message-based classroom, and encouraging student initiations and follow-ups, an example of which can be viewed in the following transcript:

(Initiation) T: they will read the text silently and then they will look at the questions and answer the questions. But the prerequisite the precondition for answering your questions in the quiz is that they should have the text in front of themselves. So that's not part of teaching that's part of answering the questions. Ha?

(Response) S5: yes I'm not teaching anything. They are reading it themselves.

(Follow-up) T: but you have said that you will ask them to summarize, you will ask them to answer the comprehension questions, you can do this as part of teaching but it should happen after the quiz has been accomplished.

(Initiation) S2: I think eh...

On the other hand follow-ups having an evaluative function, hindered student initiation and somehow the meaning-based communicative mood of the class, such as the following:

(Initiation) T: What does it mean?

(Response) S: Before starting circulation

(Follow-up) T: Okay very good

(Initiation) T: Ladies?

The teachers had a tendency to over-state the communicativeness of their lessons, and the observations give real evidence of the kind of communication that actually took place during the 3 class transactions which were analyzed. In this kind of approach to classroom discourse, sometimes,

corrective feedback is neglected in expense of maintaining the meaning-based and the interactive status of the class. It was still very clear that overall teacher contributions outnumbered student contributions. So one advantage of using the IRF model is that it gives the teachers a feedback regarding the amount of student talk that actually occurs, their own talk and the type of follow-ups they provide for their interlocutors. This analysis also provided evidence of the degree of communicativeness of the activities chosen for the lessons. Activities with a large number of display questions would result in an equally large number of evaluative follow-ups; whereas a large number of referential questions would produce an equally large number of discursal follow-ups. Thus it can be said that the transactions in Seminar, and Syllabus Design classes were more communicative than those in Linguistics class.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, it was attempted to show the pedagogical importance of the teachers' follow-up move in the context of classroom interaction, by examining a snapshot of a fairly traditional university classrooms which is perhaps typical of many where English is taught as a foreign language. The snapshot reveals a sequence of classroom interaction which consists of a chain of I-R-F exchanges led by the teacher from the front of the class, in which discursal follow-ups surpassed the evaluative follow-ups. In the interactions, the teachers' follow-up moves play a crucial part in clarifying and building on the ideas that the students express in their responses, and in developing a meaningful dialogue between teacher and class. Further classroom studies of this nature would be useful to corroborate the findings of this particular study with a view to determining what makes for effective follow-up. Greater understanding and knowledge in this area will have important implications for teacher training and development. This research involved a limited data sample from 3 lessons. Further research involving a larger sample of data obtained during one-on-one classrooms may be helpful in determining whether there are unique patterns of interaction and follow-up moves applicable to variety of content-based teaching situations.

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Appendix 1: Data Transcription

(Seminar)		
Initiation	Response	Follow up
T: ok we've got a lot of work to do here. I mean we'll need every students 'proposal to be properly tackled and discussed here and so if we are going to be absent or cancel the class I think ahh you are perhaps the person who would be affected negatively because the others have already discussed their proposals. So it is not a good idea to think about early cancelations from now.	S1: but we don't have time to give it to you before the test.	T: don't be a pessimist. We don't have earlier cancelation. We will have just all our classes as we've got in the schedule.
	S2: is it possible to discuss mine in the class?	T: you've lost a very great chance to have your proposal discussed here when it was your turn S2: sorry
T: but if we've got some extra sessions at the end of the course perhaps yes we can also	S2: in Farsi: mamulan be kuchaktarha ye forsate ezafi midan . man tu class az hame kuchektaram.	T: in Farsi: Jedan?
	S2: bale	
T: in do nafar az shoma kuchektar nistan?	S2: ostad ina classe ma nistan	T: pas chera inje neshastan?
	S1: they are guests.	
T: well we've got two guests here as you'll be well aware with Ms. Akhavan and Ms. Amiri.	S3: two of your best students.	
T: you know the custom of being guests to my classes? Bunch of flowers , box of candies.	S3: ok, they will give you candies, bunch of flowers.	T: in Farsi: nakhastim velesh kon.
	S2: ostad, so if you, excuse me.	T: in Farsi: shoma az ma zerangtarin. Ok. Yes.
S2: if you give me a chance. I'll bring my proposal.	T: yes Ms. Karvani. Ok. Hopefully if we get to the	S2: thanks.

	end of the list of students who were supposed to be presenting a proposal we shall hopefully find some extra chance for you too.	
T: you well come . ok let's see who 's here , (he calls the list) ok who are today's victims? Ms. Samadi and who else? And Ms. Rafyee.		
S4: can I give you my proposal and to my classmates?	T: please yes.	
T: Ms. Samadi why did you send your mom to my office yesterday?	S5: I didn't find anyone.	T: you couldn't find anyone younger?
	S5: yes I couldn't S5: I couldn't really find anyone!	T: if I knew that you're going to send your mom to my office I wouldn't ... you could've sent a friend.
	S6: I had a class.	T: oh, you had a class too?
T: Well let's begin with Ms. Samadi's proposal. As usual it will take us a couple of minutes to have a look at the content. If you have already studied the proposal we can start discussing. If you've just got it ok let's spend a couple of minutes on that we shall look at this writing in greater detail trying to see that if we can improve it. Of course Ms Samadi's proposal has undergone some checking and revision by me. But any how we will be able to have some further ideas hopefully. So everybody please spend a few minutes reading this piece of paper and then we shall be discussing. (10 minutes silent reading).		
T: ok anybody not finished yet? Well ahh while in most cases I gave you a model of ah... and I talk about the content of design and structures and you remain silent, it does not mean that you cannot have you own voices. If you have any comments any points which are unclear to you then you can also ask me for help. If you've got ideas about why something should be this or different then you can also have your comments and ideas we can discuss. Well, as I said you we've been working with Ms Samadi on this perhaps for a couple of sessions now. As I read the final draft yesterday, I gave some comments. Then most of the things which I would have probably liked to be seen here are in correct order and the way I expected to be in a proposal. So in terms of the design yes she's going to use an intact group design that was the right design as I have said in most cases the applied linguist in our context use this design because we don't have authority or control over	S1: presi.. design	T: yes

the groups which we choose. So the design is ok. In terms of the selection of the groups into experimental and control groups again this stage only will be random. The selection of participants will not be random that's why we call it intact group design. But the assignment of one group to control and the other group to experimental will be on a random basis. This is actually technically called?		
T: this is actually an example of presi.. design but this process of assigning a group randomly to control and another group randomly to experimental is technically called what?	S2: semi-randomization	T:semi-randomization yes
T: so that assignment will follow a semi-randomization procedure according to Gass and McKay. The design is also quasi-experimental because you're having experiment it is in a way or another experimental because you are not selecting your participants on a random basis. It is not a true experimental design but it is a quasi experimental design. So these things I mean are supported. I'm not trying to say that anything should be changed here but I would like to agree with what you've said. In terms of participants well everything is in terms of a proposal you're just predicting what may have done. Two university freshman students will be chosen from two different universities. Well the fact that they are freshman and the fact that they are taking general English course the fact that they are non-English majors will mean that they are really very low proficient students. There could be some high proficient students. If you find very high proficient and very low proficient students in your participant then the best option will be to move them to look at them as outliers as extreme scores and then to make homogeneity in your groups to take shape. But of course Ms. Samadi has said homogeneity will be also be guaranteed using a PET test so you need I mean the fact that they are non-English major students , or the fact that they are freshman students does not mean that they are equivalent in terms of language proficiency . We don't know perhaps in each class there are some very knowledgeable some very proficient students but in the other class we don't have the pairs so the best way to make sure that the groups the classes are equal is to begin with using a language proficiency test and because they are low proficient students then the PET which has been suggested here is an appropriate test. Does anybody know what PET stands for?	S4: preliminary English ...	

<p>T: preliminary English test which is a low level English language proficiency test and that will do the job of showing whether they can be homogenous or not. If the candidates are homogeneous well the task is easy you'll be able to use a t-test simply at the end of your analysis but if the candidates are found to be a bit different from one another across the groups if you do not see a homogeneity to begin with then your task is a bit difficult and in this case you need to use the ANCOVA analysis technique well I've checked Ms Samadi's initial data which was using PET and there was not a significant difference as far as I remember between the groups so she doesn't need worry about using ANCOVA but any how if in your case the situation is that while you are comparing the groups at the beginning of the study you do not find any parallelism or equivalence in terms of language proficiency which means that the groups are not homogenous you need to make sure that in your analysis of the data you need to use analysis technique or method of ANCOVA. ANCOVA will take care of the initial differences. Ah what is the major of the students in Piranshahr Azad university Ms Samadi?</p>	<p>S5: accountancy</p>	<p>T: accountancy? Hesabdari? Is it different from accounting? Did you check it in the dictionary and it was accountancy?</p>
	<p>S5: yes</p>	
<p>T: I think it should be accounting again check it in dictionary to make sure</p>		
<p>S6: excuse me</p>	<p>T: yes</p>	
	<p>S6: majors are different is it ok?</p>	<p>T: yes because we are working with general English proficiency of people and generally English proficiency is not very much related to the different majors people have as I said what is important here as a variable is not the major of that the students have but the amount of language proficiency that the students have and to check this we need to use a PET or any other proficiency test so the fact that students are majoring in</p>

		accounting or accountancy or any other major will not make them any different indeed if they are not different in terms of language proficiency so it is not a crucial issue to worry about a crucial variable to worry about that is not something which should be concerned.
S1: excuse me I have a question concerning the research question what is the use of ...	T: where is the research question?	
	S1: ah the title	T: the title, ok.
S1: what is the reason for checking guessing after teaching itself? You know we usually check guessing before teaching so after we have taught something after we've taught reading of course we make words familiar to the students so they are going to guess all of them.	T: ok that is a kind of methodological issue which I was going to raise as well in the procedure section and of course the procedure and the materials have mixed up a bit and in the materials section Ms Samadi is talking about how the quizzes will be given and their guessing ability will be checked well the point is that if you have already discussed I mean read the reading material the passage itself well the hope is that any student whether receiving pre-discussion before the lesson or not receiving pre-discussion before reading should be able to guess the meaning of the words because the reading have already been done discussed..	
	S1: not even expect them to know the meaning	T: yes I mean the guessing ability of students should be checked prior to discussing the reading passage itself rather than after you have discussed the passage
S5: before studying the passage we can give	T: ok that is the focus you	

pre-discussions so they become more familiar with the content of the reading so they won't need any dictionary or we don't give the meanings to the students so by pre-discussion they can guess the meanings of the words	would like to see whether pre-discussion will help the students to predict some meanings and whether those who do not have a pre-discussion will have the same facility or not. If you have already discussed the content of the reading the assumption is that everything in the reading passage should by now be clear digestible, understandable. I'll come to you Ms Soleimanzadeh don't worry don't rush please.	
	S2: I think	T: ok go ahead rush please
S2: I was just saying that when you are teaching reading, she will you know teach in a way that she will only ask the students to read the passage in pre-discussion they will pre-discuss the topic the title or the pictures of the reading something like warm up		
T: or whatever this discussion should be clearly defined what are the exact activities during the pre-discussion?	S2: and the students will not know the meaning of the words there are some hidden and new words in the reading passage that even after reading once on their own they will not understand it is something which happens to our classes	
	S1: I think after teaching reading not just after the warm up	S2: no I mean after teaching you know she is not going to just give the meaning of the words I think she is going to ask the students to read the reading comprehension passage and after that you know they will be provided with the eh..
T: well that's not teaching reading if she is going to ask the students to read the passage that's not teaching reading but I understood here that she is going to ask them to summarize it to ask them to answer the comprehension	S2: on that case she is going to give the meanings of the words too	T: that is actually the objection we are having we are saying that the ability to guess should be

questions or whatever and it means that having spent enough time on reading it means teaching reading properly.		checked before actually starting to teach the passage
S2: I think eh...		
T: teaching the passage in whatever way then you have already given hints clues to both groups in understanding the meaning of the words you should be teaching		
S2: I think there is something wrong with the terms she has used she doesn't mean eh...		
T: well let's ask her to clarify her own position which she stands. Ms Samadi what are you going to do are you going to check their guessing ability before teaching reading or after teaching reading?	S5: after teaching reading	T: but it will pose a problem
	S5: after teaching reading eh...	
T: so what are you going to do?	S5: I won't teach them every word and give them the meaning of the words they are just going to read the reading eh...	T: ok
T: what do you mean by teaching reading just clarify it to us	S5: first of all I'm going to give the pre-discussion to the students about the content of the reading	T: ok
S5: and then eh...		
T: listen please listen please!		
S5: and then eh...	T: make sure that pre-discussion is discussion not just giving a background information	S5: yes it is discussion eh...
T: in pre-discussion it means that you are going to engage the students	S5: yes they are eh...	T: ask them questions and answers ok
	S5: ah I'm going to ask them questions about the content give them background knowledge of the content of the passage	T: ok
	S5: it will last about 15 to 20 minutes	T: ok
	S5: then the students will read the passage	T: reading of the passage is ok as far as you are not teaching any structures or words or meanings or definitions or whatever
	S5: yes nothing ah	T: so that reading is ok because without

		reading they won't be able to answer or do the quiz or guessing the meaning questions
S2: so as I said she is not going to teach any words she's just asking the students to read the passage. In the passage eh...	T: Ms. Soleimanzadeh akhe she says here that	
	S5: ok I think there is something with the terms used here ok as she explained herself eh... S2: ok explain	T: would you let her explain what she means herself please?
T: (in Farsi) age shoma bezarid. Bazam mesle inke ma ba shoma davamun khahad gerefta! Do ta ham mehmun darim. Yes Ms. Samadi the only thing you are going to do in teaching reading if we call it teaching reading is to allow the students to read the passage	S5: yes	
T: Is this called teaching reading? No!	S5: emm just reading silently	
T: they will read the text silently and then they will look at the questions and answer the questions. But the prerequisite the precondition for answering your questions in the quiz is that they should have the text in front of themselves. So that's not part of teaching that's part of answering the questions. Ha?	S5: yes I'm not teaching anything. They are reading it themselves	T: but you have said that you will ask them to summarize, you will ask them to answer the comprehension questions, you can do this as part of teaching but it should happen after the quiz has been accomplished after the quiz has been administered
	S5: you mean that I give comprehension questions and the summary after the quiz	T: yes
	T: because if you work on a reading passage, if you ask the students to read the passage answer the questions summarize it then it means that you have already taught everything in the reading passage so the assumption is that...	S5: ok when they are reading for example there is a word in the passage they don't know the meaning I won't give meaning to the words
T: so you will ask them to read the passage answer the questions without yourself giving them any help in the reading	S5: they will just comprehend guess the answers you know	
T: so you won't give them any clues, any helps, any guides as to whether the answer to questions are right or wrong or whatever?	S5: yes I will	

T: so in that case you will be teaching the reading	S5: they don't have to know every single word meaning in the text for example when I choose my reading comprehension questions I give them the questions	
T: but you know that some of the questions you are using in your quiz are exactly those questions in the passage I mean eh...	S5: yes	
T: as part of the comprehension question	S5: I just give them two or three questions based on the passage I try to give them the questions ah that the words used in the answers are not the words used in my quizzes I give them other questions I don't want them to eh...	T: well you need to make sure that you haven't taught the passage properly I mean if you make everything in the passage clear to the students then there is no point to talk about their guessing ability because they already know everything about the passage

(syllabus design)		
Initiation	Response	Feedback
T: During the last session as we discussed the objectives as far as curriculum development is concerned. I want to ask you what you know about objectives? Shole?	S1: objectives I think are things in our mind before starting anything for example before starting teaching teacher and students should have some objectives in their minds. A place where they want to reach, eh...	T: destination?
	S1: destination	T: ok thank you and
	S1: without it we don't know what we are going to do	T: where we are and where we are going to or what's the destination yes thank you
	S2: and eh going to be carried out by students whether...	T: yes thank you. In general speaking objectives is our goals or plans, ok, implemented in the classroom for general course substance or whole course ok for implementing it helps us to know where we are and where we are going to our destination eh sorry!

		Eh as Mr. Azarmi said it helps us specify whatever we will do in the class whatever the teacher will do in the class what's expected from the students and so on yes Bahareh.
S4: what makes a difference between goals and objectives?	T: yes exactly	
	S4: goals are more general and general statements about what the course book will be but objectives are more specific.	T: yes, thank you this is what I wanted to make eh to ask you whether there's a difference between goals and objectives. Objectives are the more specified forms of the goals. Normally we've got objectives of specified types for specific group of people for example for a classroom section but the goals are the broader. in fact both of them are of the same eh let's say eh not scope the same meaning with different scopes ok this is general one of broader one and this is more eh less.
	Ss: specific	
	S2: those complement each other	T: pardon
	S2: both complement each other	
T: well we can say objectives are preliminaries for specifying the syllabus	S3: ehm	
T: first you define... in fact objectives from the syllabus you define the objectives you know you specify the content what the reader will do in the class then all of these things are the preliminaries for the syllabus.	S2: you can see the syllabus is inevitable fragment of our all package of course	T: preliminaries for the syllabus yes any other idea?
	S4: specifying objectives maybe carried on before dealing with the design of the syllabus	T: yes they form the syllabus
	S4: it depends on the... for example in the rational of syllabus the	T: yes they form the syllabus eh

	objectives are specified before maybe during the design of the syllabus	
	S4: it depends on..	T: yes but in general objectives are still one part of the syllabus as some steps you know toward complementing the syllabus so now we know what objectives are but the importance of objectives should be referred as well. Why do you think setting objectives prior to any plan as Shole said is important? Why is it important to talk about objectives of the syllabus before implementation? Rafyee!
	S5: because considering the objectives the content of the course and the activities that's going to be performed during the course are specified so it's necessary for every syllabus has a objectives	T: ok thank you Deniz sorry.
S6: what the students then the awareness know that what they 're going to do	T: yes exactly	S6: eh
	T: satisfied, motivated they know that what's the main purpose of the instruction, what they will achieve at the end of the instruction. These are the important things the students would like to know at the beginning of the term. So objectives define as I told you where we are what the destination is these I turn would have some positive and good side effects as far as the learners are concerned. You please	
	S7: yes you know they also can use for evaluation purposes	T: ahh
	S7: at the end of the term or semester or at the end of the course you know ah they can be evaluated based on what has been restored by the students or teachers	T: thank you
	S2: exactly if the syllabus or instruction is successful at the end of instruction or not you know the	T: yes thank you Samadi

	objectives are as criteria for evaluating of students instructions teachers materials anything so if we reached the objectives we are successful if not they should be changed so the objectives are important	
	S4: objectives act as a prior to destination of our instructional materials of different materials different activities.	T: yes thank you
T: as she said in fact your explanation directs us you know to another side of the objectives well we talked about the importance of objectives what they are now let's see what's you know included in the objectives you know what's meant by objectives what we do as far as objectives defining and setting objectives is a concern . as Samadi said the first thing we set in objectives is what teachers will do on the class for example yes we specify the teachers' duties like what?	S8: the type of instruction	T: umm the type of instruction or the material that define the type of instruction yes!
	S8: instruction, the context	T: no as far as the teachers are concerned
	S2: eh...	
T: how do we specify what the teachers do what's meant by what teachers do in class as far as objectives is concerned?	S2: what methodology the teachers use in class...	T: well prior to methodology we have to decide about the things the teachers have to do in the class then the lesson plan Shole
S1: I want to give an example for example the teacher is going to explain the difference between eh something	T: yes so	
	S1: this is very specific	
	T: very specific in very specific terms yes the teachers or the objectives tell us what the teacher will do in this specific you know session, class yes as seen in ILI you know hand guides for the teachers very specifically they tell now after 10 minutes they tell now teach the difference let's say between the present tense and past tense this is a specified objective that tells the teacher what to do ok or sometimes you may have a lesson plan during your teaching your lesson plan one point for example you have written	

	eh for example teach the students or explain the students about the cultural differences between two countries. This is a kind of you know objectives defined for the teacher to do in the class want to do in the class yes...	
S5: can we say that, teachers' guides that have been provided by interchange books also a kind of objectives that says what the teachers should do in the class?	T: ok tell me what the guides are? Then you can say	
	S5: for example how should we teach a conversation part?	
	T: how? Or how should we teach?	
	S5: yes how should we teach?	
S2: excuse me...		
T: or suppose that's a way of teaching.	T: or suppose that's a way of teaching.	

(linguistics)		
Initiation	Response	Follow-up
T: So let's go to today's class. I think first of all you were supposed to hand me some word formation examples. Am I right?	Ss: Yes	
T: And also some of you prepared some samples to show to the class today	Ss: Yeah	
T: Ok, So and today we are going to talk about chapter?	Ss: 7	T: 7 morphology yes
T: So first there is some information at the beginning. What does it say? The beginning of chapter. What's that? The mental conversion of blood living creatures into cartoon characters. What is the relevance of this to this chapter? And what is the word at the beginning? The word at the beginning Sorry? Bumbification? What is the meaning? Bambify? Have you seen such a word before? Does anybody have a dictionary? Do we have such a word in English?	Ss: No	T: There is no such word. This is the author's creation.
T: So if you look at morphology itself you can see that we have the concept of morpheme Ha? What do we mean by morpheme?	S: The smallest meaningful unit	
T: Similar to morpheme, we studied? Phoneme. Phoneme ha? So you see that phoneme. So okay phoneme is the smallest what?	S: Sound	T: Not sound morpheme
T: Morpheme is the smallest?	Ss: Meaningful unit	T: Meaningful unit, ha?

T: So now write a big word so let's each of us write a big word and try to identify the meaningful units in them. Which section do you think that stand alone and can we use as a meaningful unit. The biggest word you can think of I think in the last class we had a big word ya? What was that?	S: It was German	T: No
T: was it your class?	Ss: No	T: I wrote, it was the other class
T: I wrote this antidisestablishmentarianism.	Ss: Laughter	
T: The longest word in English, Now you find similar long words that you know in English, which has sections, more meaningful units in it. Ok what examples did you write?	S: Dissoluteness r	
T: What meaningful units could you find?	Ss: Dissaluteness	
T: Aha so how many?	Ss: 3	T: Ok good
T: Any other examples?	Ss: Precirculationarism	
T: So what are the components of that?	Ss: Pre circulation	T: Precirculationarism
T: What does it mean?	S: Before starting circulation	T: Okay very good
T: Ladies?	Ss: Undernourishment	T: Okay
T: you should say the components	S: Under nourish ment	T: Okay very good
T: So are these morphemes all the same?	S: No	
T: For example if you say let's say hmm	S: Dis	T: Yes d I s
Does it come alone? Can it stand alone?	Ss: No	T: No.
T: So there are morphemes which can't stand alone e. Such as?	S: Anti, er,	Er a.
T: So meaningful units that can't stand alone		
T: Careless, care less. Ok if you say care, it stands alone. You can say it doesn't care. How about less?	Ss: No	T: No,
T: so that can't stand alone. So morphemes are not always the same, a wide variety of morpheme in. We have a classification in this book. We are first going to talk about what are free and bound morphemes t, and then what are lexical and? And functional morphemes, so let's 2 by 2 talk about these categories. So let's study together and we will review these things together and we will give you an assignment to do. Is there anybody whose major is biology?	S: Yes, me	T: Ok
T: Is there anything about morph or	S: Parts of the body, their	T: And morpheme is a

morpheme in it? Parts of sounds	appearance, and features. That's called morphology	term taken from biology
T: So morpheme is a minimal meaningful unit. Literally it means the study of what. Of forms appearance and initially it was taken from biology used for the description of forms of the language.		
T: So as we studied in this book the major classification can be bound or free morphemes. So, free morphemes as the name says can stand alone. They can be lexical or?	S: Functional	T: Functional, yes.
T: So we can have free morphemes as lexical words or functional words. Functional free morphemes include function words such as?	S: Conjunctions	
T: Examples of conjunctions include?	S: And, but, or	T: Aha, very good
T: Prepositions, articles such as?	S: The, a, an. And pronouns	T: Okay
T: But, bound morphemes can be derivational or?	S: Inflectional	T: Inflectional
T: Derivational ones are used to make words of different parts of speech e. Like the adjective becomes a?	S: A noun	T: A noun
T: Or a noun becomes a verb. Now can you make a verb out of an adjective? Can you make a verb out of an adj? From an adjective make a verb. From an adjective make a verb.	S: Stand up.	T: No no
T: from an adjective you make a verb. Light, lighten. Short, shorten. Dark, darken ha?	Yes. Absent.	
T: So anyway, if the word is in one form, and then by adding sth, it becomes a verb The part of speech changes. For example good as an adjective can be changed to be a noun such as? Goodness. O my goodness for example. Okay? But, inflectional morphemes do not change the part of speech. They just modify or add more grammatical information, for example this plural s ha or apostrophe s for possession. So, the part of speech does not change. Just some more grammatical features are added by the inclusion of these morphemes. Or ing for example.		

THE EFFECT OF DIRECT AND PEER FEEDBACK ON ACCURACY OF EFL LEARNERS' WRITTEN PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to explore the impact of direct and peer feedback on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. Seventy intermediate-level students learning English at Furuzesh Institute of Parsabad participated in the present study. For the purpose of homogeneity, prior to research, an Oxford Placement Test as a proficiency test was given to the students and the participants of the study were selected based on the results of the proficiency test. Students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean took part in the study. Accordingly, four students were taken out of the study since their scores were one standard deviation below or above the mean; therefore, sixty six students remained in the study. All the participants were assigned to three groups; control group (CG) and two experimental groups (EG1 & EG2). CG received no feedback, EG1 took advantage of direct feedback, and EG2 received peer feedback. The data were obtained through a pretest and a posttest, both of which were writing compositions. Data analysis indicated a statistically significant difference between direct and peer feedback and no feedback. In other words, both direct and peer feedback outweighed no feedback, and peer feedback outperformed direct feedback in improving writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners.

Key words: direct feedback, peer feedback, no feedback, writing skill

Introduction

In terms of language learning, writing is probably the most difficult skill to acquire. It is something most native speakers never master and is more challenging for second language learners. According to Lenneberg (as cited in Brown, 2007), writing is like swimming. He further adds that

Hyland (2003) claims that nowadays, the teaching of writing occupies a much further essential situation in the field of second or foreign language teaching rather than two or three decades ago. He states that it is related to the dependence of network communication on writing skill.

Writing is a recursive process and learners should revise their writing several times before submitting final drafts. According to Richards and Renandya (2001) "the skills involved in writing are highly complex. Second language (L2) writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on" (p. 303).

Despite the importance of English as an international language, writing in English as a foreign language has not received much attention in the way it is taught and learned in Iran. Students need to be competent in certain areas of language and its skills to be able to cope with academic demands of their courses (Meibodi&Gharaei, 2012). Even though writing is one of the most important tools in expressing new ideas and concepts, it has been marginalized in the Iranian educational curriculum (Javadi-safa, Vahdany, &Sabet, 2013) which might be due to the traditional methods of teaching this skill in educational contexts.

The focus of teaching writing has moved in recent years from the finished product to the process of writing (Raimes, 1983). The name of the approach reveals its main principle, putting emphasis on writing as a process. The goal of the model is to improve writing by providing the learner with

opportunities to master a range of behaviors related with effective composition (Williams, 1998). Learners try to internalize the practices utilized by good writers in order to write effective composition (Williams, 1998).

In the early parts of the 20th century, theories of how languages were learned relied heavily on the input provided to the learner. This was the case within the behaviorist tradition. Research on the efficacy of meaning-focused communicative approaches reveals that comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) alone does not improve learners' language proficiency in terms of syntax. Output, in response to input, is necessary for further language development. According to Swain's (1998) output hypothesis, output may impact noticing and promote L2 acquisition. L2 learners can be exposed to two types of input, positive and negative evidence (Long, 1996). Positive evidence provides learners with the models of what is acceptable in L2. By contrast, negative evidence provides learners with information as to what is unacceptable in L2. In second language acquisition (SLA) literature, the term negative evidence is often used interchangeably with the terms negative feedback and corrective feedback to refer to any indication of learners' non-target like use of the target language (Long, 1996). Learning to write is difficult especially for those writing in a second or a foreign language in academic contexts since they do not have enough knowledge about how to generate accurate and grammatically correct essays. As grammatical correctness of writing is considered to be a problem for EFL learners, a need is felt to improve the accuracy of students' writing performance.

Accuracy refers to the absence of errors. Skehan (1996) defines accuracy as the extent to which the language produced conforms to the norms of the target language. Skehan and Foster (1996) state high accuracy is an indication of interlanguage development. Accuracy measurement as an indicator of writing development is based on the assumption that second language learners write more accurately, or produce fewer errors in their writing, as they became more proficient (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998).

Lately, there has been much research in the field of SLA on the constructive function of corrective feedback on writing accuracy (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). To Richards and Schmidt (2010), feedback entails "comments or other information that learners receive concerning their success on learning tasks or tests, either from the teacher or other persons" (p. 217). The aims of corrective feedback, as Williams (2003) elaborates, is to teach skills that improve learners' writing proficiency and make them aware of their responsibilities as writers and enable students to construct qualified texts.

Celce-Murcia (1991) distinguishes between forms of feedback and states that there are different ways for students to receive feedback on their writings. She believes that teachers will want, of course, to be in charge of providing feedback to their students, believing that such feedback can play a vital role in the improvement of students' writing. Celce-Murcia asserts that teachers whose philosophies embrace the value of collaborative learning turn to the other students in the class to assist in the feedback process. Other students in the writing class can be taught to provide valuable feedback in the form of peer response, which serves to sharpen their critical skills in analyzing written work as well as to increase their ability to analyze their own drafts critically. In the present study the researcher is going to investigate and compare the effect of direct-feedback and peer-feedback on accuracy of EFL learners' writing performance.

In spite of the importance of peer feedback in improving writing skill (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997), few studies (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990; Lockhart & Ng, 1993; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Najafi, 2011) worldwide and nationwide have been conducted in order to highlight this important aspect of language pedagogy. Moreover, few studies (Kasanga, 2004; Miao, Badger, & Zhen, 2006; Najafi, 2011) investigated the effectiveness of direct feedback versus peer feedback. As a result, due to remarkable demand for pursuing academic career, and for social and educational needs, it has been deemed necessary to conduct an investigation into writing to find out methods for enhancing the writing skills of learners especially regarding accuracy of writing.

Moreover, the issue of whether teachers should provide grammar correction in EFL classes has been a matter of considerable debate for many years. There is no obvious answer to date owing to the variety of the limitations of the research design. Another issue is which type of corrective feedback is more effective in students' L2 learning. These two issues are worth studying since they may inform teachers when and how they mark their students' writings, given that providing students with the proper types of corrective feedback, teachers not only save the marking time but also enhance the effect of error correction. The right corrective feedback may be useful in guiding students to focus on

their grammatical errors or enhancing their linguistic sensitivity. Considering the value of the topic for discussion, this article aims to examine the relative effectiveness of two types of feedback (direct & peer), as well as feedback compared with no feedback, in terms of the accuracy of students' writing.

Based on the purpose of the study the following research question is proposed:

Is there a significant difference between in the accuracy of written performance of EFL learners who receive a) direct feedback, b) peer feedback, and c) no feedback.

2. Review of Literature

Whether to correct written errors or not has always been contentious. Correcting language learners' compositions is usually a big concern for L2 teachers. It is a considerably time-consuming task that is also often unrewarding if teachers want to correct their students' lexical and grammatical errors just to find out if they make the same errors in the subsequent writings. Truscott (2007, p.270) stated that "the best estimate is that correction has a small harmful effect on students' ability to write accurately." Hyland and Hyland (2006) assert teachers believe feedback is a key element for enhancing learning and those who work in the field of L2 writing has also conceived the significance of feedback. Traditionally, approaches to L2 teaching put a great emphasis on feedback, whether generated by learners, peers, a computer, or a teacher and whether occurring through error correction, self editing, peer feedback, or conferencing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Feedback plays a vital role in encouraging learning (Anderson, 1982) and improving L2 writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Van Patten & Benati (2010) define feedback as the response that learners receive in regard with the language they produce. In Keh's (1990) view, it refers to teacher's input to a writer's composition in the form of information to be used for revision. Feedback might be either written or oral. Written feedback could be in the forms of direct correction, indirect correction, or coding. Direct correction is when the teacher corrects students' errors on their scripts by writing the correct structural or lexical form (Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984). Indirect correction is when the teacher displays that there exist errors in students' writing by underlining or circling errors without providing corrections (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). Coding is the teacher's usage of codes to demonstrate the type of error without correcting it (e.g., S for spelling, T for tense). Feedback might also take the form of oral interaction including the teacher or the students themselves.

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), although feedback is significant in ESL writing pedagogy worldwide, studies of response in L2 writing did not actually initiate until the early 1990s and many questions remained unanswered for many years. According to this issue, the practicality of teacher feedback has been perused when teachers provided specific, idea-based feedback, causing student's writing improvements both in L1 (English as a first language) (Hillocks, 1982) and L2 (English as a second language classrooms) (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997). Although direct feedback is usually given in written form, teacher-student oral interaction is offered for making the feedback more influential.

Recently, an option to teacher corrective feedback has come over to be put into practice by L2 teachers and has closely been explored by second language acquisition researchers under the general rubric of peer review. Liu and Hansen (2002) view it as "the use of learners as sources of information and interaction for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing" (p.75).

Accordingly, feedback is a significant part of every language teaching and learning process, and careful work on the job will be a contribution to pedagogy (Hedge, 1988; Raimes, 1993; White & Arndt, 1991). In the recent years, peer feedback has attracted the researchers' attention around the world and plenty of them have begun to conduct research on it. As a matter of fact, variations in writing pedagogy and research have transformed feedback practices, with teacher comments often supplemented with peer feedback, writing workshops, conferences, and computer-delivered feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Complexity, accuracy, and fluency are considered useful measures of second language performance. In Brumfit's (1984) view, fluency is defined as the spontaneous use of language, while accuracy promotes learner attention on producing grammatically correct linguistic structures in L2. In their study, Skehan and Foster (1996) believe that high accuracy is a demonstration of interlanguage progress. Wolf-Quintero et al. (1998, p. 33) defines accuracy as "the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate in either writing or speech." Put it differently, any deviation of the

target language system will have negative effect in accuracy on both grammar and vocabulary. More simply, accuracy is viewed by Foster and Skehan (1996) as "freedom from error." For analyzing writing accuracy, it is needed to find the number of errors in a written text. According to Wolf-Quintero et al. (1998, p. 33), finding accuracy means "counting the errors in a text in some fashion". Several researchers (e.g., Henry, 1996; Hirano, 1991) have employed various procedures and approaches to analyze writing accuracy (Mubarak, 2013).

Several comparative studies have been carried out on the relative effectiveness of teacher feedback and peer feedback in enhancing L2 writing. Several researches have been done to investigate the significance of feedback on improving writing skill of students. In this section a number of these studies will be presented.

Ahangari (2014) attempted to investigate the effect of teacher, self and peer correction on the pronunciation improvement of Iranian EFL learners in oral productions. To do this, 45 participants were selected from among 60 English language learning students by assigning a PET test and they were divided into three groups. Some picture series were given to the participants to make and then tell a story based on the scripts. In the self correction group every participant had to correct her pronunciation errors individually, in the peer correction group the participants in pairs corrected each others' pronunciation errors and for the third group their errors were corrected by the teacher. This process continued for 15 sessions. A pre-test and post-test were administered. The results showed that the pronunciation of the self correction group improved more than the other two groups and peer correction group outperformed the teacher correction group.

Soleimani and Jamzivar (2014) investigated the impact of providing written corrective feedback by peers on writing performance. The researchers homogenized 46 pre-intermediate learners in a private English institute in Tehran, Iran, and assigned them into two groups of 23: the peer feedback group, which were required to provide peer feedback, and the teacher feedback group, which received teacher feedback. In a 20-session course, participants handed in 16 paragraphs, and the feedbacks were given based on a checklist designed by the researchers. The t-test analysis of the post-test results revealed a meaningful statistical difference between the two groups, and the comparison of means reported a higher rate of performance improvement on peer-feedback group.

Zarei and SayarMahdavi (2014) conducted a study to investigate the comparative effects of peer and teacher assessment on Iranian intermediate-level EFL learners' lexical and grammatical writing accuracy. The participants of this study were 70 female Iranian students at Safir institute. The participants were randomly assigned to experimental and comparison groups. To accomplish the purpose of the study, initially, a PET test was administered to the participants. Both groups received writing assignments. The participants of the experimental group were given peer feedback whereas the participants of the comparison group received teacher feedback. At the end of the experimental period, both the experimental and comparison groups were tested using an in-class writing assignment used as the post-test. Data were analyzed using two independent samples t-tests. Results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in terms of both grammatical and lexical writing accuracy.

Najafi (2011) investigated the impact of teacher written feedback and peer written feedback on the writing performance of Iranian EFL students with different learning styles. She homogenized the participants by KET Cambridge proficiency test. Afterward, 91 students took part in the treatment process. Over a fourteen-week semester, students received teacher written feedback and peer written feedback in two different groups in order to achieve the mentioned goal. She analyzed their pre-test and post-test scores by applying a t-test. Considering their learning style, the students' scores were analyzed to discover any writing improvements regarding the kind of feedback they received by the researcher through an ANOVA test. The results verified that teacher written corrective feedback and peer written corrective feedback had a significant effect on the writing performance of the subjects. In the teacher feedback group, there was no significant difference between the three different learning styles, whereas in the peer feedback group, visual learning style outperformed the other two learning styles.

Wakabayashi (2008), in an attempt to explore effective instruction in the Japanese university setting, examined the effects of peer feedback on learners' writing quality, revision behavior, and perceptions of the task. Learners composed essays using a TOEFL essay topic, and then engaged in peer feedback and revision activities. Essay scoring of the first and the revised drafts, conducted by five independent raters, revealed significant increases in mean scores. She analyzed Japanese learners'

revision behaviors after peer feedback, and the results showed that they focused more on content level problems than on surface level problems. The post-task questionnaire results revealed learners' positive perceptions towards peer feedback, indicating its usefulness in the Japanese context.

Wu (2006) investigated EFL adult learners' reactions to once highly acclaimed writing pedagogic techniques: peer review and teacher feedback in EFL composition class. Both the peer review and teacher feedback were given and transmitted via the web to learners' blog. The author examined 7 first drafts, 32 peer reviews, and 8 revised drafts (one student made two revisions), trying to find out what effects online peer review have on the revisions of low-intermediate EFL writers. Then, teacher feedback given to these seven students was also reviewed to see whether teacher feedback made tangible impacts on their revised drafts. Finally, another 7 articles written by the same group of students which received little or no peer review and teacher feedback were compared with their final drafts to see whether EFL learners can do a substantive revision without peer review and teacher feedback. As expected, while teacher feedback appeared to lead to both positive and negative revisions, depending on learners' attitude and English proficiency, a significant proportion of the peer review did not serve a linguistic function to give meaningful and constructive comments but serve a pragmatic function to give complimentary praise or blessings.

Miao et al. (2006) investigated whether peer feedback may provide a resource for addressing teaching writing by examining two groups of students at a Chinese University writing essays on the same topic, one receiving feedback from the teacher and one from their peers. Textual and questionnaire data from both groups and video recordings and interviews from L2 individual students revealed that students used teacher and peer feedback to improve their writing but that teacher feedback was more likely to be adopted and led to greater improvements in the writing. However, peer feedback was associated with a greater degree of student autonomy, and so even in cultures that are said to give great authority to the teacher, there is a role for peer feedback.

Kasanga (2004) carried out a peer-reviewing activity (following a survey of more than 250 students) in normal classroom writing activities with 52 first-year students from two tutorial groups taking an academic writing course. He administered two short (pre- and post-reviewing) questionnaires to identify problems in and possibilities for using both peer and teacher feedback in student writing. The study confirmed the prediction of the preference of teacher feedback over peer feedback and, also, greater use of the former. In conclusion, he found an evidence of greater feasibility than had been expected of the introduction of multiple-draft multiple-reader writing instruction at first-year. His study also showed how a "negotiated" classroom practice may become "accepted" practice, in spite of presumably unfavorable sociocultural and educational traditions.

In conclusion, direct and peer feedback and their impact on accuracy of EFL learners' written performance have received limited attention in Iran and few research have been done practically. In this regard, the current study is an attempt to cast more light on this issue to fill the aforementioned gaps.

2.1. 3. Method

Participants

This study was conducted with 70 intermediate-level students learning English at Furuzesh Institute of Parsabad. Both male and female students participated in the study. For the purpose of homogeneity, prior to research, an Oxford Placement Test as a proficiency test was given to the students and the participants of the study were selected based on the results of the proficiency test. Students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean took part in the study. Accordingly, four students were taken out of the study because of personal reasons; therefore, sixty six students remained. Finally, the participants were divided into three groups randomly; two experimental groups and one control one. Each group consisted of 22 students.

Instrumentation

Oxford Placement Test

In order to make sure that all the students were at the same level of language proficiency, Oxford Placement Test was administered at the very beginning. The test contains 60 multiple choice items and one paragraph of writing from Oxford Placement Test (2007). The participants were given enough time to answer the questions. Owing to the fact that the Oxford Placement Test is a standard test of proficiency, its validity and reliability were assumed to be satisfactory.

Keshavarzi (2012) computed the reliability and validity of Oxford Placement Test in Iranian context. To ensure the content validity of the test, she sought the comments of two experts. Both of them

strongly confirmed the appropriateness of the test regarding the subject matter content and the general objective of measuring learners' English proficiency in areas of vocabulary, structure, and writing production. In order for estimating the reliability of the use of Oxford Placement Test, she computed the internal consistency of the test based on KR-21 formula. "The reliability index for the Oxford Placement Test was found to be 0.94, which is considered a high positive reliability" (p. 37).

Topics for Composition

Two different topics for composition writing were given to the participants in all the groups as pre-test and post-test to compare their scores and explore the effect of the treatments on the students' performance. The topics of pre- and post-test were the same for all three groups.

Accuracy Measurement

In order to measure the accuracy, first, the data were coded for t-units. According to Bygate (as cited in Birjandi&Ahangari, 2008), a t-unit is defined as "a finite clause together with any subordinate clauses dependent on it" (p. 37). The participants' writing accuracy was measured through counting the number of grammatical, lexical and spelling errors per t-unit. To do so, the researcher first calculated the number of errors in each t-unit and added all the errors of the composition up. Then she computed the mean of errors per t-unit by dividing all the errors produced by the students in each composition by its total t-units; the lower the mean, the more accurate the performance (Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, Chehreh, 2014).

Errors in the present study refer to grammatical, lexical and spelling errors. Grammatical errors consisted of wrong use of tenses, incorrect prepositions, wrong word order, and subject-verb disagreement. Lexical errors include wrong word choice, wrong combination/phrase, derivational errors and wrong singular/plural form (Mubarak, 2013). The third category was spelling errors which included any deviation from American or British spelling of the words.

2.2. Research Procedures

At the first stage, an Oxford Placement Test as a proficiency test was administered to the students of the three classrooms. According to the results of the test, those students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected to participate in the study. The participants randomly and based on their scores were divided into three groups. To ensure the homogeneity of learners' writing accuracy, one-way ANOVA was conducted. One of the groups was taken as control group (CG) and the other two as experimental groups (EG1 & EG2), randomly. For fourteen sessions the classes were held twice a week for one hour and a half each session. The students in three groups wrote essays on different topics during the term. The topic selected for each session was the same for all groups.

At the first session, participants in all groups were asked to write on a topic to be considered as their pre-test. The accuracy of their writings was scored by the teacher and was taken as their pre-test score. The unit of evaluation was t-unit. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define t-unit as "consisting of one independent clause together with whatever dependent clauses that are attached to it" (p. 613). Accuracy of the written performances was evaluated by calculation of the number of grammatical, lexical and spelling errors per t-unit.

Procedure for three groups differed from the second session. In the CG, students were required to write an essay on a topic, each session. The accuracy of their written essays was scored by the teacher for the next session. They did not receive any feedback from the teacher or their peers.

In EG1, students received feedback from the teacher about the grammatical points failed to consider in their writings. The teacher provided a correct form of the grammatical errors on the written sheet by the students. After this feedback period, students set out to write another essay on the new topic.

In EG2, first, the teacher modeled giving peer feedback using a checklist containing the grammatical points to be considered by peers, to comment on a student's draft. Then, similar to other groups, they wrote an essay on a topic. At the end of the session, the teacher photocopied the students' essays and gave them to peers to provide feedback for them to be reviewed in the next session. The original essays remained near the teacher to prevent the risk of missing them. The next session, each student gave his comments to his/her peer and during first 15 minutes of the sessions, oral feedbacks were given by the students to their peers. After giving oral feedbacks, students started to write on a new topic like other groups.

At the end of the 14th session, the post-test – another topic to write an essay about it – was given to the students in three groups and its results were compared to the results of the other pre-test to investigate the effect of direct or peer feedback on the experimental groups on. Accuracy of written production. To our best effort, the only difference was the explicit treatment that our experimental groups received in terms of direct and peer feedback. It must be noted that all the statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 19.0) program. Finally, the results were interpreted and discussed and their implications were pointed out.

2.3. Research Design

The present study included pre-test, post-test, control and experimental groups. Therefore, the design of this study was 'pre-test – post-test control-group design'. In this study, feedback (no feedback, direct feedback, and peer feedback) was the independent variable at three levels which their effect on the writing accuracy of the students as the dependent variable was investigated.

2.4. Results

Creating Control and Experimental Groups

In order to make sure that all the participants were at the same level of language proficiency, Oxford Placement Test was administered at the very beginning to all the participants. As mentioned earlier, students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean took part in the study. After gathering the data, the descriptive statistics were produced by SPSS program. The descriptive statistics of proficiency test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Proficiency Test of the Participants

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Proficiency test	70	40	19	59	46.20	6.27
Valid N (list wise)	70					

As displayed in Table 1, the mean score was 46.20 and the SD was 6.27. Therefore, the learners whose scores were between 39.93 and 52.47 could participate in the study. Figure 4.1 gives a clearer picture of the participants' scores.

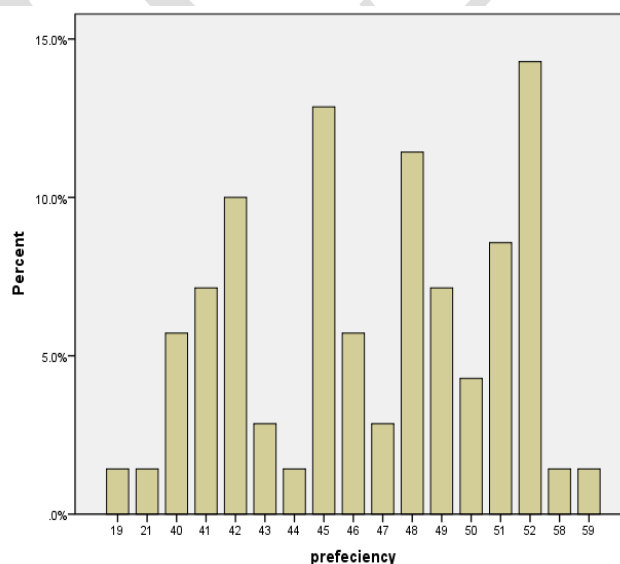


Fig 1:Percentage of the participants' scores in the proficiency test

Accordingly, four students were taken out of the study; therefore, sixty six students remained in the study. Thus, the participants of the study were randomly divided into three groups; two experimental groups and one control, each group included 22 students.

Pre-test Analysis

The descriptive statistics (the mean and the standard deviation) of the pre-test scores of experimental and control groups regarding direct feedback, peer feedback and no feedback are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Control and Experimental Groups' Pre-Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
CG	22	2.35	.45	.09	2.15	2.55	1.56	3.01
EG1	22	2.26	.52	.11	2.02	2.49	1.09	2.99
EG2	22	2.51	.41	.09	2.33	2.69	1.45	3.11
Total	66	2.37	.47	.06	2.26	2.49	1.09	3.11

Note: CG= control group; EG1: Experimental group 1; EG2: Experimental group 2

As it is seen in Table 2, the mean scores for EG2 ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .41$) is higher than the mean scores for EG1 ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .52$) and CG ($M = 2.35$, $SD = .45$). In other words, students in EG2 made more mistakes in their pre-test writing compositions.

In order to find out whether the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' pre-test was significant, one-way ANOVA was run. Table 3 shows the result of the one-way ANOVA.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results for the pre-test

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.718	2	.36	1.65	.20
Within Groups	13.69	63	.22		
Total	14.41	65			

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the three groups in terms of their writing accuracy. As it is evident in Table 3, analysis of variance showed no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in pre-test scores for the three groups: $F(2, 63) = 1.65$, $p = .20$. As a result; it can be claimed that there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' pre-test scores; therefore, the three groups are homogenous in terms of their writing accuracy.

Statistical Analysis for the Hypotheses

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to explore the relative effectiveness of two types of feedback (direct & peer), as well as feedback compared with no feedback, in terms of the accuracy of students' writing.

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant difference between in the accuracy of written performance of EFL learners who receive a) direct feedback, b) peer feedback, and c) no feedback.

In the following lines, the data analyses and results are presented. The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) of the post-test scores of the three groups are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for EG1, EG2, and CG's Post-Test Scores

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest	CG	22	2.05	.30	.06
	EG1	22	1.27	.32	.07
	EG2	22	.73	.29	.06

As indicated in Table 4, for CG, the mean score was 2.05 and the SD was .30, for the EG1, the mean score was 1.27 and the SD was .32, and for the EG2, the mean score was .73 and the SD was .29. In other words, students who received direct and peer feedback made fewer mistakes in comparison with those who received no feedback. Apparently, the experimental group 2 outperformed the other ones regarding the accuracy of writing compositions.

To make sure if the difference between the mean scores of the EG1, EG2 and CG is significant, one-way ANOVA was run. Table 5 shows the result of the one-way ANOVA.

Table 5. One-way between Subjects ANOVA

Posttest					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.45	2	9.72	104.33	.00
Within Groups	5.88	63	.09		
Total	25.32	65			

As Table 5 indicates, analysis of variance showed a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in post-test scores for the three groups: $F(2, 63) = 104.33, p = .00$.

In order to find out which type of feedback has significant effect on EFL learners' writing accuracy, Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD was conducted. Table 6 displays the results.

Table 6. Multiple Comparisons of Experimental and Control Groups' Posttest Scores

Tukey HSD						
(I) posttest1	(J) posttest1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CG	EG1	.78*	.09	.00	.56	1.00
	EG2	1.32*	.09	.00	1.10	1.54
EG1	CG	-.78*	.09	.00	-1.00	-.56
	EG2	.54*	.09	.00	.32	.76
EG2	CG	-1.32*	.09	.00	-1.54	-1.10
	EG1	-.54*	.09	.00	-.76	-.31

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for EG2 ($M = .73, SD = .29$) was significantly different from EG1 ($M = 1.27, SD = .32$) and CG ($M = 2.05, SD = .30$). Therefore, it can be claimed that the hypothesis is confirmed. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the effects of direct and peer feedback on accuracy of EFL learners' written performance. In other words, in regard with feedback, peer feedback outweighed direct feedback and no feedback improving writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners.

Discussion of the Findings

The related research questions were answered on the basis of the students' performance on writing compositions. Regarding the research question, as it is indicated in Tables 4, 5 and 6, participants'

performance indicated a statistically significant difference between direct and peer feedback and no feedback. In other words, both direct and peer feedback outweighed no feedback, and peer feedback outperformed direct feedback in improving writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners.

The above findings regarding the effect of direct and peer feedback on learners' accuracy are consistent with the results of some previous studies. Soleimani and Jamzivar (2014) investigated the impact of providing written corrective feedback by peers on writing performance. The t-test analysis of the post-test results revealed a meaningful statistical difference between the two groups, and the comparison of means reported a higher rate of performance improvement on peer-feedback group.

Moreover, the result of this study is in line with a study conducted by Zarei and SayarMahdavi (2014) who investigated the comparative effects of peer and teacher assessment on Iranian intermediate-level EFL learners' lexical and grammatical writing accuracy. Results indicated that the peer assessment group outperformed the teacher assessment group in terms of both grammatical and lexical writing accuracy.

The above findings are compatible with the study of Najafi (2011) who investigated the impact of teacher written feedback and peer written feedback on the writing performance of Iranian EFL students with different learning styles. The results verified that teacher written corrective feedback and peer written corrective feedback had a significant effect on the writing performance of the subjects.

The findings of the present study is also compatible with Ahangari (2014) who investigated the effect of teacher, self and peer correction on the pronunciation improvement of Iranian EFL learners in oral productions. The results showed that peer correction group outperformed the teacher correction group.

However, the findings of the present study do not support the study conducted by Chaudron (1984) who compared written peer feedback and teacher feedback. Data analysis showed that neither types of feedback had helped ESL students to improve in their revisions.

There might be some reasons to explain this study's results. One reason might be owing to the fact that the peer feedback group's students were less anxious than the direct feedback group's students during the feedback process. Since their peers gave them feedback and assessed them, anxiety was low and better performance resulted. The results also might be due to the fact that in peer feedback group, mistakes were discussed and oral feedback was given by the peers, so they understood their mistakes and this led them to have a better performance. Another reason, in explaining why the students in the direct feedback group had lower performance than the peer feedback group, could have been due to the confusion in teacher's comments. Students may have used teacher feedback without understanding the logic behind it. Students might have also enjoyed the process of collaborative learning, in which they felt their English proficiency, writing skills as well as their interpersonal relationship strengthened (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000).

Conclusion and Implications

Peer feedback has been proved as an effective strategy for students to improve their writing skill (Corbin, 2012). The present study increasingly supports the idea that making use of peer feedback can extend and enrich students' L2 learning. Therefore, peer feedback would be very useful in EFL classrooms as a learning and motivational tool. In addition, it has been widely recommended and used in a variety of ways in L2 learning in advanced countries, however, it is still new and not adopted by EFL teachers in Iran. Thus, teachers should have an increasing amount of interest in using peer feedback as a learning tool.

Moreover, due to the improvement on learners' accuracy of writing through the use of peer feedback in this study, not only there are mutual advantages for both learners and teacher in terms of classroom objectives, but also it helps students increase motivation to writing and learn how to treat writing as a collaborative social activity (Farrah, 2012).

By comparing two error correction conditions – direct and peer – with one non-error correction condition – control – the study contributed to one of the most crucial and controversial issues in writing; whether or not intervention can improve L2 students' writing skill. The study also contributed to another important theoretical issue involved in L2 acquisition, that is, which one of the feedback types is better capable of improving L2 students' writing.

The results of the present investigation are most useful for EFL teachers and instructors. It provides new insights into the way teachers run their classes, organizing effective teaching– learning

environment in the light of implementing peer feedback. It is also beneficial for researchers to turn their attention toward peer feedback strategy in various areas of L2 learning.

Syllabus designers may benefit from this study to modify, organize and enrich English language curricula with activities which encourage students to have peer work. The study also stimulates specialists' and supervisors' interests in conducting training courses for their teachers to enhance the use of peer feedback in their writing classes.

Students may optimize their learning by adopting peer feedback as a strategy for improving their writings. Since peer feedback is a student-directed strategy that does not rely on teacher involvement or other formal or complex technological supports, it is easily adopted by users. Furthermore, peer feedback is flexible enough to be useful in a variety of learning settings.

Finally, this research and its findings tried to help the development of the area of research on direct and peer feedback. It is hoped that this small study will attract the interests of researchers to focus on this area in further studies.

According to the limitations identified in this study, the following recommendations are made for future research on feedback. First, the participants of the study can be chosen from different English proficiency levels and also from different English institutes in different cities which might enhance the validity of the results of the research. Second, direct and peer feedback strategy can be applied to teach other language skills and sub-skills to Iranian EFL learners. Finally, it is also recommended that future research should provide more training time and more practice opportunities to the participants before conducting the study since peer feedback is a very demanding learning strategy that requires sustained efforts in order to be used effectively.

Learners might optimize their learning by using peer feedback as a learning strategy. It provides learners with a better learning environment and makes them play various roles as, thinkers, problem solvers, and researchers. Such roles help them learn and use English language in different situations more easily. Thus, for L2 learners to be strategic and also aware of their strategies for being able to handle the linguistic barriers to communicate effectively, they need to be instructed on how to make use of peer feedback.

In conclusion, teachers should be aware of the importance of providing effective feedback for the development of L2 learners' thinking and writing. Feedback can encourage and advance student learning if it focuses on "growth rather than grading" (Sadler, 1983, p. 60). To make use of its full potential, students must be able to self-manage learning and lecturers have a role in encouraging and motivating this ability within students (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). Thus, teachers may present themselves as helpful facilitators offering support and guidance.

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THE EFFECTS OF CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION ON THE WRITING SKILLS OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, miscellaneous approaches to the teaching of writing as well as to the examining of the effectiveness of these approaches have emerged. Among these, content-based language Instruction (CBLI) focuses on teaching writing through the implementation of the subject matters learners are required to cover in their curriculum. CBLI tries to empower students to become independent learners and continue the learning process beyond the classroom.

This study aims to investigate the effects of CBLI on the writing abilities of intermediate ESP learners in Iran. Subjects are intermediate juniors majoring in Psychology in Garmsar University. The subjects were pre-assigned to either the experimental group (group A) or the control group (group B). The language proficiency level of the subjects was measured. Also, a writing pre-test was administered in order to ensure the homogeneity of the subjects in their writing skills prior to the experiment. The experimental group enjoyed CBLI drawing of content-based psychology curriculum. The control group enjoyed the same amount of writing instruction using general texts. At the end, a TOEFL writing post-test and another test of TOEFL general proficiency was administered.

The gathered data was analyzed through several independent and paired sample T-tests. The results indicated that CBI had a significant impact on developing writing skills of Iranian intermediate ESP learners.

Key words: Content-Based Language Instruction (CBLI), ESP, Writing skills, Subject matter

1. Introduction

Content-based language instruction (CBLI) and task based-language instruction (TBLI) are two kinds of integrated-skill instruction. Content-based language instruction places emphasis on learning content through language, whereas task-based language instruction stresses doing tasks that require communicative language use. Both of these instructions benefit from a wide range of materials, textbooks, and technologies for English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Learners get to practice all language skills in a highly integrated, and communicative fashion, while they learn content such as mathematics, science, and social studies in content-based instruction (CBI).

In CBI, integrating language and content is the main concern of teaching a foreign or second language (FL/L2). The rationale behind CBI is to empower learners to become autonomous and go on with the

learning process beyond the classroom. The significant aspect of CBI is on motivation and attitudes of students towards language learning.

It is posited that providing language learners with opportunities to learn a language through the medium of subject matter might be a fruitful vehicle to enhance learners' motivation. Considering the fact that writing is least desired and most difficult among the four skills, enhanced motivation acts as a facilitator and assists learners in developing their writing abilities. This study aims to investigate the possible impact of CBI on Iranian intermediate ESP learners' writing ability. Being cognizant of the efficacy of CBI and the fact that the autonomy of ESP learners is a valuable vehicle to success, necessitates it to conduct this research on the efficacy of CBI in a new context of intermediate Iranian university students.

The literature on CBI has demonstrated high applicability of this approach in academic contexts in meeting the learners' needs. Thus, studying its impact on a new contexts, Iranian universities would be helpful to endorse the applicability of this approach. Peachy (2003) holds that learners would also benefit from the following advantages: CBI can make the learning of a language a more interesting and motivating experience. Deploying language to fulfil a real purpose, can provide an environment conducive to the autonomy and self-esteem of learners. CBI can provide students with opportunities to widen and deepen their knowledge of the world. CBI has become popular among EAP instructors since it is proved helpful in developing valuable study skills in learners.

Research Question & Hypothesis

Does content-based instruction have a significant impact on the writing abilities of Iranian intermediate ESP learners?

H0. Content based instruction has no significant impact on the writing abilities of Iranian intermediate ESP learners.

As the CBI effects might vary on ESP learners with different levels of writing proficiency, the result of this study might not be extrapolated to all university students. In this study the effect of CBI was only performed on the intermediate learners of ESP course.

2. Literature Review

Content-based instruction (CBI) teaches academic subject matters and second language skills concurrently (Brinton, Snow, and Welsch, 1989, cited in Shang, 2006). According to Krashen (1982, cited in Shang, 2006), in content-based instruction, learners can acquire the content of the subject matter with comprehensible input, and increase their language skills simultaneously. According to Larsen- Freeman (2000), "the special contribution of content-based instruction is that it integrates the learning of language with the learning of some other content, often academic subject matter" (p. 137). The theoretical basis for CBI is founded on educational and cognitive psychology. CBI provides a number of conditions deemed necessary for being successful at L2 acquisition. CBI is founded on two central principles: 1. Learners learn a second language more successfully when language is employed as a vehicle of garnering information rather than as an end in itself. 2. Learners needs for L2 acquisition are better reflected in content-based instruction (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

The most cogent evidence for CBI, however, is derived from research in educational and cognitive psychology. The following four findings from research in educational and cognitive psychology underlines the advantages of CBI (cited in Stoller, 1997):

Presenting information in a coherent and meaningful way, an attribute of well-organized content-based curricula, leads to deeper processing and enhanced learning (Anderson, 1990).

Thematically-organized materials, characteristic of CBI classroom, are to be learned and remembered with much more ease (Singer, 1990).

There exist a nexus between learner motivation, student interest, common outcomes of content-based classes and a student ability to process materials which are challenging, to recall information, and to elaborate (Alexander, Kulikowich, and Jetton, 1994)

To develop expertise in topics, learners are required to reinvest their knowledge in a series of tasks which progressively become more complex. This feature is feasible in content-based classrooms, but usually absent in more traditional classrooms because in these types of traditional classes, the focus is on language rules, or inadequate time on topics which are shallow and disparate (Scardamalia, 1993).

Content-based models can be found in both foreign and second language settings. There are three models of CBI such as theme-based, adjunct, and sheltered (Oxford, 2001). It is in their

implementations that CBI models differ. Educational settings, program objectives, and target population are some factors contributing to this difference. All models, however, share a commonality: there is an integration of language teaching aims with subject matter instruction (Snow, 2001).

Teachers who intend to teach the target language through CBI, need to be well trained. Thus, to be a good teacher in CBI, one should have invested a good deal of time to master co-planned curriculum and instruction.

In the literature of ESP four notions can be observed:

According to Hutchinson and Waters, ESP should be perceived as an approach than a product. They maintain that the foundation of ESP is built upon learners need. Learners consider their needs as the reasons for which they learn English and their purposes vary from one to another.

To define the concept of ESP, Strevens (1988) makes a distinction between what he calls four absolute characteristics and two variable characteristics.

The following are the four absolute characteristics: ESP is designed to meet specific needs of learners; ESP in content is related to a particular discipline, occupation, and activities;

ESP is centered on language which is apt to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics and the analysis of discourse; ESP is in contrast with General English.

Writing with reasonable coherence, cohesion, accuracy, and intelligibility in a L1 or L2 is what challenges many people with years of language study experience. Thus, writing with remarkable ability and subtlety in a L1 or L2 proves more complex and effortful a skill than speaking, reading, and listening (Kroll, 2001, cited in Celec-Murcia, 2001).

In recent years, composition programs for native and nonnative students alike have experienced with a range of content-based approaches to teaching of academic writing. In content-based academic writing instruction, writing is linked to the study of specific subject matter and is deemed as a vehicle to promote the understanding of this content. In other words, students write about materials they currently study in their academic course. The rationale for adopting a content-based approach to the teaching of writing is that it helps develop thinking, researching, and writing skills which students need in order to succeed academically. CBI does this more realistically than does the traditional instruction to writing that isolates rhetorical patterns and underscores writing from personal experience.

In CBI writing instruction courses, students write in a variety of forms such as short essay tests, summaries, critiques, and research reports in order to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter and at the same time to extend their knowledge to new areas. Writing is integrated with reading, listening, and discussion about the content.

Content-based academic writing instruction can be structured in at least the following five ways:

1. Topic-centered *modules or mini-courses* (attention to all four language skills)
2. Content-based academic writing courses in which composition courses are organized around sets of readings on selected topics. This is appropriate for newly matriculated undergraduates.

In order to cite a work incorporating most, if not all, of the mentioned approaches; task-based language instruction, English for specific purpose, L2 wring instruction, a case study done by Petric & Harwood is worth mentioning.

"The discourse-based interview approach (Odell, Goswami, & Harrington, 1983) was used to elicit Sofie's perceived citation functions, followed by quantifying the qualitative codings to allow for comparison. The findings show that some of the citation functions Sofie described were the same in both assignments, while others were task specific." (p.12).

Sofie used citations in both assignments to define terms and support her arguments. However, it was only in her assignment for the open task that she used citations to show the relevance of her chosen topic. Conversely, she frequently used citations to apply citees' concepts to her own analysis in the directed task, but not in the open task. This case suggested that students need to learn to cite for a range of purposes in order to successfully respond to different types of assignment tasks and to different requirements within the same task type.

3. Methodology

The design of the study is quasi experimental in nature due to the fact that it was not possible for the researcher to randomly select the participants. The participants were given a TOEFL general

Proficiency test prior to the study to ensure that they are at an intermediate level and a writing pre-test to make sure of their writing homogeneity. The control group enjoyed a traditional way of writing whereas the experimental group was taught through content-based instruction. The participants were psychology students in Garmsar University. The control group consisted of ten students, five male and five female students. The experimental group, also, consisted of ten students, five male and five female students. The male and female students in each group were taught separately due to gender segregation policy in the institute where they were taught. Inferential statistics were processed by SPSS software (19.0). Several t-tests analyzed scores before and after the treatment.

Several variables exist in this study. The independent Variable is the CBI otherwise known as treatment variable. Dependent variable which is supposed to change as the independent variable, CBI, is introduced, will be the writing ability of the subjects and their general English proficiency level. Motivation, in this case might be the intervening variable of the study.

The subjects of the study are two classes of Psychology undergraduates at Garmsar University. The first class (group A) is the experimental group, and the second class (group B) is the control group. All the subject are Farsi native speakers. In each of these groups, there are five boys and five girls, making two groups of ten students. The boys and the girls in each group are taught separately. Their language proficiency level is determined through TOEFL language proficiency test. The participants of the study were not informed about the purpose of the study, so the result of the study was not positively or negatively influenced by informing the students.

To make sure of the homogeneity and comparability of the writing ability of the learners in each group, a TOEFL writing pre- test was administered prior to implementing the treatment. After the students took the general TOEFL proficiency test and a number of students were selected based on the homogeneity of their general English, another test, which is a writing pre-test, was also administered so as to make sure that the students are also at the same level of writing ability. After the administration of the writing pre-test, the students' writings were scored and those who were at the same level of writing ability were selected in order to proceed with the experiment.

Drawing on authentic materials in the classroom is one of the main ideas of CBI in order to expose learners to as much real language as possible. The rationale behind it is to keep the learners motivated through the employment of authentic resources. One of the proved benefits of CBI is its ability to keep students motivated. CBI does achieve this significant factor through providing learners with authentic and practical materials. Seeing the immediate usefulness, freshness, and practicality of the materials students start enjoying studying and getting motivated and keep being motivated through the whole course of study.

To determine the possible progress in writing ability of the subjects, after the treatment at the end of the investigation, another writing test with the features of the pretests are administered. Through these two tests, the researcher is provided with sufficient evidence as to the improvement and progress of learners in these two areas beside the class observations occurring through the whole course of study.

The participants of the study took part in an English writing course for twenty sessions, two sessions a week and each session lasting for one hour forty five minutes. The course was intended to be an introduction to the practical writing process and to develop the writing skills adult language learners need in order to express their ideas clearly and concisely. Throughout the course, learners completed writing activities which enabled them to fully understand the nature of writing process and to actively participate in it. The fundamental elements of a good paragraph, such as topic sentence, central idea, body of the paragraph and its conclusion were elucidated at length to them. Participants, also, became quite familiar with how to organize multiparagraph compositions in order to prevent it from looking a patch work or an untidy mass of information. The importance of grammar, sentence construction, mechanics, diction, and choice of vocabulary were also emphasized. In the first session, the participants took a writing pre-test on the topic of " Personality Disorders". During the course, the learners wrote eight other compositions on which they received some brief and general comments. A few learners volunteered and their writings were analyzed in depth and detail in the classroom so as to provide the learners with how a composition develops step by step. In the last session, the participants were required to write a composition on the same topic as they did in the pre-test but this time observing all the details they had become familiar with during the course.

The following procedures were followed in conducting this study: First, to measure the proficiency level of the students, before implementing treatment, a TOEFL proficiency test was administered. Having administered the test, the scores of subjects were accounted. And homogeneous students were selected. After the administration of TOEFL proficiency test, and making sure of the homogeneity of the subjects, a writing pretest was administered to the homogenous subjects in order to find out their writing ability level before the administration of the treatment. The writing pretest scores were accounted and students who were at the same level of writing ability were selected. After the administration of tests, the students who were both homogeneous in general English and writing ability were divided into two groups, namely control group and experimental group. Each group consisted of 10 students, making five male and five female students. The male and female students in each group were taught separately.

In order to conduct the study, two groups, namely, "experimental group" (A), and "control group" (B), are selected. The experimental group is taught by content-based writing instruction and the control group is taught through general writing instruction. Both of these groups are exposed to the same amount of writing instruction materials. The difference lies in the fact that the control group is instructed through drawing on general writing materials, whereas in experimental group, CBI Psychology materials is utilized as the medium of writing instruction. In this study, the sheltered model is used according to their English proficiency level. After the treatment sessions are over, a writing post-test is administered to examine any probable improvement on the writing ability of the subjects and also another general English proficiency test to measure their probable improvement in their general English proficiency.

After implementing the treatment, a writing test similar to that of the pretest is administered in order to examine the probable impact of CBI on the writing ability of the subjects.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The participants of the study took part in an English writing course for twenty sessions, two sessions a week. Each session lasted for one hour forty five minutes. The course was intended to be an introduction to the practical writing process and to develop the writing skills adult language learners need to express themselves clearly and concisely.

In this study, a TOEFL General Proficiency test was administered to the learners. This test consisted of 140 questions. There were 50 questions for the listening comprehension section and the allocated time was 35 minutes. For the structure and written expression section, there were 40 questions and the allocated time was 25 minutes. And finally there were 50 questions for the reading comprehension section and 55minutes was allocated to this part. The results were obtained and the homogenous students in general English were selected. Then they were administered a writing TOEFL test to ensure of their homogeneity in their writing abilities. Eventually, twenty students who were homogenous in both general English and writing abilities were selected to start the implementation of the treatment. The control group was instructed in traditional way while the experimental group enjoyed content-based instruction.

To ensure of the homogeneity of the learners, a TOEFL Proficiency test was administered. The results revealed that they were at an intermediate level of English proficiency. Figure 4.1 and table4.1 show the descriptive statistics of this test.

ANCOVA for testing homogeneity of regression					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	82.461 ^a	3	27.487	61.097	.000
Intercept	5.737	1	5.737	12.753	.003
GROUP	.816	1	.816	1.813	.197
WRITING ABILITY pre	78.268	1	78.268	173.971	.000
GROUP * WRITING ABILITY pre	.019	1	.019	.041	.842
Error	7.198	16	.450		
Total	3822.938	20			

Corrected Total	89.659	19			
Dependent Variable : WRITING ABILITY					
a. R Squared = .920 (Adjusted R Squared = .905)					

According to the fifth column of the table above, the figures support the homogeneity of regression. Thus, analysis of covariance can be employed to test the hypotheses. With regards to the fact that $p > 0.05$ and $F = 0.04$, it can be said that the hypothesis is correct.

Before the treatment in order to ensure of the homogeneity of the writing skills of the learners, a TOEFL Writing Proficiency Test was administered. As the main aim of this study was to investigate the possible effects of CBI on the writing abilities of the learners, statistical comparisons of the experimental and control group are presented below.

The mean and standard deviation of the writing abilities and the number of learners in both experimental and control group. The mean and standard deviation in the experimental group are 14.0950 and 2.27382. In the control group the mean is 13.2300 and the standard deviation is 2.09194.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.849	1	18	.369

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + WRITING ABILITY pre + GROUP

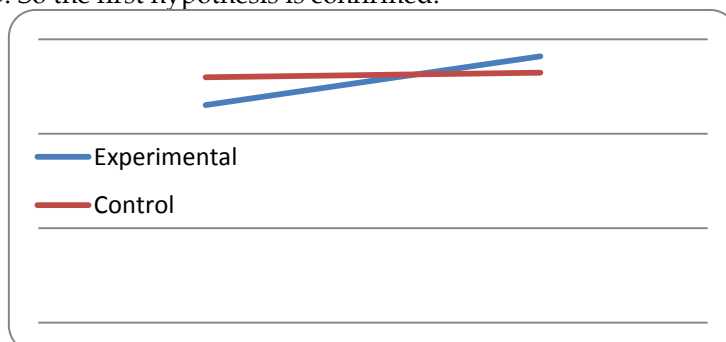
Levene's test investigates the homogeneity of variances in different instances. In other words, it tests that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. The above table shows Levene's test to test the equality of variances. With regards to the fact that $P > 0/05$, so we can conclude that the figures don't question the equality of variances.

ANCOVA for instruction Effects on writing abilities						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	82.443 ^a	2	41.221	97.101	.000	.920
Intercept	5.937	1	5.937	13.986	.002	.451
WRITING ABILITY pre	78.701	1	78.701	185.389	.000	.916
GROUP	16.928	1	16.928	39.876	.000	.701
Error	7.217	17	.425			
Total	3822.938	20				
Corrected Total	89.659	19				
a. R Squared = .920 (Adjusted R Squared = .910)						

The above table shows the covariance results testing the effectiveness of instruction on the writing scores of the learners.

GROUP's Means after correction				
GROUP	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EXPERIMENTAL	14.613 ^a	.210	14.171	15.055
COTROL	12.712 ^a	.210	12.270	13.154
a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: WRITING ABILITY pre = 12.1025.				

After modifying the pretest scores, the instruction was found to be effective ($F = 39/876$, $P < 0/01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0/701$). The modified mean scores show the writing abilities and that the instruction has caused an increase in the mean scores of the writing abilities of experimental group (the mean of control group in the pretest is ۱۴.۰۹۵۰ and the mean of the control group in the posttest is ۱۴.۶۱۳. The difference in modified means is meaningful in both groups and is of more significance in experimental group. So the first hypothesis is confirmed.



As the above diagram shows the content based instruction has improved the writing abilities of the learners in the experimental group but in the control group which was taught writing traditionally no significant change has happened.

Both experimental and control groups are compared on the writing skills of cohesion, and coherence in order to see which group did better on each of these skills of writing and see where content based instruction can be proved to be more effective.

Descriptive Statistics for cohesion mean in two groups			
GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EXPERIMENTAL	3.0000	.62048	10
COTROL	2.7700	.51218	10
Total	2.8850	.56617	20

The above table shows the mean and standard deviation of cohesion item of writing and the number of learners in both experimental and control group. As it can be seen in the table in experimental group the mean is 3.000 and the standard deviation is 0.62048. In the control group the mean is 2.7700 and the standard deviation is 0.51218.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances ^a			
F	df1	df2	Sig.
4.673	1	18	.064
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.			
a. Design: Intercept + COHESION + GROUP			

The above table shows levene's test of equality of error variances. As the $P > 0/05$, so the equality of error variances is confirmed.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on Cohesion						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	5.779 ^a	2	2.889	157.469	.000	.949
Intercept	.040	1	.040	2.172	.159	.113
COHESION	5.514	1	5.514	300.523	.000	.946
GROUP	.447	1	.447	24.375	.000	.589

Error	.312	17	.018			
Total	172.555	20				
Corrected Total	6.091	19				
a. R Squared = .949 (Adjusted R Squared = .943)						

The above table displays the results of covariance testing the effectiveness of instruction on the scores of cohesion.

GROUP's Means after correction

GROUP	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EXPERIMENTAL	3.035 ^a	.043	2.944	3.125
COTROL	2.735 ^a	.043	2.645	2.826

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: COHESION = 2.6650.

After modifying the pretest scores, there was found the effectiveness of the instruction($F = 24.375$, $P < 0/05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0/589$). The modified mean scores of writing abilities show that instruction has been effective in improving the mean score of writing abilities in the experimental group (the mean of experimental group prior to instruction is 3.000 and the mean after the instruction in this group is 3.035). The difference in modified means in both experimental and control group are meaningful and to the favor of experimental group. So it can be concluded that the experimental group has performed significantly better than the control group on this skill of writing.

4.5.2 Comparison of groups on coherence

GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EXPERIMENTAL	2.4750	.47799	10
COTROL	2.5000	.57735	10
Total	2.4875	.51603	20

The above table shows the mean and standard deviation of coherence and the number of learners in both experimental and control group. As it can be seen in the table, the mean is 2.4750 and the standard deviation is 0.47799 in experimental group. In the control group, the mean is 2.5000 and the standard deviation is 0.57735.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.497	1	18	.237

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + COHERENCE + GROUP

The above table shows Levine's test of equality of error variances. As the $P > 0/05$, so the equality of error variances is confirmed.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on Coherence						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3.972 ^a	2	1.986	31.053	.000	.785
Intercept	.081	1	.081	1.270	.275	.070
COHERENCE	3.969	1	3.969	62.058	.000	.785

GROUP	.513	1	.513	8.020	.012	.321
Error	1.087	17	.064			
Total	128.813	20				
Corrected Total	5.059	19				
a. R Squared = .785 (Adjusted R Squared = .760)						

The above table shows the results of covariance testing the effectiveness of instruction on the total score of coherence.

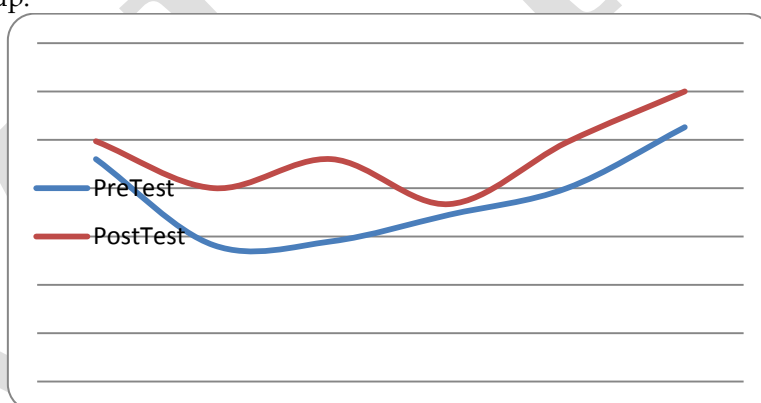
GROUP's Means after correction

GROUP	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EXPERIMENTAL	2.661 ^a	.083	2.485	2.837
COTROL	2.314 ^a	.083	2.138	2.490

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values:
COHERENCE = 2.1875.

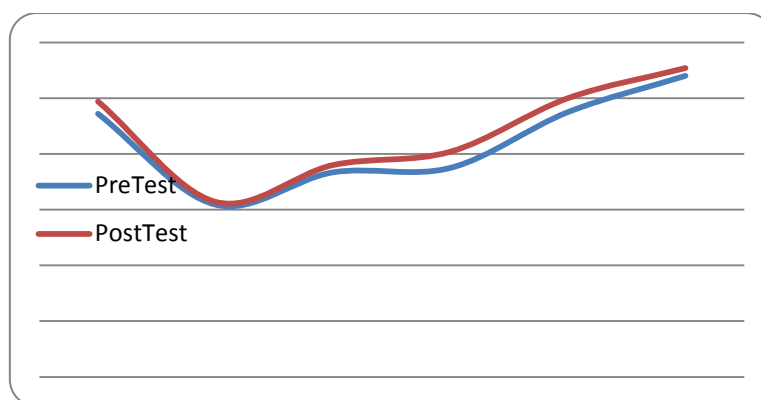
After modifying the pretest scores, the effectiveness of instruction was found ($F = 8.020$, $P > 0/05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0/321$). The modified mean scores show that the instruction has improved the mean scores of coherence in the experimental group. (the mean of experimental group prior to the instruction is 2.4750 and the mean in this group after the instruction is 2.661). The difference in modified means in both experimental and control group are meaningful and to the favor of experimental group. So this hypothesis is confirmed.

The following diagram compares the subgroups of writing abilities in pretest and posttest of experimental group:



As the diagram shows, the writing skills have improved significantly after the instruction. This improvement is more noticeable in the critical thinking and developing ideas skills of writing. While punctuation and organization shows the least improvement.

The following diagram compares the subgroups of writing abilities in pretest and posttest of control group:



As it can be seen from the diagram there is no significant improvement in the control group.

Discussion

This study investigated the possible effects of content-based instruction on the writing abilities of intermediate ESP learners. In content-based method of writing a great deal of attention has been attached to the process of writing, critical thinking and developing ideas and not just to the mechanics of writing such as punctuation and organization. In this study, the sub-skills of cohesion and coherence was evaluated and compared across groups.

The table related to comparison of groups on coherence showed the mean and standard deviation of coherence and the number of learners in both experimental and control group. As it was seen in the table, the mean was 2.4750 and the standard deviation was 0.47799 in experimental group. In the control group, the mean was 2.5000 and the standard deviation was 0.57735.

So, pursuing the line of the question of this study, the potential effect of content-based instruction on writing skills of cohesion and coherence investigated and presented. Content-based instruction had a significant effect on cohesion and coherence.

The findings of this study indicated that the implementation of the content-based instruction helped students develop their writing abilities, thinking skills, motivation, and general English language proficiency. However, this study was limited in the way that the number of participants in the study was small. Due to the limited number of sample, generalization of the results should be done cautiously. Nevertheless, having a control group helped to prove that the effects were not solely due to the instruction and also provided the opportunity for comparison.

The suggestions for teaching that follow are not offered as magic formulas guaranteed to produce success, but as guidelines that might be helpful to good teachers who know how to adapt themselves in practice for the particular student in their particular classrooms (Eskey, 2005).

One implication of the study concerns the relationship between learning and teaching. The content-based instruction implies the integration of a higher order thinking skills into language classroom. Use of higher order thinking is desirable because it can stimulate learners' interest in the content area and therefore in language (KHoshshima & Rostami Abusaeedi).

A crucial implication of this study would be a change in the conventional procedure of materials development. It is also worthwhile to mention that a modification of materials would be necessary in order to present new content-based texts in ESP classes after certain periods of instruction to keep the novelty of materials (Eskey, 2005). Meticulously planned and developed content-based approaches offer a potent framework for affective writing instruction.

The solution to this problem begins with locating appropriate texts, that is, texts that readers want or need to read. Since people learn to write, and write better by reading, a major part of the writing teachers' job is to introduce students to appropriate texts, texts which are linguistically at the right level and texts that are both interesting to them pertinent to their particular needs, and also to introduce them to read such texts in quantity.

In future research, in order to increase the level of generalization and also a more vivid picture of the effect of CBLI on EFL students' writing ability, it is recommended that larger and randomized subjects with other English and non-English majors with different educational and language proficiency levels join the research. It is also recommended that besides examining general writing abilities of the learners, the academic progress of the students in the subject matter be examined.

Since this approach to integrating instruction is relatively effective, there are a number of areas such as teacher education, student assessment program evaluation, and the preparation of text books and other instructional materials in which additional work is needed. Additional research into the academic language or other areas is also recommended.

Except for the occasional courses in CBLI, current language teacher pre-service education doesn't specifically address ways of integrating language and content instruction or even provide adequate instruction to enable teachers to perform their own needs assessments or analyze subject matter texts and classroom tasks for their language and cognitive requirements. As a result, language teachers may feel inadequately prepared to structure and teach a content-based course. It is recommended to train teachers so as to implement this sort of instruction.

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THE EFFECT OF USING TEACHER MADE SCORING CHECKLIST ON IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS' COMPOSITION SCORES

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ABSTRACT

Students need to learn and understand the English as a second language, but it's their right to know how their products and performances will evaluate and what elements their teacher will consider before scoring. Scoring students' progresses in four skills, speaking, reading, writing and listening depends on and need to think and understand what the scoring features are. Many instructors are looking into the use of ways to score students products and performances such as composition to obstruct their personal opinion to score. Teachers score the composition subjectively based on what they have considered before and sometimes based on feedbacks that they get from each composition. Those feedbacks that teachers take based on compositions are the factors that affect their thought to score compositions; on the other hand there are some effective filters that represent teachers' personal opinions affect scoring composition such as; sentimentality of the teachers during scoring composition, favorite topic, teacher-student relationship, the morality of the teacher, instruments of scoring such as kind of pen, paper, font, size of writing and even the tone of writing, for example jussive writing, change the teachers' opinions and affect teachers' scores. Scoring composition subjectively may not be an efficient and effective way to score in teaching English as a second language in Iran's schools and institutes. For example, it seems that some teachers think, the introduction is not as important as the other part of a composition and they read the subject and some part of the body and finally they score students' composition based on feedbacks that they have got from compositions. The researcher of this study claimed that it feels that the use of an efficient questions and consideration factors, before scoring that researcher calls it "Checklist", is necessary. The checklist is seeking for all features that it can be found in each part of composition separately and each part has special points by itself. The checklist is able to consider all aspects of a composition to consider before scoring such as Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Cognitive psychology and Sociolinguistics features.

Keywords: Subjective scoring, Checklist, Objective scoring

1. Introduction

Investigations into the social, cultural, economic, and political contexts of L2 learning have provided much insight into populations of learners and their specific learning goals. Observing a second language can make researchers realize that most tasks or activities require more than merely one language skill and there are also moments in which apprentices are taken in a single language skill, such as when they are seeing a movie or writing a report, for instance.

L2 language teachers who want to create a more engaging classroom can understand it by reviewing exemplary research and presenting innovative activities. Achieving proficiency in writing involves an explicit pedagogy in grammar and Lexis and is important because one's linguistic repertoire and writing skills often determine one's social, economic, and political alternatives. Among skills, writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow students to communicate their message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are keys in written communications. The reader will form an opinion of students' writings based on content presentations, and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression. Write a writing content correctly is one of the most important concepts in English language learning and also on the

other hand, how to score writing contents such as students' compositions, is another aspect of teaching L2 writing. This study wants to assess; the Effect of Using Teacher Made Scoring Checklist on Iranian Advanced EFL Learners' Composition Scores.

2. Literature Review

While some may define out to develop L2 conversation or reading skills for different uses, others need to speak and write in L2 academic and professional backgrounds. Investigations into the social, cultural, economic, and political contexts of L2 learning provided much insight populations of learners and their specific learning goals. Composing is an indispensable part of EFL learners' development, that it involves a considerable amount of time and effort on the theatrical role of both students' and instructors. Recent discussions of validity in language testing (Bachman, 2005; Chapelle et al. (2008); Kane, 1992, 2002; Kane, Crooks, & Cohen, 1999), conceptualize test validation as the process of articulating and seeking evidence for a series of inferential steps that are taken between a test performance and score interpretation and use. Students may become more involved in editing their compositions if their teacher does more factors to score and correct their writing composition. Teachers would look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, including prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Less attention to correction of grammatical errors, together with real attention to, content, leads ultimately to be a weak composition writer. Writing is an essential component of students' EFL development, yet it requires a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of both students and teachers. Developing writing such as essay, free writing and composition, first depends on students' ability, capacity, training aids and in the other hand depends on teachers' scoring factors (how to score). Written composition as a product or performance in L2 learning and teaching, demonstrates the ability to formulate and communicate a written message in English to an adult reader. Scoring writing, especially compositions on Iranian EFL learners are common problems that teacher most of the time are faced with them. There are some reasons show that teachers score the composition subjectively and teachers' personal opinions effect on scoring composition that researcher calls' them affective factors. Kaye, (2008) pointed out, there are many types of tests and elicitation techniques available to evaluate writing formally; Including discussion, joint tasks, and descriptions, role making the appropriate responses, questions and answers, using visual prompts, re-telling a story, and reading aloud. Scoring must be understood as a process based on standard factors which they are not personally scoring, in the other word checklist can help teachers to score composition objectively and break the old and traditional ways on scoring composition (subjectively). Scoring is not always as simple and straightforward as counting the number of words in composition.

One of the aspects of the performance assessment is performance itself, as well as creating the product. Sometimes performance of something is the product. Performances are not limited to, physical education, art, and music, but can also include speeches, writings, demonstrations, and class presentations in any subject area. Performance might also involve the actions of the student while preparing the product. In some situations, teachers observe how student behave when the students is "performing," but in other circumstances they observe learning related behaviors in the classroom setting; e.g., writing composition, time on task, participation in class discussions, oral presentation behaviors, or collaboration skills. When teachers are assessing the product, performance, or both, one important guideline is that the assessment should be done systematically before scoring, so all students are assessed on the same basis. This research is designed to help teachers who want to score composition based on an effective checklist to avoid their personal opinion on scores. Based on the checklist this study wants to challenge all aspects of writing which every composition writers' write. The primary purpose of this study refers to the most important part of scoring that concerns with how teachers will able to score students' compositions as their product or performance based on effective factors of scoring. According to Farhady et al. (2009), the oral interview (speaking) test is the most valid test of speaking ability. The following pieces of advice are recommended to improve oral interviews such as: a test should be carefully instructed and to obtain dependable results and candidate situation should be considered and using global or specific scoring system, purpose of the test and also each test should be recorded to be scored later and scoring can be done holistically with an impression rating such as "excellent", "good", etc. According to Kaye (2008), phonological features, rules of the language, communicative function, and social meaning can be the elements to be evaluated in scoring composition in isolation by analyzing various elements or by use tasks which can measure the writers' communicative competence in general. Moreover, emotional factors such as

stress and nerve problems, and also available resources such as time, examiners, equipment and atmosphere must be taken into consideration. How to score the composition is one of the most problems that students involved during writing composition and this question is rounding on their minds, whether their composition contain all factors that their teacher have considered or what kind of feedback their teacher will get during reading the compositions before scoring. According to Barnett (1989), both students and teachers are commonly frustrated over the number of errors and the lack of improvement in student writing and lack of a standard way to score composition objectively. In this article, the researcher looked at how teachers traditionally assign, score and react about student writing. According to this study, these reasons showed that scoring composition subjectively was not an efficient and effective way to score in teaching a language. The role of the checklist has presented more when the researcher counted some of the problems to score compositions in below:

1. Teachers personal opinion affects scoring unconsciously.
2. Teachers are able to change compositions scores optionally based on their attitudes.
3. Students don't know how their composition will score.
4. Elements of scores on compositions subjectively, are unknown.
5. Students' compositions may become weak because they don't know what are their teachers' wills in a standard composition.

Written composition is a product that demonstrates the ability to formulate and communicate a written message in English to an adult reader. Scoring writing, especially composition, is a common problem that most of the time teachers are faced with. There are some reasons, which the researcher calls them effective factors, show teachers score a composition subjectively and their personal opinion affects' on the scoring composition that researcher calls them effective factors. Scoring should understand as a process based on standard factors which they are not personally scoring. Focusing on those learning theories that constitute the general background of theories for language teaching and learning needs to gain a full understanding of the models of communicative competence that propose to make the process of L2 teaching more effective. The first model of communicative competence, regarded as the pioneering work on which the theoretical bases of communicative approaches to L2 language teaching that it's founded is that of Canale and Swain (1980), and further expanded by Canale (1983). This model presents an integrative theoretical framework consisting of four main competencies: grammatical, Sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competence. Grammatical competence, the first component of the model, refers to the knowledge of the language code. It includes knowledge of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation and spelling, word formation and sentence structure. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of use in a particular context. Strategic competence involves the knowledge of how to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication. Discourse competence, the last component of the model, is concerned with the knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text. Learners' knowledge of these four elements is essential to train them to face their communication needs in the L2. However, these four main competencies do not provide a description of the relationship among these components, a fact that is regarded in the model of communicative competence proposed by Savignon (1983). The second model includes the same four competencies, adopts the shape of an inverted pyramid to show how an increase in only one component produces an increase in the overall level of communicative competence, since all components are interrelated to each other. This assumption support by the fact that a measure of both Sociolinguistic and strategic competencies, without any knowledge of grammatical competence, can contribute to increase someone's communicative competence (i.e., without the use of language, a person can communicate through gestures or facial expressions). These two models of communicative competence, which are developed during the 1980s, are serious endeavors to define the communicative competence construct. Additionally, it seems that there is no attention to the key role of the four skills in these communicative frameworks. These components are influenced by the last one, strategic competence, which is concerned with the knowledge of communication strategies and how to use them. This model thus provides a clear picture of the interrelationship among all the components. Silva (2004) based on his synthesis of 72 studies, concludes that significant differences exist between practically all aspects of L1 and L2 writing. He emphasizes that the learning needs of L2 writers are crucially distinct from those of basic or proficient L1 writers and that L2 writing pedagogy requires special and systematic approaches that take into account the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and L2 writers. Even advanced and trained L2 writers continue to

have a severely limited lexical and syntactic repertoire that enables them to produce only simple text restricted to the most common language features encountered predominantly in conversational discourse (Hinkel, 2003).

In many teacher education textbooks, such as Byrd and Reid (1998), Celce-Murcia (2001), Olshtain (2000), Ferris (2005), Hinkel (2004), new insights into the properties of written and spoken texts combine with the growing recognition that L2 writing requires a substantial range of grammar and lexical skills, lead to considerable modifications in L2 writing instruction. At present, the grammatical and lexical features needed to construct formal academic writing and discourse are discussed and foregrounded. Writing is a basic communication skill and a unique asset in the process of learning a second language. Both aspects of writing are important in the typical language class, and both can serve to reinforce the other. However, students' needs at the elementary level have not yet become specialized, and writing is usually included as one of the four language skills taught. In these foundation courses the focus is on writing as a fundamental process to learning the language. In advanced composition courses the emphasis is primarily on writing as communication, although increased knowledge of the language system is one of the by-products of writing to express one's ideas. According to Barnett (1989), both students and teachers are commonly frustrated over the number of errors and the lack of improvement in student writing. This study looks at how teachers traditionally assign and react to student writing. The researcher claimed that students may become more involved in editing their own work if the teacher does less Writing Theory and Practice in the Second Language Classroom and also teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, including prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Less attention to correction of grammatical mistakes, together with real attention to, content, leads finally to better student compositions.

Given the broad general agreement about the importance of learning to write, it is disturbing to discover that "most researchers and educators agree that, with rare exceptions, students do not and cannot write well" (Mann 1982, p. 3). In preparation for a report sponsored by the (AASA), American Association of School Administrators, Neill (1982) conducted a survey of 425 school districts and found that 90 percent of the respondents considered student writing to be a problem either a serious problem (40 percent) or a minor problem (50 percent). Neill also quotes a late 1970s report stating that the reasons given by some corporations for leaving urban environments is that they couldn't find people for clerical jobs who are minimally competent in basic skills, including writing. One reason may arise from this stage that students don't recognize what a writing concept such as composition consist of. Its need to be pointed out knowing about the compositions parts such as, composition and style, structure, Grammatical errors, proofing, prewriting, writing, drafting, revising, can help students to write composition well in L2. Once a student knows what he/she is writing, and for whom and actually why he/she starts to write. And it's easy to get stuck because he/she don't know how to start. Here composition and style contain subcategories. Suppose that a student wants to write a composition, what he would know to write about a composition is listed and explained below: First of all composition writers should start with his audience and he has to remind his readers may know nothing about what he is telling them. What do they need to know first? Create an outline; this is especially helpful if he is writing a longer document such as a report, presentation, speech or composition. Second, the outlines help him identify which steps to take in which order, and they help him reveal the project up into manageable bits of data. He can use AIDA, (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action), if he is writing something that must inspire action in the reader; follow the AIDA formula. These four steps can help guide his through the writing process. Try some empathy; for instance, if he is writing a sales letter for prospective clients, why should they care about his product or sales pitch? What's the benefit for them? The students should remember their audience's needs at all times. If he is trying to persuade someone to do something, make sure that he communicates why people should listen to him, and pitch his message in a way that engages his audience and present information rationally and coherently. Identify his main theme – If he's having trouble defining the main theme of her message, pretend that he has 15 seconds to explain his position. What does he say? This is likely to be her main theme. He can use simple language; unless he is writing a scholarly article, it's usually best to use simple, direct language and also he can use long words just to impress people.

Wesdorp (1983) and other researchers believe that, the revision stage is most productive of superior final products if it includes input from teachers or fellow students. Editing; polishing of the draft takes place in the editing stage. The writer gives attention to mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and handwriting, and may also make minor lexical and syntactic changes.

Publication; publication refers to the delivery of the writing to its intended audience. Wesdorp (1983) and other investigators have found that student motivation and achievement are enhanced when student work is "published" for a larger audience than the teacher. Classmates, other students, parents and community members are among the potential audiences for students' written work. This study in this part presents a variety of direct measures to assess five important aspects of the writing product: fluency, content, conventions, syntax, and vocabulary. Although instruction requires emphasis on the writing process (planning and organizing material, transcribing thoughts into words, and reviewing and revising), but assessment of writing skills must focus primarily on the writing product. There are two reasons why this is so. First, there is not yet a definitive, comprehensive theory of developing processes that can be used accurately for assessment. As Moran (1987) pointed out, research methodologies to document a writer's process are not yet sufficiently operationalized to provide immediate assessment information on a student's skills. Second, Process strategies are judged to be successful only as they ensue in a well written product. Writing is a form of communication that is intended for a receiver removed in time and space from the sender. The receiver only understands what has been communicated effectively in the text. Testing of writing products has four purposes: inter individual comparisons, instructional planning, monitoring student progress, and providing feedback. Different writing measures may have advantages for some assessment purposes but not for others. First, writing measures can be used to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful writers and identify exceptional students in need of remedial instruction. Norm-referenced tests traditionally have been used for this purpose. Ysseldyke et al. (1983), however, they claim that performance in writing expression can be measured validly and reliably in very short amounts of time using simple curriculum-based measures on samples of student writing. Often comparisons between successful and unsuccessful writers are made on the basis of holistic evaluation, a guided scoring procedure based on the subjective rater judgment of several composition factors taken together (Cooper, 1977). The most common form is, general impression marking, in which the rater fits the writing sample into an ordered ranking on the basis of the total impression creates by the paper.

Research Questions

In advanced composition courses the emphasis is primarily on writing as communication, although increased knowledge of the language system is one of the by-products of writing to express one's ideas. According to Flower and Hayes, writing is a complex, recursive cognitive process involving the writer's long-term memory, where knowledge of the topic, audience, and writing plans are stored, the task environment, including the rhetorical problem and the text produced so far, and writing sub processes such as idea-generation, goal-setting, organizing, reviewing, evaluating, and revising. In many locations around the world, learning English has the objective of learners' gaining access to technical, educational, or professional opportunities (Canagarajah, 2002, 2005). The aim of this study refers to investigation of the effectiveness of Using Teacher Made Checklist on Iranian Advanced EFL learners' Composition Scores. Generally, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate the answers of following questions:

1. Does the application of teacher made checklist in compositions' score, leads from subjective scores to the objective scores?
2. Does the checklist any role to obstructing teachers' directly opinion interference on scoring composition?
3. Does Using Teacher Made Checklist have an effect on Iranian at Advanced level of EFL Learners' composition Scores?

3. Method

In this study, materials deal with advanced students and their performances such as writing compositions. The advanced students have selected based on OPT proficiency test homogeneously. The topics of composition are selected between 17 subjects. The materials in this study refer to students, writing composition, checklist and those instructors that want to score the composition based on the checklist. Students composed a composition about selected topics in 30 minutes and they got the points from 0-40 based on features in the checklist. The topics of composition have selected from Passages 2, which is written by Jack C. Richards and Chuck Sandy, the second edition, at advanced level.

Participants:

The present study investigated the effect of using teacher made checklist on Iranian Advanced EFL learners' composition scores. This study tried to determine whether using teacher made checklist may enhance a more acceptable path to score composition in Iranian EFL learners at the advanced level or not. To answer this question, 15 advanced language learners in Asre Novin Institute in Rostamabad selected randomly via administering an OPT to 80 language learners. They wrote a composition about a topic which is selected by students between 17 topics. Then students composed a composition about selected topics in 30 minutes and they got the points from 0-40 based on using the checklist for scoring.

According to Porta (2008), a pilot study is, "A small-scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a larger scale". The fundamental purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of an approach that is intended to ultimately be used in a larger scale study. This applies to all types of research studies. A pilot study, however, is not used for hypothesis testing, instead it serves as an earlier-phase developmental function that will enhance the probability of success in the larger subsequent of each research that anticipated. What is discussed here applies to pilot studies, feasibility studies and proof of concept studies, terms that have been used somewhat interchangeably in the literature and henceforth are referred to here as "pilot studies". The researcher of this study wants to evaluate and assess by getting some experts' ideas of the Rasht Islamic Azad University about this checklist, to understand what kind of role this checklist does to score students' composition. The researcher wants to know whether this checklist is able to change teachers score from subjective to objective. For these reasons, the researcher chose a descriptive research methodology and designed a pilot study among some experts of the Rasht Islamic Azad University to assess the perceptions of using teacher made scoring checklist regarding the quality and condition, maintenance, and improvement and renovation of existing students' compositions. The researcher of this study wrote a letter in order to this way; "The researcher of this study wants to score students' composition based on this checklist and also one of the aim of this study is, score students' compositions objectively. The researcher would appreciate if you write your idea about this checklist. And also the checklist has distributed among 10 advanced students randomly and has asked them to score the checklist and its features from 0-20. According to these three experts of the Rasht Islamic Azad University, the reliability of this checklist was 0.78. On the other hand, after collecting the students' scores about the checklist, the mean of scores was 19.02. These results may show using teacher made scoring checklist have an effect on scoring. This will be analyzed, evaluated and elaborated in chapter four.

Procedure:

This section focused on the descriptive analysis of the obtained data in this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS software. Table (1) shows the descriptive analysis of the subjective and objective (based on the checklist), of the composition scoring in the one group of the study, whereas the scorers are two types of teachers and compositions will be scored by two methods; subjective scoring and Objective scoring (using a checklist).

As is indicated in the table (1), the number of participants has been 15 in an experimental group, ($N = 15$). The mean for the Subjective scoring (the teachers those scores subjectively) was shown to be 37.7 ($\bar{X} (\text{obj.}) = 37.7$) as compared to the mean for the Objective scoring (the teachers those scores objectively based on the checklist) which was 27.7 ($\bar{X} (\text{sob.}) = 27.7$). As for the standard deviations obtained for the subjective scores $SD = 0.693$ and objective scores $SD = 1.879$ groups, there seems to be more variety among the objective scores than the subjective scores. This may give an image of the participants' objective scores being more homogenous after using teacher made checklist.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of subjective and objective scoring

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Objective	37.7833	15	.69351	.17906
	Subjective	27.7333	15	1.87908	.48518

Based on standard error mean definition, standard error mean is the estimated standard deviation of the sample mean. This value is estimated as the standard deviation of one sample divided by the square root of the sample. In this study the subjective scoring the size is extracted: $0.693/15 = 0.179$, and for objective scoring the size is obtained: $1.879/15 = 0.485$. This provides a measure of the variability of the sample mean. The error mean deviation for the objective scoring is 0.179 and it shows that the error means of subjective scoring 0.485 is greater than objective scoring $0.485 > 0.179$, so objective scoring can more help students to take more points and the first hypothesis will be rejected because this kind of scoring (using a checklist objectively), is able to provide a feasible chance to move from one level to another.

4. Analysis and Results

This section focused on the inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) from which the 'Compare Means', 'Independent Samples Test' for calculating the t value, also, 'Standard Error Mean' for calculating the effect of using teacher made checklist were selected and used. As is indicated in the table (2), the t-value of the study was calculated between the subjective scoring and using checklist to score objectively of the participant in the experimental (subjective scoring) and the control (objective scoring) groups. The observed t value was calculated as to be 22.703 ($t_{obs} = 22.703$) and the degree of freedom was 14 ($df = 14$). Based on the common formula of $df = N-1$ the degree of freedom here was 14. On the other hand, based on John Best's book on page 483, the T-observed in 15

Participants are 2.14 so 22.73 is greater than 2.14 and due to this result, the first hypothesis rejected and it means that the teacher made scoring checklist effect on scoring compositions. Finally, the level of significance was calculated as to be 0.000 ($p = 0.000$) which has been used in interpreting the data for rejection or support of the first hypothesis of the study in the next section.

Table 2: The T-test results of the study

		Paired Differences				
		Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Objective - Subjective	1.71443	.44267	22.703	14	.000

Respectively, the significance level was calculated between the subjective scoring and the objective scoring of the group as to be 0.000 ($\text{Sig}_{2\text{-tailed}} = 0.000$) there is no reason to believe that the small differences in group standard deviations observed in the descriptive statistics table (see table 2) are due to random variation on the other hand the degree of significance shows that the result is not by chance and it's a fact that the teacher made scoring checklist, effects on scoring compositions and the checklist can help teacher to score composition objectively. The next inferential analysis of the data of this study was related to the degree of relationship between the subjective scoring and the objective scoring in each participant of scorers.

5. Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of testing the hypotheses of the study have presented and elaborated below: The first hypothesis claims that, using teacher made checklist does not have an impact on Iranian at Advanced level of EFL composition scores. What is shown in results of findings in the above tables, the t-observed is 22.7, in the other hand, the t-critical for 15 participants based on John W. Best's book is 2.14 and it means that the first hypothesis is rejected because 22.7 is too greater than 2.14, therefore, due to the first hypothesis, using teacher made scoring checklist has an effect on students' composition score, ($22.7 > 2.14$). The second hypothesis claims that "Checklist cannot help teachers to score composition objectively". The evidence to verify the rejection of the second hypothesis is the value of the level of significance calculated by the SPSS to be 0.000 ($\text{Significance}_{2\text{-tailed}} = 0.000$). Since this value was lower than 0.05 (based on the SPSS regulations), and also the difference between

the means of the subjective (27.7) and objective scoring (37.7) of the study $37.7 < 27.7$ and this result could not be by chance, and the rejection of the second hypothesis of the study is imminent.

6. Suggestions for further Research

Scoring writing with its features is too hard at one point of view. As this study claimed that the composition as a part of communication in writing needs to some efficient factors, by considering all aspects of linguistic, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistics to score, writing can be complex, recursive cognitive process involving the writer's long-term memory, where knowledge of the topic, audience, and writing plans are stored, the task environment, including the rhetorical problem and the text produced so far, and writing sub processes such as idea-generation, goal-setting, organizing, reviewing, evaluating, and revising. Analyzing the writing process needs to a checklist. A checklist is both a reporting tool and an assessment tool. Therefore, the checklists in this study can be and probably should be used by both teachers and students. Older students (upper intermediate and up) can use a checklist, such as writing reports, compositions, answers to the written questions and essays prior to turning into a product to be evaluated. He or she will be able to "check" for errors, completion and content of the project or paper (Assessment). This makes the student accountable for his or her own learning and accomplishments. There is a suggestion to use the checklist can be used to evaluate and score all writing materials which they are measurable and valuable to score. Therefore checklist can be used in a grading scale by assigning points or weights to the criteria on the checklist. For example, if a checklist has 10 criteria, scorer might weight each one 10 points and end up to 100% for the checklist.

To suggest for further Research some of the checklists is specifically designed to "check out" a product, such as an entry for students' projects and finding results. These checklists can also be handy for use as an "interim" report, to let parents or students know how things are going before they are surprised by a grade. The most important thing to know about, use over time is, the teachers, must decide and let the students know what the checklist is for ahead of time. Parents will be able to use the checklist to confirm the information, communication, documentation, and remediation. Parents want to know how their children are doing. Parents want to know what their children are doing. Checklists keep parents informed, aware and in touch with the classroom. They contain more specific information than a note and carry less threat than a report card. These checklists can be used to rate the written examinations, essays, reports and even theses by changing its features based on types of products and performances.

7. Conclusion

On the other side of teaching, scoring students' products can be discussed. Scoring students' progresses in four skills, speaking, reading, writing and listening depends on and needs to think and understand what the scoring features are and how a teacher would be able to score students' performances and writing products such as compositions without interference their personal opinions. How to score the composition is one of the most problems that students involved during writing composition and this question is seeking on their minds, whether their composition contain all factors that their teacher have considered or what kind of feedback their teacher will get during reading the compositions before scoring. The phonological features, rules of the language, communicative function, and social meaning can be the elements to be evaluated in scoring composition in isolation by analyzing various elements or by using tasks which can measure the writers' communicative competence in general. The checklist is able to help teachers to evaluate all aspects of linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics features and it's able to act as a map of a road and assistance for both teachers and students. The most extreme aspect of this checklist refers to prohibition part of teachers' interferences to score. One of the most problems on teaching English as a second language is scoring the products of writing materials such as composition. Based on the results of the findings of this study, the use of teacher made scoring checklist to score students' product such as compositions would help teachers and instructors to score efficiently.

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SOME BASIC GUIDELINES ON TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning due to their intricate variables are such complex phenomena that their realization will often be short of perfection. This mobile and flux complexity calls for both theoretical and practical knowledge on the part of teachers how to approach the issue. Nevertheless, some teachers follow invariable methods of teaching, which might be their innovations or imitation from their previous teachers and professors in the course of their studies, on the assumption that there are no more logical and fully-fledged procedures than theirs. The analyses of their instruction reveal that they are defective in terms of pedagogical foundations including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, etc and consequently they do not facilitate the process of learning. Reviewing some of the fundamental principles and techniques, teachers are expected to do their tasks meticulously to achieve the intended goals.

Key Words: approach, method, procedure, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics

The aim of this paper is to introduce some basic principles and techniques used for teaching English at different levels of study. Although the following suggestions are the gists of some books concerning teaching English skills and also the outcome of monitoring practical teaching course for majors in ELT, i.e. supervising would-be teachers' ways of teaching, it seems that some of these strategies can be useful for teaching other fields of study as well. Despite the fact that the procedures have not been attributed to any individual language teaching approach, they can be utilized in specific and eclectic methods to teach all skills and subskills. The procedures are as follows.

1. Begin speaking English from the first sessions so that your students feel that they are learning a subject distinct from what they have already experienced. Although at the beginning this may place strains on both teacher and students, it is worth time and effort. Speaking English in class can expose students to sufficient input and this can compensate for any lack of contact with native speakers of English. Krashen (1985) argues that if the teacher's input is one level higher than the students' English knowledge ($i+1$) or what he calls 'comprehensible input', students can guess the meaning of unknown words and structures and adopt the natural process of language acquisition.
2. Establish the necessary rules to govern classroom activities and clarify the responsibilities of the students from the outset.
3. The teacher should hold the social relationship with the students appropriately so that learning occurs with the highest interest, attitude and motivation, and willingness. According to Chastain (1988), the class climate varies with regard to age, gender, and learning environment. Establishing a positive classroom climate does not require that the teacher emphasizes social relationships at the cost of learning, but the importance lies in that unless the social and affective filters are opened, students cannot learn because learning takes place in social situations.
4. Allowing too much freedom and low standards aggravate and magnify discipline problems. If a teacher cannot have a quiet class, he will not succeed in making students be attentive to him. Meanwhile, students accept a teacher who can control the class in many respects.
5. Try to ride the whole class with your eyes so that you are able to see all students at all times.

6. Talk to all students and ask them to do so. Attention to one or only a few students makes other students indifferent and unmotivated to the course; consequently, it can arouse a sense of repulsion and hatred for the classroom atmosphere.
7. Study seating arrangements of students; those who affect others adversely may need to be removed. Students having poor sight and hearing should also be aptly identified for special care.
8. Attune your voice to the number of students and the space of your classroom. Some teachers speak so loudly in all classes that they are always in a state of exhaustion while it would have negative effect on students learning. A trade-off should be made to speak in loud and low voice.
9. Stand and move around the classroom to supervise the students' activities and attention. This shows that the teacher is actually interested in students' involvement and can counteract a lack of concentration on the part of students.
10. State the question before calling on the students ; in so doing, you involve all students to think of the problem. Furthermore, call on the students at random or they will anticipate the questions they should respond to and do not pay attention to other questions posed.
11. Try to study even simple matters before attempting to teach them; your study should be beyond what has been mentioned in the respective textbooks because there are some curious and apt students who are searching for detailed and delicate points at any level .
12. Do not punish the whole class for the misbehaviour of one or a few students, or do not punish a student through asking him difficult questions. To create a sense of achievement, you should ask the brighter students difficult questions and the slow ones simple questions, i.e. questions should be distributed in terms of the students' abilities. Treating students with contempt can also lead to irreparable results.
13. If you think a student has some problem of any sort (physiological, psychological, financial, etc.) a private conference with him may help to determine the problem and to improve conduct.
14. Summarize the important points of each lesson at the end of each class and ask your students some related questions as feedback to see whether they have grasped the content or not.
15. According to cognitive psychology, the direction of learning should be from known to unknown materials ; hence, the teacher should associate new material with what students already know. In other words, preview phase of teaching plays a central role in any learning process.
16. pedagogically, teaching more than one new point at a time overloads the cognitive ability of students to a high extent; therefore, in teaching grammar, for example, we should drop out any new vocabulary.
17. Use your praise of the students appropriately, both during the class period and while scoring their papers ; however, it should not be used so greatly to lose its value.
18. Use simulations, learning games, and audio-visuals appropriately to enhance learning and motivation. As Allen (1983) points out that the more senses are involved in learning a point, the more profound it will be engraved in mind. For example, listening to the pronunciation of a content word simultaneous with its touching or/and seeing can heighten its recallability and comprehension greatly.
19. Competition can be a motivating force in class. Students can compete with each other or with other classes. Holding exam in your own class and sometimes across different classes can make students review the points and estimate their positions for further improvement.
20. Do not tell the students that the book or the content of a lesson is uninteresting or useless ; moreover, the teacher should not tell the students the lack of his interest in teaching the course(s) or he will block the students' confidence to himself.
21. Do not label or classify students as superior or inferior groups because this can impose permanent negative effects on their personalities. Students are more positively influenced by hearing their strengths rather than weaknesses, especially in public.
22. To make the lessons as meaningful as possible, you should create a sense of exigency such as real situations of language use. Presenting preplanned examples from here-and- now context instead of artificial ones adds to the meaningfulness of the topic. The more your examples are meaningful and contextualized, the more effect they superimpose on students' learning.
23. You should make it clear to the students that mistakes, especially in speaking are not tragedies and the teacher should not interrupt their communication in order to correct their mistakes because constant correction causes students to lose confidence and to be unable to keep their minds on what they are trying to say. Burt and Kiparsky (1974) divide errors into two categories, global and local. Global errors violate rules involving the overall structure of a sentence and the relations among major

constituents, but local errors cause trouble in a particular constituent or in a clause of a complex sentence. It is implied that correcting global errors including word order, missing obligatory constituents, etc. is more beneficial than correcting local errors like subject-verb agreement, an omitted article, etc. It is reasonable to alleviate errors indirectly according to their causes explored by the teacher.

24. Although 3P's have been assigned to audiolingual method (Richards and Rodgers, 2001), this chain is certainly viable in junior and senior high schools. The procedures include presentation or providing comprehensible input by the teacher, practicing the points in chorus, in pairs, and individually and finally producing the lesson independently on the part of students.

25. It is advisable to pursue the three stages of language teaching and learning, that is, preview, view, and review to relate previous knowledge with new content and consequently to the actual and creative use of language in real situations.

26. Some scholars believe that vocabulary plays more crucial role than grammar in communication (Rivers, 1981), i.e. people resort to syntactic rules when they encounter ambiguity and other marginal obstructions; therefore, in teaching English for communication, teaching relevant vocabulary might be more focused upon than that of grammar.

27. Since repetition is one of the textual strategies employed in both modes of language (written and spoken), it can be manipulated to increase learning efficiency. Of course, exact reiteration consecutively makes teaching monotonous and boring. To avoid this, it should be carried out in different variations, and each time a new point can be loaded on the old information already taught.

28. Regarding the Chinese saying 'A picture is worth a thousand words', the use of pictures, illustrations, examples, etc. can be a great assistance in learning new items. Bright students in contrast with slow ones can grasp even abstract concepts easily, but the teacher should take all students into account and he shouldn't spare time and effort in this conjunction.

29. the language teaching methods and techniques should be applied properly. For instance, imperative sentences can be taught via total physical response, existential 'there' via now-and-here context, social formulae via simulations, dialogues, and so the like.

30. At the elementary levels of language learning, if students need some elements to complete their utterances, the teacher can provide them with necessary information in order to eliminate any embarrassment on the part of the students. According to counseling learning, students should feel that the teacher is a great support for their venture.

31. Teaching students how to use monolingual dictionaries is of importance because in so doing, students encounter words in authentic examples and this can make students be self-reliance when teachers are not available.

32. Try to teach students some strategies to get their ideas across. These strategies include using circumlocution, paraphrase, synonyms, antonyms, gestures, facial expressions, fillers and so forth.

33. The interaction between teacher and students should be meaningful and reliable. Asking display questions to a high degree at any level violates the use of language in operation (Celce- Murci and Hilles, 1988). Classroom activities should be in the form of problem-solving exchanges in which the interlocutors endeavor to fill the information gaps between them.

34. A successful teacher is one who minimizes his speaking, acts as a guide, and withdraws himself from exchanges occurring in class, but makes students interact actively with one another. It is a wrong idea to think that talkative teachers are always the most successful ones.

35. Davies and Widdowson (1974) make a division of types of comprehension questions into four categories: direct, reference, supposition, and evaluation. By the first one they mean the question whose answer can be directly recovered from the sentence which corresponds with it. The reference question is directed towards the discovery of the relationship between sentences. The supposition questions require the reader to say what is implied by certain language items, i.e. they are situation-bound in such a way that the readers should relate the text to a wider situation of communication. And lastly, the evaluation questions require the reader to assess the value of the reading passage. Although each of these kinds of questions can be apt for special stages in language learning, acquainting intermediate language learners with reference and supposition questions can direct them to learn reading comprehension in its full sense.

36. Get students to read and use language in chunks not in dismantled and isolated items. Experience demonstrates that it is hard for elementary students who place fingers on words while reading to give up this detrimental habit in later stages of their learning and ultimately they will be slow readers.

37. Since the white/blackboard is the most common medium in teaching, make it the best use. Writing in an orderly manner in different colours gives attraction, ornament and value to this widely used simple magic.
38. Teacher's too much humour abuses his authority and sponsorship. Those overusing comic at the exclusion of their aims are not regarded as typical teachers even by students.
39. As a punishment it is not acceptable to dismiss students from your classes in any way. Any reckless misconduct can result in harmful consequences in different dimensions. Instead of rush behaviour toward students, you should seek the main reasons for their uneasiness.
40. Despite the fact that the teacher may be very knowledgeable, teaching even the same course in many different classes a week lessens the quality of his class. In other words, the teacher should avoid teaching too much at any level in favour of preserving his standards and personality even though he may sustain a loss in terms of money.
41. Teaching grammar inductively can result in constant and deep traces in long-term memory in the long run. Deductive teaching of grammar reminds students of abstract, mathematical formulas and impedes the natural process of language learning.
42. In a class consisting of students with different languages, try to use English or a lingua franca (Farsi) as the medium of instruction. Speaking in a language not understandable for some of the students makes the others feel that the class does not belong to them and they may make a negative attitude toward their teacher.
43. Form and function should be taught simultaneously and dealing with one of them at the cost of the other violates natural language learning. After so many years of learning English, the majority of students does not know the functional distinction between contractions versus complete forms, formal words and structures versus informal ones and the like.
44. Making students cognizant of morphology, e.g. affixes, roots, different derivations of a word, etc. helps students analyse words to disclose their meanings.
45. You can tell students to activate their background knowledge in many situations. Arming students with both linguistic and non-linguistic backup alleviates students' problems to a noticeable degree and that is why many times readers and/or listeners overtake their addressors.
46. Asking a student to read and answer the same question is not in agreement with the natural exchanges comprising at least two participants, and this strengthens the artificiality nature of the task.
47. Students should be asked to repeat new patterns in chorus and then individually in order that slow students can use the opportunity to make up for absorbing any unlearned material.
48. Teacher's emphasis over valuing stress and intonation patterns and using them practically in the classroom encourages students to follow it appropriately.
49. When there are different arguments over the correct response of a reading/listening comprehension question, you had better direct the students to the intricacies of the text so that they are persuaded through evidence and to add this approach to their experiences.
50. A successful teacher is one who attunes his teaching on the basis of feedback and reactions he receives from the students. Teaching and learning are two mutually ongoing processes whose existence depends on one another.
51. Through the use of puzzles, scripts, plays, tapes, films, and so on students can learn language genuinely and unconsciously. Observation supports the fact that more successful learners are those exposed excessively to nontraditional material.
52. To avoid making wild associations, the teacher should use foreign names in presenting his examples or at least think about native nouns in advance. Many students graduating from high schools lack enough knowledge about English proper nouns, especially people's names.
53. When objects are available, they are preferred over pictures in teaching because they are more concrete and far from any misinterpretation.
54. Although students can imitate new sound combinations in L2, some learners may utter them in epenthetic way (the addition of a vowel or a consonant at the beginning of a word or between sounds because the language which is being learned has different sound combinations from the learner's L1; Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Overlooking these learners by the teacher can encourage students in their overgeneralization, e.g. all words beginning with 'st' may be pronounced as /1st/ or /est/.
55. Do not punish students by using irony, sarcasm, ridicule, etc. because this can arise hostility to the teacher for ever. It sometimes happens that your present students will be your colleagues in the future.

56. At the end of each class, the teacher should clean the white/blackboard ; this shows the respect to his colleagues using the board later and students take him as a model in their lives.
57. Be punctual in starting and finishing your classes. This shows the teacher's great interest and discipline in doing his profession.
58. It is not necessary to teach all new words of a lesson when teaching reading comprehension. You should teach those words which seem difficult for students to guess their meaning or bear heavy information load in unfolding discourse. The importance of teaching new words lies in that students can guess their meaning because learning is the result of hypothesis-testing, changing the wrong hypotheses, and consequently getting to the correct answers. This process works only if students are not directly told the meaning of words.
59. Teaching vocabulary items through definition is not appropriate for all levels: it is often utilized for advanced and intermediate learners. The words forming the definition should be easier than the defined or new word.
60. According to Lotfipour (1995), English verbs in particular should not be translated at all because they are considered the centres of gravity of sentences and their translation into L1 provokes students to use L2 verbs in L1 patterns. Psycholinguistically, if the meaning of words in general is presented via translation, students have to correspond the English words to their Farsi equivalents and then to their cognitive systems, and this delays the transfer of English items directly to learners' cognitive systems.
61. Oral drills should be in line with the objectives of the course, i.e. they are better operationalized without any reference to the written texts.
62. The teacher can teach the mechanics of writing implicitly through observing the rudimentary rules of writing including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation, etc. on the board.
63. In order to teach some sounds such as /ð/, /θ/ and /v/ which are absent in L1, the teacher himself should have thorough knowledge about their places and manners of articulation and produce them by demonstration.
64. The teacher should look up the correct pronunciation of both common and proper nouns, etc. to show the discrepancy existing across languages. How a teacher can expect his students to be exact in many respects while he has problems in the primary issues of teaching!
65. Knowing students by personal appearance and calling them on by their names without referring to the written list can convince the students that the teacher is attending to their presence and work.
66. To use a host of honorifics overly including 'excuse me' 'would you please?' etc. by the teacher in inappropriate situations can lessen the teacher's authority.
67. It is suggested that hybrid structures involving 'She asked a question from him' and 'They enjoyed from the film' be indirectly corrected by the teacher and students to counteract any negative transfer and fossilization on the part of the students.
68. The teacher's behaviour should be an ideal model for students to follow. He should not use the fashion mismatching his personality which distracts students and diverts their attention from the lesson to disturbing factors.
69. Encourage students to read the texts silently, but in primary stage if the aim is to check their reading aloud or to expose them to acceptable pronunciation, intonation, etc. either the teacher or the students can read the texts loudly.
70. To avoid having a noisy class, tell students to put up their hands if they know the response to a question raised, and then select the responder. Furthermore, paying attention to only a group of students brings the teacher's justice into question to a great extent. The classroom activities should be distributed among all students; it is not reasonable to dedicate your class time only to students with high command of English.
71. Teach students that stress often shifts in different derivations of some words [e.g. 'photograph vs. photógrapher, ex'port(v) vs./ 'export(n), etc.] so that they do not generalize established stress patterns for all derivations of a word.
72. Review some previously discussed points or teach new ones when the ground has been paved. For instance, if you are going to teach the distinction between ' the other ' and 'one another', you can restate the pronunciation of the definite article ' the ' as /ði:/ in 'the other' because of its position before a vowel.

73. If you find out that you have answered a question wrong, volunteer to correct it at that same session or as soon as possible since this boosts the teacher's personality. It is taken for granted that sooner or later some students arrive at the correct response.
74. Bringing students to the board and encouraging them to communicate in English is a good and attractive technique that can prepare them to speak in the presence of larger audience in the future.
75. Instead of repeating an expression such as 'very good' many times for students' responses, you can use different words and expressions including 'right', 'excellent', 'well', 'great', etc. so that your class will not be monotonous and the students learn different words in accordance with their contexts.
76. Asking questions should begin from easy to difficult ones, for example, their order should be from yes/no questions to alternative and finally to 'wh' question ones.
77. The quality of the pictures used in the classroom should be high enough in order not to be a source of confusion but to promote students' comprehension.
78. According to Allen(1983), you should think of the useful techniques of teaching vocabulary in advance. For instance, teaching words such as 'shake', 'tie(v)', 'crash', 'light(adj)', 'heavy', etc. through realia and body-movement is preferred over their teaching through pictures or definition.
79. If you want to teach some points through games, puzzles, and the like, it is advised to note down the instructions on the board to ensure that all students can understand what to do.
80. Making young students memorize songs, poems, etc. can be a stimulus for them to disclose their meaning.
81. Language functions including 'introducing yourself', 'finding an address', 'inviting somebody for a party', and 'telephone conversations' cannot be taught just through reading, but they should be simulated and practiced through films, activities, meaningful interactions, etc.
82. The unit of reading comprehension should be the text rather than individual paragraphs because many times the meaning of knotty issues will be deciphered only when you proceed more and more with the text. After taking the aforementioned step, i.e. grasping the general idea of the text, you can have students go back to the individual paragraphs to examine their comprehension of details.
83. Teaching patterns should be based on gradation. For example, teaching 'John is clever' should precede 'John is a clever boy'.
84. Practice should be different from testing in terms of its degree of difficulty. practice is one of the major components of teaching to establish new points in learners' mind; however, testing is employed to determine whether students have reached the instructional goals or not.
85. In the preview stage of teaching the teacher should not enter into all details of the reading text, but he should introduce the text indirectly so that students, on the one hand, relate what they already know to new information and the teacher can arouse their curiosity and interest to the text, on the other.
86. In elementary stages of teaching reading/listening comprehension the teacher's questions about the text on the board will specify the objectives of the task and thus the students will not be distracted by other pieces of information in the text. The questions should be designed in such a way that students cannot respond to them before reading the whole text .
87. Teaching formal and informal versions of language through conversations, stories, etc. encourages students to extend these variations to other situations. For example, if they know how to borrow a book from one of their classmates and/or teachers, this can be generalized for borrowing other things in different situations.
88. Children, firstly, see things and then they will be curious to know their names; we can use this natural way of learning in our teaching, i.e. showing the objects to draw the students' attention and then presenting their names.
89. In teaching words such as 'right and left', 'senior and junior', 'majority and minority', etc. it is better not to teach both words of each pair in a session because students may confuse them. The teacher can put off teaching one of them to the next sessions or more time should be allotted to teaching one of them.
90. To teach some words including rude, dwarf, lazy, orphan, etc., the teacher should not attribute them to his students because this can hurt their personalities to such an extent that it cannot be compensated for in any way.
91. Sociolinguistically, culture and language are like two complementary sides of a coin that cannot be separated from each other. Since the social meanings of words may not even be elaborated on in any

dictionary, making students familiar with reading short stories, anecdotes, novels, etc. can contribute to the solution to this problem (Chastain, 1988).

92. Teachers should have reflective views toward their teaching to develop their profession. If students have not acquired the points based on the teacher's prediction, he should follow a critical reflection on his failure to alleviate probable inadequacies. Audio or video recording of lessons and their later analyses can also provide a basis for further improvement.

93. According to Brown(2007), the teacher's empathy is of great significance. It is the process of putting yourself into somebody's shoes to understand what another person is feeling. In other words, to communicate effectively and to impart his knowledge to students, the teacher needs to be able to understand the students affective and cognitive states. When a teacher has false presuppositions or assumptions about students, even ordinary communication breaks down.

94. If you teach the functions of cohesive devices, e.g. the relationship existing between antecedents and their references, transitional words, etc., students will approach the text as a unified whole and these agencies direct them to cope with natural reading for comprehension.

95. According to some studies(Blakemore, 1988; Hatch, 1992), English language contains about fifty percent redundancy, i.e. a bit of information is reiterated in different manifestations in a piece of text. Acquainting students with overt and covert realizations of redundancy makes them confident not to be confused if they do not understand some parts of a text because they are often recapitulated in other parts of the text.

96. A successful teacher conducts his class according to his previously prepared lesson plans and notes. Relying solely on memory results in missing to present some points. The advantage of making use of the lesson plan is that the teacher can discuss all pre-determined issues in class in such a way that he does not interrupt the thread of his speech and waste the time of the class on thinking about them.

97. If you do not have the taste and knowledge in some courses, it is not an advantage to volunteer to teach them. The criteria for teaching cannot be restricted to only being ready to teach different courses but the significance lies in that how efficiently the teacher can manage the course and to what degree he can be helpful for students.

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A CLOSER LOOK AT LEARNERS' USE OF DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between learners' proficiency levels and their use of article at both recognition and production phase. By using a cross-sectional method, this study intended to find out a pattern among different levels of learners using articles in both recognition and production tests. Four language schools and 60 students with different proficiency levels were chosen. To make sure about their proficiency levels a placement test was administrated and learners were divided into three groups of elementary, intermediate and advanced. The classifications of articles were based on Modern English Book classification. A multiple choice test was run to find out learners recognition ability(the score of this test was used to show their ability in using definite and indefinite article) and a short story with omitted articles was designed to find out their production abilities. The reliability and validity of all tests were calculated by pilot study and through intra-rater reliability. The findings showed that elementary and advanced learners are better at using definite articles, while intermediate learners used indefinite articles better. All three levels were better at recognition tests than production tests. Also some types of definite and indefinite articles were more challenging for all levels, while some were not troublesome.

Key Words: interlanguage; english article system; persian article system.

1. Introduction

Most of the students even in advance levels seem to have problem with English articles. This system includes the indefinite article a(n), the definite article the, and the zero (or null) article. As we know these articles are frequent in English system, as Berry (1991) mentioned the frequency of articles that "the/a/an together account for one in every ten words in the average academic text". According to Hewson (1972, p.131), "the definite and the indefinite article are among the tenth discourse". Sinclair (1991, cited in Master, 2002, p.332) lists the as the most frequent word and a as the fifth most frequent. This frequency means that these two small words have a wide-ranging effect on speech styles and expression, and that proficiency in this system will provide non-native speakers with a perceptibly increased level of accuracy. It had been assumed that if a structure has frequency the amount of errors will be reduced but researcher proved that its not always true for article system, sometimes even the advanced students have errors in using article.

If we want to explain the reason of these complexities, we can refer to Master (2002), according to him, the difficulty stems from three principle facts about the article system:

(a) Articles are among the most frequently occurring function words in English (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), making continuous rule application difficult over an extended stretch of discourse.

(b) Function words are normally unstressed and consequently are very difficult, if not impossible, for a NNS to discern, thus affecting the availability of input in the spoken mode.

(c) The article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme, a considerable burden for the learner, who generally looks for a one-form-one-function correspondence in navigating the language until the advanced stages of acquisition.

So we can say that learners tend to overlook the articles while they are function words not content words. As they do not carry special meaning it is tending to be omitted by students. Here we may wonder that why articles are important while they do not carry any meaning we can refer to "Halliday and Hasan" (1976), in their investigation, pointed out that, "Whenever the information is contained in the text, the presence of an article creates a link between the sentence in which it occurs and that containing the referential information; in other words, it is cohesive" (p. 74)

Also articles can give important information about the shared information with hearer. Some factors can influence this process, In the case of articles; the difficulty of meaning is determined by the novelty and abstractness of the concept (Pienemann, 1998). Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) believe that analysis of errors made by language learners can help understand the process of language learning deeply.

English article system consists of definite and indefinite articles.

a) Definite article shows that the mentioned name is known and specific for the hearer. It is shown by "THE" some languages have it but in some languages there is no definite article. As Richard (1992) defined, the main use of definite article is to show that the noun refers to a particular example of something, for example:

a) By referring to something which is known to both the speaker and the hearer:

She is in the garden.

b) By referring backward to something already mentioned:

There is a man standing outside. Who, the man in the brown coat?

c) By referring forward to something:

The chair in the living room is broken.

d) By referring to something as a group or class:

The lion is a dangerous animal.

b) Indefinite article shows that the mentioned noun is unknown or unspecific for the hearer. It can be shown by "A/An". For words that start with vowels "AN" will be used; nouns that starts with consonants "A" is used. As Richard (1992) defined the main use of indefinite article in English is to show that the noun refers to something general or to something which has not been identified by the speaker, for example:

a) By referring to one example of a group or class:

Pass me a pencil, please.

b) By referring to something as an example of a group or class:

A dog is a friendly animal.

c) Zero article: when nouns are used without an article in English. For example:

Cats like sleeping

The following table presents the different types of articles in Modern English Book one by Marcella Frank. The tests of the present study were adopted from this table.

Table 1. Definition of definite and indefinite articles according to Marcella Frank

THE (definite article)	A/AN (indefinite article)
Developed from a word meaning this. Signals as a particular person or thing. Used with singular or plural nouns.	Developed from a word meaning one. <u>An</u> used before vowel sounds. Signals an unspecified one of others. Used chiefly with singular countable nouns.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For known person or objects in the environment .ex: he walked into THE house. 2. For person, things or ideas by the verbal context. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preceding context. b. Following context. c. 3. For a class as a whole. 4. With a ranking adjective. 5. With nouns and gerunds 6. In of phrases after words of quantity. 7. For place names. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in the sense of one or each. 2. For an unidentified member of a class. 3. For a representative member of a class. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identifying an individual member. b. Defining a smaller class.
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Persian article system

The differences that exist between English and Persian article system may cause problem for most of the learners; so it is relevant here to clarify the Persian article system too, although there were different views about it. Some researchers believed that Persian lacks definite article system others not. For example in a study done by Anzali (1985) he claimed that Persian lacks definite article, but this lack of presence doesn't mean that notion of definiteness is not present; rather, it is only a morphological absence. Ghomeshi (2003), on the other hand, gives clear evidence that Persian does have a definite article but that this article is just realized in informal spoken language. In a research done by Momenzade, Kassaian, Yuhanaee (2014), they used these examples to clarify the concept of definiteness in Persian:

Doxtær-e amæd.

'The girl came.'

Definite DPs in Persian can be specific or non-specific :

1. Specific

bæche gerye kærd.

'The child cried.'

2. Non-specific

emruz modir-e jædid ra mo'ærefi mikonand. miduni ki entexab shode?

'They are announcing the new manager today. Who do you think has been chosen?'

As it is shown in the example by adding -e to modir, it becomes definite, though it is not specific.

As for the indefinite article, linguists (Anzali, 1985; Ghomeshi, 2003) agree that Persian has two articles: the enclitic -i (word which has no independent accent) and the word "yek" which may appear individually or co-occur on indefinite nouns:

- dær xiyaban mærdi didæm.

'I saw a man in the street.'

- dær xiyaban yek mærd didæm.

'I saw a man in the street.'

- dær xiyaban yek mærdi didæm.

'I saw a man in the street.'

As like definite nouns indefinite nouns can also be specific or non-specific. Examples are:

- Specific

mærdi dær xiyaban be mæn hæmle kærd.

'A man attacked me in the street.'

- Non-specific

hær ruz in park por æz kudækani shad æst.

'This park is full of happy kids every day.'

The difference that exists between two languages is that, in Persian indefinite articles can be omitted. To make the long story short we can conclude that both English and Persian have definite and indefinite articles and that in both languages the articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness and not specificity.

Interlanguage: The term interlanguage (IL) was introduced by the American linguist Larry Selinker (1978) to refer to the linguistic system evidenced when an adult second language learner attempts to express meanings in the language being learned. The interlanguage is viewed as a separate linguistic system, clearly different from both the learner's 'native language' (NL) and the 'target language' (TL) being learned, but linked to both NL and TL by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner.

2. Review of the literature

There are lots of studies focusing on the concept of articles, some were longitudinal and some were case studies, also there were some cross sectional studies too.

In a study done by Young (1996) he considered the use of English articles by high and low proficiency Czech and Slovak learners of English. He found that low proficiency level learners use definite article more. Also he found that both low and high proficiency learners use form-function relation in their use of definite and indefinite articles. The tendency to use indefinite article with this function increased with proficiency. Some Iranian researchers tried to find out a pattern in Persian learners of English; for example, Sarani. (2003) conducted a study to find out the major areas of difficulties that students face in the target language, i.e. the occurrence of articles in different syntactic features. His findings revealed that most of the errors the students committed were due to the nature as well as the grammatical complexity of the articles in English, i.e. L1 independent which cannot be explained in terms of transfer from the native language. It was also found that students' competence using anaphoric reference is far greater than using cataphoric reference. Farahani, Roodbari, and Ghodrati, N (2009) conducted a study on Iranian learners identifying the kinds of errors they commit in the use of articles.. The results show that deletion of the article poses the greatest problem among the learners and this is because Persian doesn't have any equivalent for the definite article (the), while the equivalent for the in Arabic is **الـ** and there may be other equivalents for the in other languages. Khoshgouar (2002) had a research in which he analyzed patterns of use of English articles (a/an, the, zero) in guided conversations with Afghan Dari. The results indicate that the participants were most accurate in their production of the indefinite article 'a/an' in referential and non-referential contexts with new information, the definite 'the' in referential contexts with known information, while the zero was difficult for both intermediate and advanced learners mostly in referential contexts. Also we can refer to Momenzade et al. (2012) they tried to prove that Persian learners use fluctuation Hypothesis because Persian lacks definite article. Their study attempted to explore the acquisition of the English article system by Persian speakers. Their study showed that learners had persistent difficulty in acquiring both definite and indefinite articles in English. Based on their study, it was only at the highly advanced level that learners showed mastery of the indefinite article but still remained non-native-like in their use of the definite article. Atay (2010) had an investigation in which he studied the article choices of learners from three different proficiency levels and effects of definiteness and specificity to their article choice were investigated. His findings show that those L1 Turkish learners overused certain articles in certain contexts. In +definite/-specific and -definite/+specific contexts especially intermediate level learners overused the indefinite article a and definite article the respectively. Another study done by Jaensch and Sarko (2009) took Arabic learners of English. Arabic has an overt definite article but lacks an overt indefinite article though indefiniteness as a feature is not lacking in Arabic and generally all bare nouns are interpreted as indefinite. The researchers predicted that such learners would transfer their L1 knowledge to the L2 and would, thus, be accurate in their use of the definite article in English but would also show fluctuation in their use of the indefinite article due to lack of such morphology in L1. There was evidence in data collected from the Arab participants that the researchers' predictions were correct. Also Nikallas (2010) had a study that was designed to examine the nature of learners' article interlanguage and their reaction to explicit grammar teaching. His findings showed that the learners had problems with both underuse and overuse of articles. He concluded that Mandarin speaking learners had the least problems with Ø article and then slightly more problems with the and marginally greater difficulty with a/an - but there was no significant difference in their ability with a/an and the. Kamal (2013) had a study on "English article accuracy of EFL learners". A short story was read to them and they were asked to retell the story. The findings of the story-retelling test showed that users could use definite article more accurately than the indefinite article, with the zero articles in between. Hamza (2011) conducted a study which aimed at identifying the kinds of errors

that Iraqi FEL learners made in the use of definite and indefinite articles, the tests he created consists of a recognition and a production tests. The participants showed low success answers in both recognition and production levels though the percentage of the succeeded answers are higher in the question which tests the recognition level than in the question which tests production level. Saleha, Sofyan, and Utami (2011) in their study investigated the students' error in using indefinite article and analyze the causes of the students' errors in using indefinite article. The research shows that students use article a and an in the wrong way when they deal with consonant, vowels, and diphthongs. Also they concluded that the most common errors made by students are that they cannot differentiate the function of the, a, and an. that such learners were correctly selecting articles. Bukhari and Hussain (2011) conducted a study to investigate the errors of Pakistani students in prepositions and articles. The main focus of the study was to analyze the errors of students in articles and prepositions. They found that the total number of errors made by students on the measure of articles was 152. Out of which (127) 83.56 % was observed in indefinite articles and (25) 16.44% was observed in definite articles. They also found that 52.63% of the total error was omission errors, 19.08% was insertion errors and 28.29% was confusion errors. The results also revealed that Pakistani students faced more difficulties in learning indefinite articles in their writings.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The populations of this study are all the language schools in Rudsar. Four language schools were chosen randomly and according to the population of their learners 60 students were chosen, 20 advanced, 20 intermediate and 20 elementary learners. To make sure about their proficiency levels English Language Placement Test written by Colchester English Study Center (England UK 1969) was run. Learners who get less than 39 were considered as elementary; 40-50 were classified as intermediate and 50 and above is categorized as advanced learners. All the learners have been studied at least three years in the institutes. They were assured that their identities would be preserved in the study.

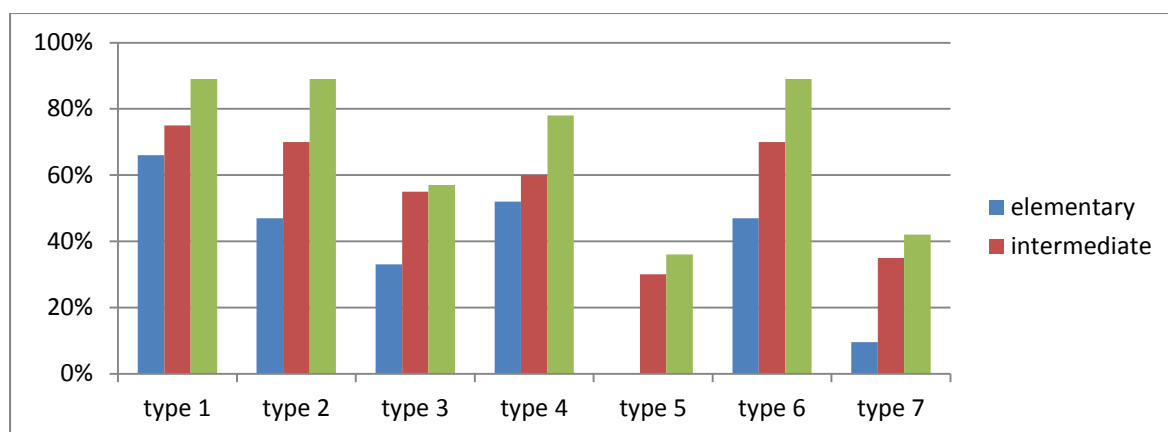
3.2. Instruments and procedure

In order to find out the learners proficiency levels and to place them in appropriate categories English Language Placement Test written by Colchester English Study Center (England UK 1969) was run. The reliability of the test was calculated through intra-rater reliability about 0.68, the test included 80 multiple choice test, in which 30 tests were grammar related tests, 30 vocabulary tests and 20 reading based tests. To find out learners score on recognition a 30 item test was run with the reliability of 0.68%, in which 15 questions were devoted to definite article and the seven different types of tests - which were introduced in Modern English book one- were included in tests as well; 15 questions for indefinite articles based on the three different types of the above mentioned book. The total score that they get on the recognition test would be considered as their recognition ability score. In order to find out their production ability a short story was given to students, in which all 22 definite and indefinite articles were deleted but there were not any blank space; in this short story different types of definite and indefinite articles were omitted, 12 definite articles and 10 indefinite articles. Learners were required to guess where to insert the articles. For data analyzing, the percent of students who replied correctly in recognition test were calculated and they were shown in graph. Also their performance in production test was calculated.

4. Results

4.1. The descriptive analysis of learners' performance in recognition test

The findings of this table show the use of different kinds of definite articles based on Marcella Frank's Modern English book. In her book she categorized the definite articles into seven types



Type 1: for known person or object in the environment. As the table shows it seems that all these groups can find the proper answer for the questions of this type. It is clear that as students' proficiency levels increase their ability in use of type one will increase as well. In this type of articles the students are supposed to choose the correct responses for this kind of questions; one of the questions was this one:

"He walked into house, and saw his dog."

Type 2 refers to person, things or ideas particularized by the context. One of the questions that learners were to answer was:

"Andy has a coat. ... coat is black."

Type 3 stands for "class as a whole" one of the questions that were used in this type was:

" Lion is a wild animal."

The result shows that all levels had problem with this type. It shows that advanced learners are better at this also intermediate group gains the same results too, it is obvious that elementary learners have more problem in this part.

Type 4 refers to with a "ranking" adjective. One of the questions that was used in this type was, in which advanced learners were better.

"Anderson is ... best student in our class."

Type 5 stands for "with nouns of gerunds+ of phrases". It seems that this type of article is really troubling for learners. One of the questions was like that:

"We can say that... election of officers influences our society."

None of the learners in elementary group could answer it questions; they mostly chose no article or a, about 30% of intermediate learners and only 36% of advanced learners find the correct answers.

Type 6 is for "in of phrase after words of quantity".

"Most of ... students were smart."

It seems that as students become better in their proficiency they can recognize this kind of article better too.

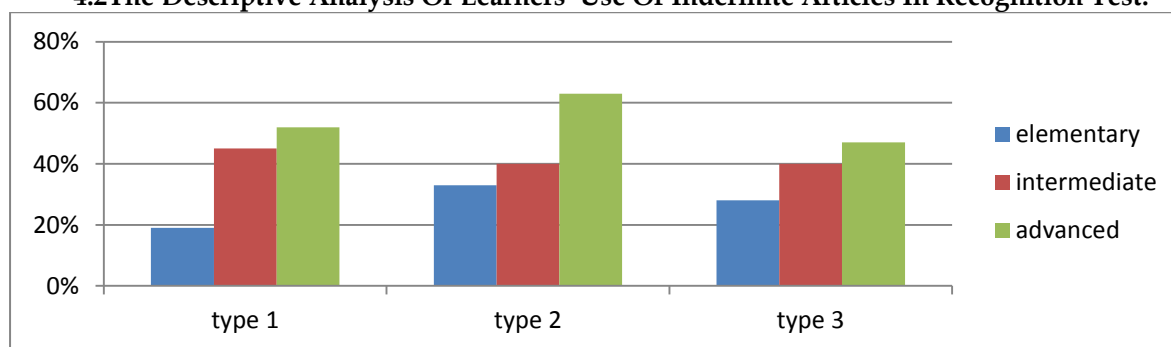
The last type stands for "place names". Results show that not only elementary students but also advanced and intermediate learners have problems as well. For example the question:

"He lives in ... France."

"The ship passed Mississippi River."

For the first question most of the learners chose the or no article. They mostly did not recognize that the name of countries can not be used with article. Also it should be mentioned that sometimes advanced learners overgeneralized the.

4.2 The Descriptive Analysis Of Learners' Use Of Indefinite Articles In Recognition Test.



This graph represents the use of three different types of indefinite articles by learners. Type 1 refers to "in the sense of one, or each". To elaborate more some questions will be shown.

"There is ----- honorable person in that meeting."

Most of the elementary learner did not recognize the fact that an is used in the first question, they could not realize the fact that when a consonant is acting like a vowel they should use an. The intermediate and advanced learners use this article properly mostly, though intermediate learners had problem with it. As advanced learners had seen this type of articles before and they used in different contexts, more than half of them seem to have problem in applying it. Type 2 refers to "for an unidentified number of a class".

"We saw ...lion at the zoo."

Elementary learners have more problems than the other groups. The last type stands for "A representative member of a class". In this type learners should be able to distinguish between the two different types of this category. The first one is "identifying an individual member"

"That animal is ... lion."

The findings show that elementary learners used the or no articles in this question. But intermediate and advanced learners could answer this type of questions better, though some of them had the same problem as elementary learners. The second category of this type is "defining a smaller class".

"The lion is ... animal."

Learners in all groups mostly failed to recognize that when they want to define a smaller class they need a, they used the in stead of a.

Another factor that was tested in this research is zero articles or no article. In which learners should not use any articles, sometimes when a determiner other than the article accompanies the noun, the article is not needed, or when the generic use of article is intended as mentioned previously about 54% use of generic use of articles is related to Ø article. For example a question that was used in the test was:

"Language is great invention of ----- humankind"

In this context about 20% of elementary learners and 30% of intermediate learners and 33% of advanced learners could find the correct responses for it. It seems that zero articles is troubling for students as they think that they should insert some articles in most of the contexts, which is related to the overuse of articles, discussed in the next part.

4.3 The descriptive qualitative analysis of learners' production test

In order to find out learners production result, this table is designed in which learners' production in the text are shown. The number of correct answers by learners were calculated, also the number of overuse, misuse and underuse of these articles.

Case And groups	Correct definite insertion	Definite article overuse	Definite article underuse	Definite article misuse	Correct indefinite insertion	Indefinite article overuse	Indefinite article underuse	Indefinite article misuse
elementary	31	48	78	9	23	79	100	11
Intermediate	72	23	53	18	90	67	60	13

e								
Advanced	128	33	29	16	120	25	48	8

The first column shows the number of correct definite article insertion by learners at different levels. The second column shows the context in which learners inserted definite articles where it was not necessary based on the obligatory context analysis. To mention some examples, some learners inserted the before lion in this example:

"Lions are very powerful..."

In another part, for this sentence "In France..." about 30% elementary learners and 40% of intermediate learners and 42% of advanced learners overused the. It seems that advanced learner tend to overuse the for this type of article (type 7). But elementary learners did not overuse it here.

The third column shows the number of definite articles that were underused by learners. By underuse, it means not to insert definite article in its obligatory context. This sentence can show this underuse:

"He fell in to trap..."

Most of advanced learners could insert the in this sentence, while elementary learners failed to do so.

The fourth column shows the misuse of definite article, here misuse means to insert indefinite article instead of definite article,

"... near Seine River..." and "in night..."

In this sentence learners ought to insert the before Seine River, about 40 percent of elementary learners neglected it and 30 percent of them inserted a instead of the. In intermediate learners about 45% of them used a instead of the, in advanced group about 10% of them used a. in the second situation about 10% of elementary learners, and 30% of intermediate learners and 60% of advanced learners produced the correctly.

The fifth column is for the correct insertion of indefinite articles. It shows that elementary learners produced more correct definite article than indefinite articles, intermediate learners produced more correct indefinite articles, and advanced learners produced more definite articles than indefinite articles; For example:

"Old tree had lived..."

It shows that for the first type of indefinite article (as mentioned before) elementary learners faced more problems.

The sixth column is for learners' overuse of indefinite article (to insert indefinite article where it was not needed). One context that most of elementary learners overused indefinite article is:

"He was over one hundred years..."

In this context 80% of elementary learners inserted a before one. This was not seen in intermediate or advanced learners.

The next column stands for indefinite article underuse (where learners were to insert indefinite articles but they missed). Such cases could be seen in this example:

"He decided to set trap..." or "old tree had lived..."

In these two examples about 70% of elementary learners missed the indefinite article, about 45% of intermediate learners and also 25% of advanced learners didn't insert a/an correctly.

The last column shows learners misuse of indefinite article, means using the instead of a or an and also misusing a in a context that an is used or vice versa.

"Old tree had lived..." and "moon hanged ..."

In this context mostly elementary learners inserted a instead of an (about 40%), and about 30% of them used the. About 30% of intermediate learners used the here and about 15% used a. in advanced group just 5% used a, and 10% used the.

Another interesting finding that the results show was the use of indefinite article for plural nouns. Which was observed just in elementary group about 40% of them failed to recognize the fact that indefinite article can not be use for plural names.

"I am different from animals..."

In elementary group about 35% of learners inserted the before animals, or in another example like this one elementary learners used a/an before plural names, such mistakes were not reported in intermediate or advanced group.

Another type that was not mentioned in the category precisely is zero articles, where learners should not enter any articles; it can be categorized as generic use of articles as well. But the interesting part of

it is that, mostly advanced learners tended to insert articles (the) in this context. The example is provided in the previous paragraphs.

5. Discussion

Young (1996) findings showed that the low proficiency level students use definite articles more accurately; But according to him learners use of indefinite article has been improved, in this research it is not so. Just for the intermediate group the use of both definite and indefinite article has been improved consistently. Also in Khoshgovar (2002) his findings showed that students are more accurate in their use of indefinite article but in this research the elementary group and advanced group did not show the same results and intermediate learners were better in their use of indefinite articles. Momenzadeh, et al (2012) findings showed that learners have difficulty in both kind of articles, that is true for this research too. Also they concluded that learners show mastery over the indefinite articles but they still have problem with definite articles. This findings for this research all the proficiency levels show different attitudes toward definite and indefinite articles they mostly performed better in their use of definite articles. Just in intermediate learners, their use of indefinite articles is better than their definite article. In Atay (2010) research, he concluded that intermediate learners overused indefinite articles. In this research both elementary and intermediate learners overused indefinite article more than definite articles. Jaensch and Sarko (2009) concluded that learners are better in definite articles. In this research finding showed the same result too, except for intermediate learners that are better at indefinite articles. Nikallas (2010) showed that Mandarins have problem with the choice of a or an but no difference in their ability with a/an and the. This was classified as misuse in the present study. The results of this study showed indefinite misuse is mostly done by elementary learners, while advanced and intermediate learners misused definite article more, also the substitution of a instead of an or the reverse happened in elementary learners more. Kamal (2013) concluded that learners are better at using definite articles than indefinite articles. In the present research the same result except the intermediate groups that were better in indefinite articles. Saleha et al. (2011) in their research showed that learners' errors are mostly for A & An. In the present research the findings showed that all three proficiency levels had problem with indefinite articles in their recognition tests, while in their production tests elementary learners had more problem in deciding to choose a or an. Bukari & Hussain (2011) showed that most of the errors are in the indefinite articles and learners have more difficulty in learning indefinite articles. In this research the findings are consistent with their findings. It seems that in this study learners have more difficulty with indefinite articles.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this research showed all learners had problems in their use of definite and indefinite articles, even advanced learners failed to recognize and produced the correct articles in this research. This research proved that learners usually perform better in recognition tests than in production tests. We can say that overuse and underuse are common in all proficiency levels and misuse of articles happens not so often. The fact that learners tend to ignore using an article in a specific situation (underuse) shows that learners usually avoid using articles when they do not know how to apply them. Different types of articles seem to make different kind of burden for learners. In this research, learners' recognition ability was better than their production ability. It is worth mentioning that learners did not have problems in all types equally. To support this conclusion we can refer to the first type of definite articles which was not troublesome for learners and on the other hand, the seventh type that was challenging for all learners.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MACRO-STRUCTURE FEATURES OF RESEARCH ARTICLE INTRODUCTIONS IN THE FIELDS OF SOCIOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

The present study set out to compare the macro-structure features of research article introductions in the fields of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*. To establish whether there were similarities and differences between the afore-mentioned disciplines, Swales' (1990) CARS model was applied to the research article introductions. Taken together, the results of the study pointed to a number of similarities and differences. In terms of similarities, in both disciplines, the prevalent move structure was M1 M2 M3, which implied that the authors of both disciplines presupposed a certain degree of background knowledge possessed by their readers, since they identified their disciplines as well-established ones. The findings also indicated that though the patterns in the discipline of *Linguistics* were more converging, one could find less agreement in the structural pattern of moves in the field of *Sociology*, which might be accounted for in terms of Hyland's (1999) ideas who stated that in emerging disciplines with more wide ranging topics questions cannot be answered by following a single path.

Key words: Research Articles, Introductions, Macro-structure features, Sociology, Linguistics, Disciplines, Comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

Recently, there has been wide interest in academic writing. In particular, researchers have paid attention to genre analysis of the research articles (RA), so that a large body of data has been reported concerning the genre of RAs (Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans; Hyland, 2000; Salager-Meyer, 1990, 1992; Samraj, 2002; Melander, Swales & Frederickson, 1988; Martin, 2003; Ruiying, & Allison, 2003; Swales, 1981, 1990; Brett, 1994; Thompson, 1993; Williams, 1999; Yang & Allison, 2003).

In this vein, researchers have specifically focused on the introductory section of RAs, using Swales' (1990) create a research-space model CARS model (Anthony, 1999; Bunton, 2002; Fakhri, 2004; Nwogu, 1997; Ozturk, 2007; Posteguillo, 1999; and Samraj, 2002; Swales & Najjar, 1987).

According to Swales (1990), RA introductions include three essential moves: move 1 (establishing the territory), move 2 (establishing a niche); and move 3 (occupying a niche). Swales (1990) proposed that each move is identified in terms of a variety of obligatory and optional steps. Whereas Swales (1990) held that the structural organization of the research articles is realized in terms of CARS model

irrespective of the disciplines, further studies using CARS model revealed disciplinary variation in the structural organization of RAs (Anthony, 1999, Crookes, 1986; Holmes, 1997; Samraj, 2002).

In a major study, Holmes (1997) suggested that “the presence of lengthy Background sections can perhaps be considered a distinctive feature of RAs in the social sciences as opposed to those in the natural sciences” (p. 328). Likewise, Samraj (2002) found that “a greater degree of embedding is needed in Swales 1999 CARS model to account for the structures found in the introductions of *Wildlife Behavior and Conservation Biology*” (P. 1).

Therefore, in light of the new research, Swales (2004) modified CARS model. The modification concerning the steps in move 1 was of prime importance. Swales (2004) reduced steps 1 (claiming centrality) and step 2 (making topic generalizations) in move 1 to a single step, i.e. topic generalization of increasing specificity.

Moreover, in move 2 the four steps in 1990 model were reduced to two, with a new optional step (presenting positive justification) added to the previous model. Finally, as far as move 3 is concerned, according to Swales (2004), “occupying the niche is relabeled as presenting the present work which is realized through seven steps, involving one obligatory, three optional, and three probable in some fields (PISF) steps” (p. 232).

It seemed that these modifications to 1990’s CARS model could account for most of the limitations suggested by the above-mentioned researchers especially Anthony (1999) and Samraj (2002). Despite these new modifications, subsequent researchers continue to apply Swales (1990) CARS model which might be because of the fact that the 2004 model didn’t make a radical departure from 1999 model except for introducing some optional moves (Arvay & Tanko’, 2004; Fakhri, 2009; Hirano, 2009; Ozturk, 2007). Consequently, the present study uses Swales’ 1999 model as a point of departure, while considering Swales’ 2002 modifications of CARS model.

In addition, introductory sections of RAs received particular attention, since they play an important role in introducing and establishing the research for the first time. Moreover, there has been a variety of disciplinary studies investigating the introduction sections of RAs (Brett, 1994; Habibi, 2008; Milagros del Saz Rubio, 2011; Ozturk, 2007; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2002, 2005).

Although some studies have investigated either the introductions or results sections in the fields of Sociology or Linguistics, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, to date, none of them have compared the macro-structural features of the introductions of *Linguistics* and *Sociology* RAs (Brett, 1994; Ozturk, 2007; Ruiying, & Allison, 2003). Therefore, the aim of the present study is to compare the macro-structure features of research article introductions in the fields of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*.

Research question:

Therefore, the present study aims to provide answers to the following research question:

1. What are the similarities and differences between the macro-structure features of research article introductions in the fields of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*?

2. Literature review

In recent years, a considerable amount of literature has been published concerning academic genre analysis of RAs. Holmes (1997) analyzed general patterns of organization in political science and Sociology RAs. The results indicated that the introductions were untitled, but most of them were followed by a titled part. He proposed that this was the section that was concerned with previous background knowledge in varying degrees.

In an early study which set out to evaluate Swales’ CARS model, Anthony (1994) applied this model to 12 articles which have received “best paper” awards in the field of software engineering. The findings of this study suggested that although the model adequately describes the main framework of the introductions, a number of important features are not accounted for, in particular: an extensive review of background literature, the inclusion of many definitions and examples, and an evaluation of the research in terms of application or novelty of the results.

In a similar vein, Posteguillo (1998) studied the schematic structure of RAs in the field of computer science. The findings provided evidence that the IMRD (introduction-methods-results-discussion) pattern cannot be applied to RAs in the field of computer science. In contrast, Introductory and conclusion sections were employed more frequently.

Likewise, Samraj (2002) applied Swales’ (1990) CARS model to investigate the nature of RA introductions in two related fields; say, *Wildlife Behaviour and Conservation Biology*. The findings of

the study highlighted disciplinary variation across these fields. It was found that the Observation Biology introductions accomplished a greater promotional function in comparison to the Wildlife Behavior introductions. The author; moreover, stressed the need for a greater degree of embedding in CARS model to account for the structures analyzed.

Ruying and Allison (2003) also carried out a genre analysis of how research articles (RAs) reporting empirical investigations in applied linguistics proceed from presenting results to final conclusions. The results of the study indicated rhetorical choices among possible Results, Results and Discussion, Discussion, Conclusion, and Pedagogic Implications sections, and identified specific organizational choices within each section.

They; moreover, proposed a two-level account (Moves and Steps) of the separate Discussion sections in our corpus, and held that this is able to capture general trends and specific rhetorical realizations in an insightful way.

In a seminal study, Ozturk (2007) investigated the degree of variability in the structure of 20 research article introductions within a single discipline. So, two subdisciplines of applied linguistics; namely, second language acquisition and second language writing research were compared and contrasted using Swales' (1990) model.

The results showed that these two subdisciplines adhered to different, and unrelated structural patterns. While in second language acquisition RAs one types of move pattern was dominant, in second language writing two different moves were frequent. It was proposed that these differences are justified by taking into account the concepts of established and emerging fields.

In another major study, Habibi (2008) examined 90 RA introductions from three related fields; namely, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Psycholinguistics, and Sociolinguistics, in terms of Swales' CARS model. The results of the study pointed to marked differences across the disciplines regarding Move 2/step 1B, but showed no marked differences in research article introductions across the disciplines in terms of Move 1 and 3 along with their constituent steps. Furthermore, there were no marked differences concerning the extent of concordance between the CARS model and the move structure of the RAs analyzed.

In a similar study, Fakhri (2009) used a genre analysis approach to investigate rhetorical variation in fifty introductions of Arabic research articles from the fields of law and humanities. Besides, introductions from each discipline were analyzed by taking into account their research justification and reader orientation. The findings showed that law introductions displayed more exponents of both functions; but none of the discipline utilized challenges to previous scholarship as a means of justifying the research proposed. The findings could be accounted for in terms of cultural, sociolinguistic, and educational factors that characterized the context of production of the texts considered.

In a recent study, Milagros del Saz Rubio (2011) employed Swales' (1990, 2004) Create-A-Research-Space model (CARS) as an investigative tool and Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse analyzed the rhetorical constituent moves and steps of RA introductions pragmatically. In addition, he attempted to identify the metadiscoursal features frequently used to signal such moves. Findings suggested that there was no radical departure from Swales' proposed rhetorical pattern; say, M1 M2 M3.

What's more, analysis of metadiscoursal features of the identified moves revealed that evidentials, transition markers and code glosses were the most prevalent interactive categories. Besides, the use of hedges and boosters signified interactonal metadiscourse.

3. Method

Materials

A total of 40 research articles were selected for the purpose of the present study, including 20 *Linguistics* and 20 *Sociology* research articles. Since the discipline of *Linguistics* was interdisciplinary, involving a variety of topics and drawing upon other disciplines such as *Psychology* and *Sociology*, it was chosen for the analysis, and then *Sociology* was selected because of its close connection with the discipline of *Linguistics*. Furthermore, these were published during 2000-2014 in high impact factor journals of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*. The following table highlights the selected journals of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*.

Table 1: List of *Linguistics* Research Journals Used in the Study

Linguistics and Education (Elsevier)
Lingua (Elsevier)
Language and Linguistics (Elsevier)
System (Elsevier)

Table 2: List of *Sociology* Research Journals of the study

American Journal of Economics and *Sociology* (Wiley Online Library)
 Annual Review of *Sociology* (Annual Reviews)
 American journal of *Sociology* (AJS) (JSTOR)
 Social Problems (JSTOR)

Data Collection

A corpus of articles authored by native English speakers were chosen for this study in order to ensure that they reflect L1 culture, not an international conventional culture among *Sociology* and *Linguistics* researchers.

Data Analysis

First of all, to find out moves, the 20 RA introductions were carefully read according to Swales' CARS model. In the analysis of the introductions in the corpus, Swales' (1990) CARS model was employed. In summary, this model assumed three moves in RA introductions. The first move involves establishing the territory of research. The second move establishes a niche or gap, while the last move involves occupying the niche. The moves and steps of this model are summarized in figure 1 below:

Fig. 1. Swales' CARS model. (Swales, 1990, p. 80).

Move 1: Establishing a territory
 Step 1 Claiming centrality and/or
 Step 2 Making topic generalization(s) and/or
 Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research
 Move 2: Establishing a niche
 Step 1A Counter-claiming or
 Step 1B Indicating a gap or
 Step 1C Question-raising or
 Step 1D Continuing a tradition
 Move 3: Occupying the niche:
 Step 1A Outlining purposes or
 Step 1B Announcing present research
 Step 2 Announcing principal findings
 Step 3 Indicating RA structure

Furthermore, where a sentence included two different moves, the most salient one was considered. This is in agreement with the ideas of other researchers who held that where one sentence involved two different moves, the most conspicuous one should be taken into account (Crookes, 1986; Holmes, 1997; Ozturk, 2007).

Furthermore, in this study move refers to a part of text that governed by a particular communicative purpose. According to Nwogu (1991), a move is defined as:

A text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it. Each "move" is taken to embody a number of "Constituent Elements" or sub-moves which combine to constitute information in the move (P.114). In addition, Swales (2004) proposed that a move is a semantic and functional unit rather than being a formal one.

4. Results and discussion

As stated earlier, the aim of the present study was to compare the macro-structure features of research article introductions in the fields of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*. The results of the analysis of move structures in *Linguistics* RAs are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Move structure in *Linguistics*' RA introductions

	No. of articles	%
Articles following Swales' CARS model		
M1-M2-M3	16	80
Articles deviating from the strict Swales' CARS model		
M1 M3 M2	1	5
M1 M3 M1	1	5
M3 M1 M2 M3	2	10
Total number of articles	20	100

M1: Establishing a territory; M2: Establishing a niche; M3: Occupying the niche.

As Table 2 shows, 80 % (16 out of 20) of the RAs in the field of *Linguistics* followed the proposed move pattern in Swales CARS model (i.e. M1, M2, M3), and so were quite conventional. It appeared that 5% of the articles reflected alternation between move 1 and 2 prior to niche establishment via move 3 (M1, M3, M2). Besides, only 5% (1 out of 20) of the articles showed no M2 move and therefore deviated from Swales' CARS model (M1-M3-M1).

This specific pattern began with a topic introduction (M1), immediately followed by M3 where the writer occupied the niche by expressing the purpose of the study in general. This was then followed by reference to related research. As a final remark, 95 percent of the articles included M2 or move establishment pattern which implied that gap identification is of prime importance in Swales' CARS model.

The results of this part of analysis are in line with the findings of Milagros del Saz Rubio (2011) who found that niche establishment seems to be an obligatory move of the CARS model. The findings are also in agreement with those of Ozturk (2007) who found that the majority of RAs in second language acquisition apply the move structure M1-M2-M3.

Additionally, after move 2, 80% of the RAs directly continued to move 3, which suggested that their authors presupposed a certain degree of background knowledge by their reader, since they consider the field of *Linguistics* to be a well-established one. Table 4 below represents the results of move analysis in *Sociology* research articles.

Table 4: move structure in *Sociology's* RA introductions

	No. of articles	%
Articles following Swales' CARS model		
M1-M2-M3	9	45
Articles deviating from the strict Swales' CARS model		
M1 M3 M2	7	35
M1 M3 M1 M2	1	5
M1 M3 M1 M2 M1	1	5
M3 M1 M2 M3	2	1
Total number of articles	20	100

M1: Establishing a territory; M2: Establishing a niche; M3: Occupying the niche.

According to Table 4, 45% (9 out of 20) articles were written in conformity with Swales' CARS model (M1-M2-M3), which indicated that RAs in the field of *Sociology* were quite conventional in this respect. It was also indicated that almost 9 articles out of 10 followed this pattern (M1-M3-M2). In 2 of them, there was an intervening M1 between M3 and M2 which provided either a background knowledge about the research question or a review of previous studies. So, these RAs deviated from the strict CARS model, applying move 3 prior to gap signaling move (M2).

Only one of the RAs revealed a completely different pattern, i.e. M3-M1-M2-M3, thus establishing the territory before establishing the niche. What's more, none of the RAs lacked gap signaling move (M2), which indicated the obligatory nature of M2 move in *Sociology* research articles.

The findings of this part of analysis were in agreement with those of who Ozturk (2007) who found that most of the researchers in second language acquisition research prefer using the move structure M1-M2-M3.

Finally, the two disciplines of *Sociology* and *Linguistics* were compared and contrasted with regard to their move structures, the results of which are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Frequency of the patterns of move structures in *Linguistics* and *Sociology*

Move structure	<i>Linguistics</i>		<i>Sociology</i>	
	N	%	N	%
M1-M2-M3	16	80	9	45
M1 M3 M2	1	5	7	35
M1 M3 M1	1	5	-	-
M3 M1 M2 M3	2	10	2	10
M1 M3 M1 M2	-	-	1	5
M1 M3 M1 M2 M1	-	-	1	5
Total	20	100	20	100

According to Table 5, the predominant move structure is M1-M2-M3, which occurs in both corpora. However the frequency of its occurrence is higher in the field of *Linguistics* rather than *Sociology*. In other words, while this pattern accounted for 80% of the data in the field of *Linguistics*, it accounted for 45% of the corpus in the discipline of *Sociology*.

So, given that in both disciplines, the prevalent move structure was M1 M2 M3, it seemed that in both disciplines the authors presupposed a certain degree of background knowledge possessed by their readers, since they assumed that their disciplines were well-established ones and after move 2 directly proceeded to move 3. But, the authors in the discipline of *Linguistics* considered their discipline as being more well-defined and that's why they provided the readers with less background information.

Nevertheless, in comparison to the field of *Linguistics*, one could find less agreement in the structural pattern of moves in the field of *Sociology*. According to Hyland (1999), in less established, or emerging, fields of inquiry, "problem areas and topics are generally more diffuse and range over wider academic and historical territory, and there is less assurance that questions can be answered by following a single path" (p. 354).

The findings of this part of the study are in line with the ideas of Ozturk (2007) who proposed that "the more established a discipline is the greater convergence is likely to occur in the structural organization of RA introductions" (p. 35). Therefore, although both fields were quite established ones, one could see more agreement in the structural pattern of moves in the field of *Linguistics* which was better established.

The next high frequency move was M1 M3 M2 which was employed in both corpora. Nonetheless, it was used more frequently in the discipline of *Sociology* and accounted for 35% of the corpus.

The next high frequency move was M3 M1 M2 M3 which was again used in both disciplines, with its frequency of occurrence being the same, i.e. 10% in each discipline. This move began with an M3, where the author introduced the aim of the research in general terms (M3), followed by providing relative background information (M1). Then, the author identified the niche (M2), and announced the research question (M3).

The least frequent moves were M1 M3 M1 M2, M1 M3 M1 M2 M1 which were employed only once in the discipline of *Sociology*, and M1 M3 M1 which was used only once in the discipline of *Linguistics*. This final move included another M1 to help the author provide more background information.

Among the plausible explanations for these findings is the disciplinary nature of the fields of *Linguistics* and *Sociology*. Considering the variety of topics included in these disciplines, sometimes the authors might diverge from the M1 M2 M3 pattern to provide background information and familiarize their readers with the topics. Posteguillo (1999) and Anthony (1999) held that the frequent

use of Move 2 and Move 1 in Computer Science RA introductions indicated that many readers were unfamiliar with the background information necessary to comprehend the articles.

5. Conclusions

The present study was an attempt to compare the macro-structure features of research article introductions in the disciplines of *Sociology* and *Linguistics*. The results of the study indicated that in both disciplines, the prevalent move structure was M1 M2 M3. So, in both disciplines the authors presupposed a certain degree of background knowledge possessed by their readers, since they assumed that their disciplines were well-established ones and after move 2 directly proceeded to move 3. But, the authors in the discipline of *Linguistics* considered their discipline as being more well-defined and that's why they provided the readers with less background information.

Nevertheless, in comparison to the field of *Linguistics*, one could find less agreement in the structural pattern of moves in the field of *Sociology*. This might be justified in terms of Hyland's (1999) ideas who stated that in emerging disciplines with more wide ranging topics questions cannot be answered by following a single path. As a result, whereas the move patterns in the discipline of *Linguistics* are in more agreement, in the discipline of *Sociology* the move patterns tend to be more diverging.

In terms of the pedagogical implications, the present study suggested that in order to organize RAs, students should pay attention to the prevalent rhetorical conventions and the norms of their disciplines. On the other hand, teachers should also pay attention to the most dominant rhetorical patterns of the disciplines of *Sociology* and *Linguistics* in order to instruct writers or students.

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THINKING STYLES AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and thinking styles among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. To this end, 90 intermediate university students (42 male and 48 female) specializing in the English translation were asked to fill out the Persian versions of emotional quotient inventory (EQ-I) (Bar-On, 1997) and thinking styles inventory (Sternberg-Wagner, 1992) questionnaires. Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between emotional intelligence and thinking styles and t-test was used to determine the differences of two genders in using styles of thought. Analyzing data results revealed that there was no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their thinking styles. Also the findings of the t-test showed that no significant difference was found between males and females with regard to their thinking styles.

Key words: emotional intelligence, thinking styles, EFL learners

1. Introduction

Many studies have shown that emotional intelligence like other intelligences is important in life. And it is widely used in the domain of language teaching and learning. Emotional intelligence is composed of two words, emotion and intelligence (Rokni, Hamidi, Gorgani, 2014). Emotional intelligence "based on the Gardner's work" is a section of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993). He believed that old IQ tests just measure language and logic while all human have not just a single intelligence (psychologists called "g" for general intelligence) rather equipped with a set of series intelligences. That is a unique feature of human. These intelligences are different in terms of composition and power. Furthermore, he asserted that instruction and drill can be effective in acquiring intelligences. And factors like experiment and environment enhance these intelligences. These intelligences include spatial/visual, naturalistic i, interpersonal and interpersonal, kinesthetic and musical intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Later emotional intelligence originated from interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences (Rokni et al., 2014). Eventually, based upon Gardner's viewpoint a perfect model of emotional intelligence presented by Mayer and Salovey in 1990 (Bar-On, 1997).

2. Review of literature

Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) have conducted another study to examine the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy. The teachers' sense of efficacy scale and the emotional intelligence questionnaire was used. The findings reported a significant relationship between the teachers' EI and their sense of efficacy. Furthermore, Motallebzadeh (2009)

aimed to investigate the emotional intelligence relation with reading comprehension and structural ability. To meet this end, he selected 250 Iranian EFL learners of Islamic Azad University. After performing language proficiency test 170 participants were selected as intermediate level. The findings showed that except for two categories of interpersonal skill, social responsibility and empathy there was significant relationship between emotional intelligence, reading comprehension and structural ability.

Hadizadeh Moghadam, Tehrani and Amin (2011) sought to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and management decision making styles of managers in Iranian oil industry. Fifty five managers participated. In order to measure emotional intelligence and managers' decision making styles two questionnaire, emotional intelligence and Bruces decision making style were used. Based on Pearson product moment correlation, it was found that there are negative meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and each of rational and avoidant decision making styles and there is a positive meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and intuitive decision making style of managers.

Alipour, Akhondy and Aerab-shyban (2011) studied the correlation between handedness and thinking styles in male and female students. They used Edinburgh handedness and Sternberg-Wagner thinking styles inventory questionnaires. The results of the study showed that was a significant relation between handedness and legislative, judicial, executive, hierarchical, monarchic, oligarchic, global, local, liberal, and conservative thinking styles. Those individuals who were left-handed used more legislative, judicial and hierarchical thinking styles while right-handed persons used more executive and local thinking styles.

Another related study was conducted by Fouladi (2012) to investigate the effects of EI on the choice of language learning strategies of post-graduate Iranian students. The results showed that there is no correlation between high and low EQ with choice of language learning strategies.

In another research Emamipour and Shams Esfandabad (2013) have done a study on the thinking styles of Students University with regard to their gender over a period of 10 years. The thinking styles inventory questionnaire by Sternberg was used for evaluation. The findings of this study showed that, there was a significant difference between male and female in applying thinking styles. During 10 years (2000-2011) the average of legislative, judicial, monarchic, hierarchic, external and liberal thinking styles among students considerably reduced. The means of monarchic and executive styles among female students were higher than male, while the mean of judicial style in male students was higher.

Turki (2012) explored the common thinking styles based on Sternberg theory and its relationship with some variables among the students of Tafila Technical University. Random, stratified and cluster method used for 800 participants (male and female). The researcher applied a number of methods for Sternberg and Wagner (1991) as the instrument of the study. The results showed that in all of the thinking styles excluding the legislative and judicial style that is for the benefit of males there were not statistically significant differences among male and female. And also the differences of executive styles are for benefit of females.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The participants of the current study were 90 undergraduate students (50 male and 40 female) within the age range of 19 to 25. Thirty students were chosen from the university of Sistan and Baluchestan majoring in English Language and Literature, twenty from Zahedan Azad university majoring teaching English as a foreign language and forty from Maritime university of Chabahar majoring in English language translation. The selection of the students was based on easiness of accessibility.

2.2 Instruments

The instruments utilized in the present study were three questionnaires: (a) Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (b) Sternberg-Wagner Thinking Styles Inventory and (c) Nelson English proficiency.

Bar-on Emotional Quotient Inventory

In order to determine participants' emotional intelligence, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) was used. It contains 133 statements which measure 5 areas of skills and 15 factorial components, with five-Likert Scale ranging from: 1. Very seldom 2. Seldom true for me 3. Sometimes true for me 4.

Often true for me 5. Very often true for me. The reason that the researcher selected Bar-On's EQ model is its extensive and expansion since it covers all dimensions of the models of EQ completely.

In order to prevent misinterpretation and cross cultural differences about the content of the questionnaire the translated Persian version was used. Dehshiri (2003) reported that the Persian version of this questionnaire has a good internal consistency, test-retest reliability and construct validity. As he cites, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .76 and the results of the factor analysis provided convincing support for the inventory hypothesized structure.

Thinking Styles Inventory

Sternberg and Wagner (1992) based on the theory of MSG that is a self-report inventory designed thinking styles inventory (TSI). It consists of 104 questions with 13 subscales and 8 questions for any subscale that assess 13 thinking styles suggested in the theory of Sternberg. For each question, participants were asked how well each statement describes them on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 (doesn't describe me at all) to 7 (describes me very well). Because of the absence of the Persian version of thinking styles inventory, it was translated by a teacher and a group of authors.

3.3 Procedures

A brief explanation of the aim of the study and the instruction of how to answer the items are given to the students. Two questionnaires were distributed in two sessions. After completing the questionnaires by the students the data were analyzed.

2.4 Data analysis

Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) were used for analyzing the collected data. For responding to the research questions presented in the current study, descriptive statistics and referential statistics were performed. The descriptive analysis includes means and standard deviation and percentages were used to determine students' level of emotional intelligence and the types of their thinking styles (legislative, judicial and executive styles). Referential statistics by the use of correlation coefficient was carried out to determine the degree of the relationship between emotional intelligence and thinking styles and in order to determine the differences between two genders an independent sample T-test was used.

2.5 Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics include the mean and standard deviation of the emotional intelligence and its components and thinking styles are shown in Table 4.1.

Descriptive statistics include the mean and standard deviation of the emotional intelligence and its components and thinking styles are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Emotional Intelligence and its Component, Thinking Styles and English proficiency

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional self-awareness	90	16.00	38.00	25.3556	4.35583
assertiveness	90	13.00	29.00	21.6778	3.71704
self-regard	90	17.00	42.00	30.9667	4.50081
self-actualization	90	23.00	42.00	30.5889	4.40096
independence	90	12.00	32.00	21.7667	3.86296
empathy	90	16.00	36.00	27.2778	4.01969
interpersonal	90	22.00	48.00	37.1111	4.87240
Social responsibility	90	24.00	47.00	35.0222	5.08794
Problem solving	90	14.00	40.00	28.0556	4.27262
Reality testing	90	21.00	45.00	32.1222	4.88250
flexibility	90	10.00	33.00	24.7556	4.48295
Stress tolerance	90	15.00	39.00	28.0444	4.57868
Impulse control	90	17.00	42.00	28.9556	5.32518
happiness	90	17.00	44.00	31.7000	5.42870
optimism	90	16.00	39.00	26.8556	4.64120
Emotional intelligence	90	354.00	572.00	430.2556	46.17202
Legislative style	90	3.00	6.88	4.9292	.77827
Executive style	90	2.75	7.00	5.5181	1.16623
Judicial style	90	3.63	6.75	5.3861	.73859

As shown in Table 4.1, the highest mean value belongs to the emotion intelligence with the mean score of 430.2556, and the standard deviation of 46.17202, and the minimum and maximum scores of, 354.00 and 572.00 respectively. The legislative style obtained the lowest mean value of 4.9292 and standard deviation of .77827, and the minimum and maximum scores of this type of style were 3.00 and 6.88 respectively.

In order to find out whether there is any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and three types of thinking styles, Pearson correlation was run. Table 4.2 shows the findings of the Pearson correlation.

Note. N = Number of participants; Min = Minimum; Max = Maximum; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4.2 Pearson correlation: Emotional Intelligence and Thinking Styles

	Emotional intelligence
Emotional intelligence	1
Pearson Correlation	90
Sig. (2-tailed)	
N	
Legislative style	-.046
Pearson Correlation	.670
Sig. (2-tailed)	90
N	
Executive style	.041
Pearson Correlation	.700
Sig. (2-tailed)	90
N	
Judicial style	.050
Pearson Correlation	.641
Sig. (2-tailed)	90
N	

The table 4.2 indicated that there was no correlation between emotional intelligence and thinking styles.

2.6 Discussion

The findings of the data analyses indicated that there was no significant relationship between learners' emotional intelligence and their thinking styles. This study could support the results of the previous researches. A study was conducted by A study was done by Pishghadam and Moafian (2008) examined the role of Iranian EFL teachers' EQ in their success in language teaching at high school level. The findings showed that there was no significant relationship between their success and other types of intelligences.

Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) have conducted another study to examine the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy. The findings reported a significant relationship between the teachers' EI and their sense of efficacy.

However, the finding of this study is not consistent with some of the former studies; a number of them are mentioned below.

Fouladi (2012) was aimed at investigating the effects of EI on the choice of language learning strategies of post-graduate Iranian students. The results showed that there is no relationship between high and low EI with choice of language learning strategies.

In an attempt, Norouzi Kouhdasht et al. (2013) conducted a study about EI and thinking styles. The results indicated that there was a meaningful relationship between EI and thinking styles.

Skourdi et al. (2014) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. Based on the finding a positive correlation was found between EI and vocabulary knowledge.

Jenaabadi (2014) examined the effect of training skills of optimism on fostering EI of males in education & improvement center in Zahedan. The results showed that the approaches of training optimism are effective on promoting EI.

Furthermore, Zafari and Biria (2014) carried out a study to discover the relationship between EI and language learning strategy use. The findings revealed there was a significant correlation between EI and language learning strategies.

Abdolmanafi Rokni et al. (2014) delved into the relationship between EI of the students of English as a foreign language and their achievements at university. The results indicated a significant positive correlation with EI of students and their academic achievement.

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- (Abdolmanafi Rokni et al., 2014; Alipour et al., 2012; S Emamipour & H Shams Esfandabad, 2013; S. Emamipour & H. Shams Esfandabad, 2013; Gardner, 1993; Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2009; Hadizadeh Moghadam et al., 2011; Motallebzadeh, 2009; Sternberg & Wagner, 1992; Turki, 2012)
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THE COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS OF MACRO-STRUCTURE SCHEMATIZATION OF ENGLISH AND PERSIAN BLURBS

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ABSTRACT

Blurbs constitute structures and common features that help producers and readers to communicate efficiently and effectively; however, these generic-oriented structures have not been a focal area of inquiry among genre analysts. This study reported on the analysis of blurbs across English and Persian in order to see whether blurb writers from different linguistic communities belong to the same discourse community. More particularly, the study aimed at finding out rhetorical structures employed by the two groups of writers. Thus, 80 blurbs (20 in English teaching, 20 in English literature, 20 in Persian teaching and 20 in Persian literature) were selected and analyzed through the use of content analysis. The results showed that each of the two disciplines had different rhetorical patterns implying that the discourse communities of each discipline hardly communicate with each other. This shows that teaching and literature blurbs are different in their structures and have been formed to meet divergent needs. The findings of this research have clear implications for blurb writers in teaching and literature in particular. The findings of this research can be utilized for training prospective blurb writers as the study provides a relatively thorough paradigm that can be utilized by them.

Keywords: rhetorical patterns, macro-structures, English blurbs, Persian blurbs, teaching, literature

1. Introduction

The study of textual and meta-textual specifications has been an interesting area of inquiry for long. Such studies which are carried out at two levels of micro-structures (linguistic features) and macro-structures (communicative moves), help identify the communicative intentions that are pursued by the experts in a particular discourse community and "thereby construct the rationale for the genre" (Swales, 1990, p. 58). One area of consideration with its own specific textual and meta-textual configurations and specific communicative specifications are blurbing.

Blurbs are generic-oriented texts with definite rhetorical structures which, according to Valor (2005, p. 41), are displayed on book covers and also on the internet to provide information about the content of books to potential readers. Valor states that blurbs have intertextual coherence that characterizes a specified genre with definite generic rules and rhetorical conventions such as complimenting, elliptical syntactic patterns, the imperative, the address form *you*, and curiosity arouser.

The study of blurb's characteristics has been the major concern of some studies in the area of text analysis. Douglas (2001) studied blurbs aiming at revealing the significance of autobiography. To this point, he analyzed three examples of contemporary autobiographical writings by British women: *Once in a House on Fire* (Ashworth 1999), *Skating to Antarctica* (Diski 1998), and *Oranges Are not the*

Only Fruit (Winterson 1996). However, his study was limited to biographical parts rather than the overall structure of blurbs.

In another research, Byerly (2005) studied the generic structures of blurb of novels. He selected the blurbs on cover pages of his own published or unpublished romance stories, romantic suspense, science fiction, and fantasy, and proposed that for the description of short novels two paragraphs are sufficient but for longer novels three or four paragraphs are needed. Consequently, he concluded that each paragraph is assumed to focus on specific themes. Jerz (2004) studied the content of electronic blurbs and offered guidelines on how to write an acceptable and attractive blurb. He identified the shortcomings of the blurbs that he studied and offered clues to overcome their mistakes. Jerz concluded that blurbs should not recommend or urge readers to click the websites.

In a relatively comprehensive study, Valor (2005, p. 48) studied the blurbs of 60 electronic books of the best-known publishing and best-selling houses in today's English speaking market such as Penguin, Ballantine, Routledge, Barnes, and Nobles. He only focused on electronic blurbs because of their convenient availability to potential readers, as well as persuasive function, which can constitute a new generic structure in the realm of advertisement, and introduced three moves: (1) description, (2) evaluation, (3) about the author.

In another research, Cronin and Barr (2005) studied non-fiction blurbs, focusing on two broad areas, i.e., business and history, in order to discover what areas have made greater use of blurbs. Findings showed that in history, the average (mean) blurb rate (i.e., number of blurbs per book) was 3.2 while in business it was 5.7. Therefore, they revealed that business books made greater use of blurbs than do history books.

Blurbs constitute structures and common features that help producers and readers to communicate efficiently and effectively; however, these generic-oriented structures have not been a focal area of inquiry among genre analysts. Except for Valor's work, which considered the generic structures of blurbs and introduced their discursial and linguistic conventions, other studies seem to have provided a full-fledged schematic paradigms for the analysis of blurbs' structures.

Although Valor's paradigm can be regarded as a systematic procedural scheme for analysis, it has its own limitations. Valor's study merely covered one discipline, i.e. literature, and because it was not comparative, it could not provide an account of rhetorical characteristics that reflect the infrastructure of English and non-English societies. Also, it only took into consideration electronic blurbs thus being confined to a particular register. Besides, it did not consider non-linguistic factors as a determining tool of advertising, and this, in fact, was neglected by Valor in his proposed procedural scheme. More importantly, Valor did not present discursial patterns and linguistic features in specified order; conversely, all discursial patterns and linguistic features were introduced under one category without any specification for linguistic features and discursial patterns.

Within this reflection, Valor's work could hardly be regarded as a reliable scheme for all kinds of blurbs. There is an urgent need for further investigations in the diverse area of blurbs. On the other hand, no analysis has focused on blurbs across different languages. There is also an urgent need to study blurbs cross-culturally in order to see whether they abide by particular generic patterns that discourse community members observe, or whether they are cultural disparities that condition the structure of blurbs in different languages. Accordingly, the study of blurbs has been an utterly neglected area, especially in the Persian context, and since blurbs play a very pivotal role in informing readers and persuading them to buy book, blurbs in other languages also need to be analyzed to see if they adhere to the norms accepted by the academic community, or if there are structures and functions that differentiate them from their corresponding English blurbs. Such an analysis, according to Ruiying and Allison (2003), determines organizational patterning and particular text features. It will also result in the recognition of macro-structures and micro-structures, which can be helpful for a more successful writing (Hyon, 2001).

By writing an effective blurb, the probability of the success of a book will be increased. Blurbs help authors to affect readers as much as possible by various citations and multiple recommendations of famous authors and by emphasizing and praising the quality of books. Authors may emphasize the needs of their prospective readers and present prompting solutions in their blurbs to persuade them to buy books.

This study reports on the analysis of blurbs across English and Persian in order to see whether blurb writers from different linguistic communities belong to the same discourse community. More particularly, the study aims at finding out rhetorical structures employed by the

two groups of writers. Thus, taking previous studies in the field as the starting point, this study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What rhetorical conventions characterize the Persian and English blurbs?
2. What interdisciplinary differences exist in the blurbs of literature and teaching books?

2. Methodology

2.1. Materials

A total of 80 blurbs written in English and Persian from the disciplines of literature and teaching were selected for analysis in the present study. The main reason for selecting these two principles was that they both belong to social sciences and therefore can provide us with helpful results which consequently affect our decisions in relation to social sciences. Moreover, these two disciplines address a large number of people since literature books entertain them and teaching books help them to know about and improve their process of language learning.

The corpus in each language included 40 blurbs. It was assumed that this number would allow us to make valid generalizations about the generic organization of blurbs in two disciplines. There was no predetermined intention for the selection of books from specific publishing houses; conversely, they were selected randomly from the available books in the market. On a quick examination, it was revealed that most of them were from well-known Iranian publishers such as Jangle, Rahnama, and Markaz among others for Persian blurbs and Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Longman, and Nelson for English blurbs. Therefore, a categorization consisting of four groups was obtained for discursial analysis of blurbs as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of blurbs in the two disciplines of Persian and English

	Teaching	Literature
Persian Blurbs	20	20
English Blurbs	20	20

2.2. Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was Valor's (2005) reference paradigm described earlier for the analysis and comparison of Persian and English blurbs in terms of the generic structures that characterize texts. The rationale for the selection of this paradigm was that Valor's classification seems more detailed and inclusive than the other available paradigms, and it has proved to be successful with electronic blurbs.

2.3. Procedure

Selection of the blurbs was on the basis of their relevance to the current organizational conventions of blurbs as well as observing textual and contextual aspects of this specific genre. Taking Valor's work as the starting point, we conducted a pilot study. We selected 20 blurbs _ 10 in English and 10 in Persian _randomly from the two disciplines in focus, and separately ran a preliminary analysis on them in order to identify their generic characteristics. Finally, we agreed on the method of analysis. In the next phase of the study, 60 blurbs in addition to the blurbs in the pilot study were selected from the two disciplines equally for the main phase of the study. The blurbs were carefully read and carefully analyzed in terms of their generic characteristics (moves and steps) following our model which was combinatorial in nature.

3. Data analysis

3.1. Macro-Structure Schematization

Analysis showed that teaching blurbs demonstrate similarities and differences. English blurbs tend to be more elaborate as they include four minor moves (steps) while the corresponding Persian ones are generally described by two minor moves, i.e., *identifying the group*, and *inclusion steps*. English blurbs include two other moves of *identifying purposes and reasons* and *process of learning* which do not exist in Persian blurbs. Table 2 displays the presence of moves and steps which demonstrate blurbs in teaching in Persian and English.

Table 2: Blurb rhetorical moves and steps in teaching books

Blurb	Introduction Move		Inclusion Move	
English Teaching	identifying purposes and reasons	identifying the group	Process of learning	Inclusion
Persian Teaching	identifying the group		Inclusion	

Analysis of the literature blurbs in English and Persian showed that they hardly demonstrate any similarities. They constitute distinct generic patterns, and so they are rhetorically different. Table 3 shows that Persian literature blurbs are more elaborate in comparison to their corresponding English ones, since English literature blurbs constitute two moves, i.e. *summary of the story*, and *complimenting the book* while Persian Literature Blurbs constitute three moves, i.e., *biography of the author*, *quoting parts of the story*, and *citing other published works of the author*.

Table 3: Blurb rhetorical moves in literature books

Blurb	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Move 4	Move 5
English complimenting Literature		of the story			Summary the book
Persian Literature	Biography of the author	Quoting parts of the story		Citing other published works	

3.1.1. Analysis of Teaching Blurbs

Teaching blurbs comprise various rhetorical patterns as depicted in the following table along with their frequency and percentage.

As said earlier, the blurbs of teaching books include two major moves: (1) introduction, and (2) inclusion. Introduction is an obligatory move which encompasses three steps as follows: (1) identifying purposes and reasons, (2) identifying the group for whom the book is provided, and (3) process of learning.

The first minor move is one of the introduction components which represents the author's intention for providing the books. It constituted an obligatory move in English blurbs but was not favored by Persian blurb writers. The percentage of this move in English blurbs was 87.5%, but in Persian it was 15%. Therefore, Table 4 makes clear that *identifying purposes and reasons* move was frequently utilized only by English teaching blurb writers. This move usually starts with the following structures in English: *It aims at...*, *It provides*, *It offers.....* Note the following example of English Blurbs:

This series is designed to provide a source of reference for both language teachers and teacher trainers (How languages are learned, by Lightbown and Spada, 2006. Oxford University Press).

Table 4: Rhetorical patterns in teaching blurbs

Teaching Blurbs		
Move	Persian (%)	English (%)
Identifying purposes and reasons	3 (15%)	17 (87.5%)
Identifying the group	13 (67.5%)	14 (70%)
Process of learning	1 (0.5%)	9 (45%)
Inclusion	15 (75.5%)	19 (97.5%)
About the author	3 (12.5%)	6 (27.5%)
Persuasive part	4 (22.5%)	6 (27.5%)
Edition part	3 (15%)	4 (22.5%)

The second minor move in introduction, *identifying the group for whom the book is provided*, identifies the specific groups for whom the book was provided. This move is assumed obligatory because it provides learners from wandering among various books to pick out the ones that are appropriate for

their age or level of learning. The percentage of this minor move in Persian blurbs was 67.5% and in English blurbs 70%; therefore, both English and Persian blurb writers showed interest in the application of this step and found it an obligatory section.

An important issue is that blurb writers apply a collective perspective in *identifying the group* move for covering more groups and selling books in large quantities. In other words, the book may be provided merely for one group of learner, for example for intermediate or advanced level learners. On the other hand, the book may address two, three, or more groups. The following table illustrates blurb writers' tendency for this collective perspective.

Table 5 makes clear that blurb writers do not restrict their scope of marketing which implicitly is realized through *identifying the group*. In other words, blurb writers prefer to increase the possibility of selling books by addressing more groups or levels of learning. Note the following examples of English and Persian blurbs. Persian blurbs are presented and followed by their English translation:

Practicing idioms is a book at intermediate level and above (practicing idioms, by Donald Watson, 1991, Nelson).

/makhsuse:/

/dabirestan – pishdaneshgahi va davtalabine monhaseran zaban/

/zabane englisi az dabirestan ta daneshgah. abbas farzam. 1382. bastan/

(Designed for:)

(High schools, pre-university, and candidates for English)

(English from high school to university, by Abbas Farzam, 1382, Bastan)

The third minor move within introduction is *process of learning* which points out to the ways of learning the books individually or in classroom. As shown in Table 4, the frequency of this step in Persian blurbs was very low proving that this minor move could not be considered a rhetorical feature of Persian Teaching blurbs. However, it can constitute a consistent rhetorical pattern in English because of its impact on selling books as well as proximity to the average of the books. Note the following English blurb:

It is primarily designed as a self-study reference and practice text but it can also be used for classroom work (English vocabulary in use, by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell, 2002. Cambridge University Press).

Another major move significantly favored by the English and Persian, due to its significant impact on the successful selling of books, is *inclusion* which introduces various parts of the books, their contents as well as such privileges as indexes, tips, pictures, answer keys, illustrating points, audio cassettes, additional reference sections, and so forth. *Inclusion* move merely constitutes on step, i.e. *inclusion*. This move was employed in English and Persian blurbs in 97.5% and 70% respectively. Therefore, Table 4 makes clear that *inclusion* move was greatly favored by both English and Persian blurb writers due to its impact on readers' decision to buy books. Readers prefer to be informed about the details and specification of the books which determine and justify their aims of buying books; therefore, blurb writers pay particular attention to this part in order to convince readers to buy the book through illustrating the content and privileges of the book. Note the following examples of English and Persian blurbs analyzed in this study:

New for this edition:

-Explores recent theories such as skill learning, connectionism, and the 'noticing' hypothesis

-Includes more on current theories of first language acquisition and early bilingualism...

-Includes a greater variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds in a fully revised classroom learning section (How languages are learned, By Lightbown & Spada, 2006. Oxford University Press).

Example of Persian Blurbs:

/tozihe jame va kamele nokate zarori/

/moghayeseye tatbighiye dastori/

/tamrinhaye motenave baraye tamame mabahes/

/raveshe asan dar yadgiriye zabane englisi. mahdi moiniyan. 1383. rahnama/

(Comprehensive description and necessary explanations)

(Comprehensive study of grammatical points)

(Various exercises for all issues)

(An easy way to learn English, by Mahdi Moiniyan, 1383. Rahnama).

Three other kinds of rhetorical patterns offer generic values and are high-lighted by blurb writers due to their expected impact on selling books; however, it is unlikely to regard them as major discursal patterns in Teaching blurbs due to their frequency (See Table 4 for information on these patterns). These rhetorical patterns are (1) about the author, (2) persuasive part, (3) edition part.

Although about the author can be regarded an important discursal pattern, English and Persian Teaching blurb writers do not particularly engage in as in other moves and steps. The percentages of this rhetorical feature in Persian and English blurbs were 12.5% and 27.5% respectively (See Table 4); therefore, the frequency of about the author in English and Persian Teaching books was too low to regard it as a major move through the difference may be cross-culturally significant; however, it may have the potentiality of constituting a major move due to its significance on shaping readers' minds for selecting the book. Take the following examples, one in English and one in Persian: Professor Henry Widdowson is Emeritus Professor of Education, University of London, and Honorary Professor at the University of Vienna (*Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*, by H. G. Widdowson, 2003. OUP).

/doctor bahram tussi ostade zaban va adabiyate englisi daneshgahe hawaiee, va daneshyare daneshgahe azade eslami. Motavalede 1314dar mashhad (amozeshe maharat haye khareji bahram tabran/

(Dr. Bahram Tousi is associate professor of English language and literature, University of Hawaiee, and Islamic Azad University. He was born in 1314 in Mashad).

The *persuasive part* move can have an impressive impact on the decision of prospective readers to buy the book. It inclines toward persuasion rather than informing readers about the content of the book, and therefore, it can be regarded as a genuine example of marketing advertising. Despite its significance on selling books, it does not encompass a well-defined schematic framework due to its sporadic presence on the back covers of books. Moreover, this move does not have a definite place among rhetorical patterns. According to the results of the study presented in Table 4, the percentage of this move in English and Persian blurbs was 27.5 and 22.5 respectively, which implies that this move was not favorably welcomed by blurb writers. However, the paucity of this move does not necessarily decrease the significance of this part, due to its effect on the readers' minds to buy the book. Consider the following English and Persian examples:

Gain confidence with tips and strategies from the experts (*TOEFL Grammar Flash*, by Milda Broukal. 1997. Heinle & Heinle/ITP).

/jadidtarin va jametarin ketab dar noe khod/ (mokalemate ruzmareye amrikaiee va englisi, seyyed Hassan kazemi shariat panahi. 1378. Beh nashr). (The most recent and comprehensive book in its turn).

In the *edition part* move, blurb writers intend to inform readers about the edition number of books which appeals to the prospective readers and can easily convince them to buy the book. Therefore, this part intends to persuade the readers by engaging their minds about the significance of books. Even if the book is published for the first time, first publication of the book can be enhanced in its blurb by using phrases such as *new edition*, or *first edition*. What is important about *edition part* is that although this part can have an impressive effect on selling books, its significance was not totally recognized because it was not greatly favored by blurb writers. On the whole, this part is rather persuasion-oriented than information-oriented and has the potentiality of becoming a salient rhetorical pattern. As Table 4 displays, the frequency of this move in 20 English teaching blurbs was 5 and in 20 Persian blurbs was 3. Therefore, this move appears not to have been favored by both English and Persian Blurb writers.

3.1.2. Analysis of Literature blurbs

Biography of the author includes author's biography such as his/her place of birth, date of birth, and his/her academic studies. Table 6 shows that this move relatively appealed to Persian rather than English blurb writers, and so despite its low frequency, it might have the potentiality of constituting a major move in Persian literature blurbs. Consider the following example of Persian blurbs:

/fariba vafa dar sale 1314 dar Tabriz be donya amad. Inak ba hamsar, dokhtar va pesare khod//dar tehran zendegi mikonad. az nojavani be dastannevisi alaghemand bud va barkhi az//dastanhaye kutahe ou dar gahnamehaye adabi montasher shodand/ (royaye tabat. fariba vafa. 1384. nashre markaz).

(Born in 1314 in Tabriz, Fariba Vafa now lives with her husband, her son and daughter in Tehran. From early lifetime, she was interested in story writing and some of her stories were published in Occasional Journals. Tibit Dreams, Fariba Vafa, 1384, Nashre Markez).

The second move, *quoting parts of the story*, includes quoting an interesting and impressive part of the story which engages readers' interest and persuades them to buy the book. Table 6 shows that this move constituted a major move in the blurbs of Persian Literature.

/baziman yekmartabe bidar mishavim, baziman aheste va baziman hichvaght. ama agar//bidar shavim digar fekr va nazar digaran hich tasiri dar hale ma nadarad.../(samtekalamat. hosein senapour. 1384. nashre cheshme).

(Some of us wake up immediately, some of us slowly, and some of us never. But if awakened, we would no longer be affected by others' views. The dark side of words, by Hossein Sanapour, 1384, Nashre Cheshme).

Summary of the story move is applied to inform readers about the content, theme, setting, and plot of the story. Results showed that Persian blurb writers were not as interested in *summary of the story* as English blurb writers since English blurb writers attested to the consistency of this move in English. An example of English blurbs is the following:

This is a magical story of Santiago, a shepherd boy who dreams of travelling the world to seek the most wonderful treasures known to man. From his home in Spain, he journeys to the markets of Tangiers and, from there, into the Egyptian desert, where a faithful encounter with an alchemist awaits him (the Alchemist, by Paulo Coelho, 1988, Harper Collins Publications).

Table 6: Frequency and percentage of moves in English and Persian literature blurbs

Blurb	Literature (%)	
	Persian	English
Biography of the author	5 (25%)	0 (0%)
Quoting parts of the story	12 (60%)	3 (15%)
Summary of the story	4 (20%)	17 (85%)
Citing other published works of the author	11 (57%)	0 (0%)
Complimenting the book	2 (10%)	13 (65%)

Blurb writers sometimes seize the opportunity and introduce other published books of the same author. The percentage of this move, citing other published works of the author, in English and Persian Literature blurbs was 0% and 57.5% respectively (Table 6). That is, this move recurred only in Persian blurbs, not in English ones. Note the following example:

/az hamin nevisande ba nashre markaz:/
 /an tarafe khiyaban/
 /davazdah dastan/
 /kenar darya, morakhasi va azadi/
 /vaghave etefaghiye/
 (ghesmate digaran. jafare modares sadeghi. 1364. nashre markaz).
 (From the same writer:)
 (The Other Side of the Street)
 (Twelve Stories)
 (Beach, on Leave, and Freedom)
 (Events)
 (Others' Share, Jafar-e Sadeghi, 1364. Nashre Markez)

In case of *complimenting the book* move, the book is praised by publishing firms' extracts from longer reviews published in newspapers and magazines. The percentage of this move in English and Persian literature blurbs was 65% and 10% respectively showing the commitment of English blurb writers to express the firm's approval in their blurbs. Here are three examples of complimenting the book which consists of two parts:

1. Praise by review excerpts:

Immensely moving and delicately told, Anita Diamant's second novel fulfills every iota of the premise of the first... I was entranced by every word of it (Daily Mail) (*Good Harbor*, Anita Harbor, 2001. Pan Books).

Unbeatable for sheer gripping excitement (Daily Telegraph). (*The Freedom Trap*, by Desmond Bagley, 1971, Fontana/Collins)

2. Praise by publishing firms:

..., Hamlet is Shakespeare's most famous play, and perhaps the most fascinating in world literature (*Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, 1996. Wordsworth Classics).

4. Discussion

The findings of this research lead one to the recognition of disciplinary and interdisciplinary variations shaped via the notion of genre and also intra-cultural and inter-cultural tendencies by text producers and readers' expectations.

The emergence of differences between the realizations of one discipline (e.g., English and Persian literature blurbs) would be considered from the view of discipline perspective while existing differences and similarities between different disciplines would be taken into consideration through inter-disciplinary perspective, both of which are shaped by cultural factors.

4.1. The nature of blurbs and inter-disciplinary characteristics

Inter-disciplinary characteristics of a specific genre involve taking into consideration marketing demands, readers' expectations, and discursive variations which altogether have major influences in shaping and forming genres in specific ways. In this regard, the concept of blurb, as a specific genre, has relatively reflected the above-mentioned factors.

The observed rhetorical patterns of literature and teaching blurbs in the present study are completely different. This fact reveals that Teaching and Literature blurbs are generically different and have been formed and shaped for carrying out and meeting divergent needs and demands. In other words, the dissimilarity of rhetorical patterns between blurbs in the two disciplines manifests that:

1. There is little exchange of ideas or mutually collaborative links between these two disciplines;
2. There is little rhetorical structure similarity between their discourse communities;
3. The demands and expectations of readers of these two disciplines are different;
4. The preliminary purposes of these two disciplines are different.

Concerning the first point, data revealed that the two disciplines showed diverse rhetorical structures, and therefore, we argue that blurbing of different disciplines intra-textual oriented. The study indicates that the blurb writers of these two disciplines adhere to the acceptable existing structures of their disciplines with little significant deviation; therefore, a cyclical process of blurbs' rhetorical reproduction will naturally take place. Subsequently, the process of reproduction of blurbs' structures results in imitation of major rhetorical patterns which necessarily force blurb writers to stick to the structures of their specific discipline; otherwise, their works would not be adopted as representative of their discipline.

The obligatory imitational process of blurbing would culminate in intra-textual orientation of texts due to the imitational necessities which provide a mutual understanding and communication between the readers and blurb writers of that discipline. The concept of intra-textuality of blurbs' texts, like other textual-oriented genres, necessitates and forces blurb writers to reproduce the same structures of texts in a specific discipline for identical interpretations by readers in a facilitative and efficient way. In other words, imitational reproductions of blurbs' structures of a specific discipline present the consistency of textual factors which facilitate the progress of intra-textual interpretations for readers of that discipline, and therefore identical interpretations of a specific discipline by its readers bring about easier communication between blurb writers and readers of that discipline.

However, the results of the present study demonstrate the forming of different rhetorical structures of blurbs for two distinct kinds of disciplines which indicate the divergent characteristics of blurbs' shaping, affected by market and readers' demands.

In relation to the third point, the significance of readers' impact on shaping blurbs' structures, results show that in literature blurbs readers tend to have an immediate acquaintance with the content of the story; therefore, literature blurbs form in a way that satisfy the expectations of readers through providing structures such as *summary of the story* and *quoting parts of the story*. On the other hand, in Teaching blurbs, following Becher's (1989) taxonomy, there is no need in presenting the *summary of the book* with the consequence that, in return, the purposes of forming the book will be elucidated and

identified. This lack of interest in expressing *summary of the book* or *quoting parts of the book* in Teaching blurbs is due to the readers' demands which are felt not to necessitate their citation. Thus, for both kinds of blurbs, the existence or non-existence of rhetorical structures is affected by the demands of readers that force blurb writers to observe with a view to enhancing selling and marketing prospects. Douglas (2001) points out to the significance of readers in shaping the orientation of authors in a way that is desired and required by readers as well as market demands.

Accordingly, this study concludes that readers' demands are prioritized in shaping blurbs' structures, while imitational inheritance of blurbs' structures stand second in place. In other words, the demands of readers that simultaneously involve readers' expectations, interests, social and cultural factors, and historical facts pull their weight in shaping blurbs in a specific manner with specific structures followed naturally by imitational inheritance of blurbs' structures, and consequently the homogeneity and consistency of intra-textual factors.

In relation to diverse goals and weak collaboration of the two disciplines (i.e., the first and forth points mentioned above), it is argued that manifestations of different rhetorical patterns of blurbs reflect their divergent marketing procedures, readers' expectations, and the lack of compatibility of blurbs' purposes which result in the paucity of exchange of ideas between different disciplines. For example, in this research, the blurbs of Teaching books aim to tackle readers' scientific problems; therefore, there is an urgent need in identifying the purposes of the book in its blurb, while for literature blurbs, the books are written to entertain readers; therefore, in order to attract readers' attention to buy the book, there is an urgent need in expressing the content of the story or its summary which engages readers' minds and encourages them to buy the book. Because of the substantial differences in the objectives of blurbs, it is argued that blurbs in Teaching and Literature are not shaped by intercommunication between their discourse communities.

Thus, with the divergent rhetorical patterns due to the imitational duplications of textual structures of blurbs and expectations of readers in different disciplines, few identical interdisciplinary rhetorical patterns were observed. For example, complimenting the book, biography, and citing other published books of the author existed in Literature blurbs which were absent in Teaching blurbs. The main reason for the presence of these three rhetorical patterns in Literature is that the content of a literature book is uniquely created by its writer. In other words, the writer creates the concept and story which have not been stated by others previously in any sense; therefore, the content of the book merely belongs to one person while in teaching books authors find themselves in a chain of scientific participation which enables learners to overcome the nebulous aspects of scientific issues. In other words, the author in teaching books is a facilitator of learning rather than a creator. So in the area of literature, the author and the book have an outstanding importance, and for this reason, the author's life, style of living, and the book will be noticed, introduced, and complimented.

Another substantial rhetorical difference between teaching and literature blurbs is process of learning and identifying the group for whom the book is provided which were present merely in teaching blurbs. The main reason for the existence of these rhetorical moves is that many books in teaching are written targeting certain groups of learners due to their level of proficiency; therefore, they have to be selected appropriately for desired outcomes. Meanwhile these books can be learned in classroom, individually, or in group. These requirements indicate that teaching books are provided for learning. on the other hand, literature books do not require such conditions for reading because they are provided for the entertainment and pleasure of readers.

On the whole, with respect to the rhetorical patterns of teaching and literature blurbs, the study concludes that these two disciplines are distinct because their rhetorical patterns rarely show similarity; as a result, we may claim that their discourse communities hardly communicate with each other. This leads us to claim that the two disciplines hardly show identical inter-disciplinary characteristics.

5. Conclusion

Findings of several studies asserted the necessity of blurbs' analysis for a better understanding of their structure in different disciplines from different languages, to explore their similarities and differences in respect of their rhetorical patterns and linguistic features (Byerly, 2005; Cronin and Barre, 2005; Valor, 2005). Following the same lines of research, this study attempted to provide a schematic structure through analyzing and comparing two distinct disciplines in two languages. Findings encompass a paradigm consisting of rhetorical patterns neglected in previous studies. The

study suggests that the existing rhetorical differences in the structure of blurbs in the two languages mark the underlying social structures of Persian and English associates. As argued by Martin (2000, p. 9), "the stage a culture has reached in its evolution provides the social context for the linguistic development..." and this linguistic development "provides resources for instantiation of unfolding texts". Therefore, blurbs as instantiations of language bring to surface those social structure differences that exist and determine the way people's (including writers') thoughts are shaped. This becomes more revealing to us in relation to texts (such as blurbs) that are not perhaps shaped by the academic experience of writers.

The findings of this research have clear implications for blurb writers in teaching and literature in particular. Since blurbs have demonstrated themselves as a separate genre within which disciplinary and inter-disciplinary variations might abound, the findings of this research can be utilized for training prospective blurb writers as the study provides a relatively thorough paradigm that can be utilized by them.

The results of this study, following other studies in this field, support the fact that to blurb more effectively blurb writers of each discipline have to follow the rules of blurbing of that particular discipline. Moreover, since following the rules of blurb writing is essential for presenting more successful blurbing, it is suggested that blurb writers of English and Persian teaching and literature consider the benefits of using the results of this study.

In carrying out this study, two limitations were met, i.e., difficulty in accessing data, and a further complication was finding a comprehensive paradigm. The latter problem was resolved by modifying Valor's paradigm during piloting that provided us with a more comprehensive paradigm for the analysis of blurbs, which could remove the deficiencies of Valor's work.

The findings of this study merely encompass specific types of blurbing, i.e., teaching and literature blurbs; therefore, further research is needed to explore the structures of blurbs of other disciplines and of other languages.

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THE VERBAL INPUT IMPACT OF WORKING-CLASS VS. MIDDLE-CLASS MOTHERS ON THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF IRANIAN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates the impact of verbal input provided by working- vs. middle-class mothers on the language acquisition of their Iranian kindergarten children. It was conducted with twenty children selected from either the Kish Language institute or the Hafez kindergarten, in Shiraz, Iran. In order to select those twenty subjects, an interview was carried out about the education, personality, income, family background, career etc. After that, the subjects were divided into two groups of middle-class and working class. Next, recording the conversations between mothers and children started. Then, for the ease of calculation, we divided all the verbal inputs into six basic categories (A-control, B-negative response, C-response to speech, D- positive response, E-guiding and F-bad emotion.). And finally a *t*-test was conducted to find out the significant difference between different social class mothers' inputs and Pearson correlation coefficients for the purpose of examining the significant relationship between mothers' input and children's output. Regarding the former, it was found that in the category E (guiding), there was a significant difference between different social class mothers' input. And regarding the latter, in categories A-control, C-response to speech and D- positive response a high correlation was found.

Key words: verbal input, working-class, middle-class, language acquisition

1. Introduction

Although first language acquisition may seem to be an easy, natural and instinctive phenomenon, it is with no doubt one of the greatest intellectual feats which any one of us is ever required to accomplish. This complexity has provoked many scholars to do bulks of research on the way first language is acquired and the crucial factors that have prominent impacts on this process. In this regard, different viewpoints evolved from equally knowledgeable scholars of which three are the most prominent: Skinner' behaviorism, Chomsky' rationalism, and Vygotsky's interactionism.

One of the earliest scientific explanations of language acquisition was proposed by Skinner (1957). Being one of the pioneers of behaviorism, he accounted for language development by means of environmental influence. Skinner contends that children learn language on the basis of behaviorist reinforcement principles via associating words with meanings. Correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child understands the communicative value of words and phrases. For instance, when the child says 'milk' and the mother will smile and give her some consequently, s/he will find this outcome rewarding, enhancing the child's language development.

In contrast to Skinner behaviorism, Noam Chomsky (1959) in his criticism of the behaviorist approach to language acquisition, suggested that children constantly construct the rule systems of their native language supported by a brain which is already pre-wired with a specific language capacity that is separate from other sorts of mental abilities. Chomsky's theory shows a rationalist account of language acquisition for based on which (a) the ultimate source of knowledge is the mind, not the external input. Grammar in the mind applies to, and to some extent determines, linguistic experience. (b) The essential mechanism of knowledge acquisition exists in the mind's ability to generate what is perceived as input, and to deduce new knowledge. (c) The Initial State is biologically programmed prior to experience in such a way that it makes linguistic experience possible and constrains its form.

More recently, interactionism has brought a new school of thought into language acquisition. It is an explanation of language development which emphasizes the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. It has originated from the socio-cultural theories of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays a prominent role in the learning process. Moreover, he also proposed the zone of proximal development (ZPD) according to which learners build the new language through socially mediated interaction.

In line with the recent view of language acquisition, one can conclude that children's early social interactions play a vital role in development of their language abilities. Due to the fact that parents are children's first teachers and family becomes the first teaching place, the most input children are exposed to is provided by parents especially mothers. From mothers' verbal input, children steadily acquire the language. Therefore, it can be inferred that mothers' verbal input would definitely affect children's language acquisition. Even if the role of mother's input cannot be denied by any means, there are lots of variables that are worth being considered in this regard, for instance mothers' social class, level of income, age, etc. Because these factors can influence the quality of input and hence the outcome of the language acquisition process. As a result, the present study tends to investigate the relationship between different types of verbal input provided by working-class vs. middle-class Iranian mothers on the language acquisition of their kindergarten children. Consequently, these two research questions are to be answered:

1. Is there a significant difference between Iranian middle-class and working-class mothers' speech (input)?
2. Is there any significant relationship between different Iranian social class mothers' input and their kindergarten children's language acquisition?

Term definition

1. Mother-child interaction: While conversing, the mother exposes the child to lots of verbal input through her speech, and the child receives it. Next, the child provides the output to his/her mother. During this process both of them ought to keep the conversation coherent. The goal is attaining maximum psychosocial development by the child.
2. Social class: Considering the educational degree, income and career, social class generally can be divided into three major categories: upper-class, middle-class and working-class. Therefore, middle-class refers to people neither at the top nor at the bottom of a social hierarchy, to people who have a degree of economic independence, but not a great deal of social influence or power in their society. On the other hand, working-class refers to a social class contrasted with middle-class and upper-class. The major characteristic is that people in this class should depend on their managers to survive.

2.Literature Review

Since "Baby Talk" became the subject of research thirty years ago, the linguistic and social environment of infants and toddlers have become of utmost importance. Children learn their first language through interaction with their family members especially their mothers. Besides, the role and quality of the input that is provided by family and mothers in particular cannot be ignored. In what follows, related studies and variables regarding this issue will be reviewed and discussed.

Generally speaking, children's social interaction initially happens in the family. As a result, children's language acquisition firstly occurs with their parents and parents turn into children's first teachers. From birth, mothers and children have the most familiar and intimate relationship. Lewis and

Wilson's (1972) carried out a study in which they categorized mothers' input into several categories, such as reading, looking, smiling, and vocalizing. In this research, they proposed that different social status would have different influences on their children. Furthermore, education, career and economy would affect the shaping of social status. Kagan and Tulkin's study (1972) illustrated that middle-class mothers would like to give their children stimulus things and have more interaction with their children. Snow (1977) declared that language acquisition is a process of interaction between mother and child from birth. The aim of mothers' speech is to show children all the languages. In a comparison between French mothers and African mothers done by Rabain-Jamin (1994), African mothers don't usually talk to their children during child care or diapering. Moerk (2000) investigated some mothers from different culture background and their children. He deduced that in some cultures, some parents lack the notion of talking with their children. According to Hoff (2009), Mowder (1997), and Shonkoff & Philips (2000), children's quick language development in general and the acquisition of communicative skills in particular occur within the first years of children's life. Olson (1986) stated that occurrence of language development is especially affected by mothers who provide children with the most amount of input step by step as their children grow up. Hoff-Ginsberg (1991) and Lewis & Wilson (1972) stated that mothers of different social classes have differing influences on children's language acquisition. Hart & Risley (1995), Hoff (2006), Hoff, Laursen & Tardif (2002), Hoff-Ginsberg (1998) concluded that children's advanced language development is connected to maternal education level in a way that highly-educated mothers tend to have more and better interaction with their children by comparison to less educated ones. In a study conducted by Evans (2004) it was illustrated that there is a sort of connection between the amount of family income and children's language development meaning that the lower the income, the more children suffer from language development delays. In 2004, Bornstein, Leach & Haynes and in 1998, Hoff-Ginsberg studied the role of child birth order on language acquisition and stated that first-born children performed superior to later-born children considering language development. Furthermore, in studies conducted by Laible (2004), Lewis (1999), Vernon-Feagnas et al. (2008) the role of child temperament in their language development was investigated. The findings showed that mothers of preschoolers provide their children with more elaborations during language tasks in particular when they get more negative reactivity from their children.

In addition to the studies that focused on the vital role of mothers as the primary caregiver in child language acquisition and communication, Coleman (1988) and Amato (1998) asserted that fathers' education, traits and knowledge may result in children's language development and improve their competency in the acquisition of communication and language skills. Moreover, Cabrera et al. (2007) realized that fathers' education has positive effects on children's language development at 24 and 36 months of age. Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine (1992); Coley & Chase-Lansdale (1999); Gavin et al. (2002); Yogman et al. (1995) discovered that the quality and quantity of interactions between fathers and children might be affected by paternal education.

From above discussion it can be inferred that interaction and input provided by parents of different social class, education, culture, economic level etc. are of vital importance in children's language development. Of all family members, mothers seem to have the maximum level of interaction with their children. As a result, mothers' input might influence children's language acquisition the most. Furthermore, when focusing on the mothers' importance, variables relating to mothers must be taken into account, for instance social status and cultural differences etc. and observe if those variables have any impact on their children's acquiring the language.

3. Method

In accordance with the research goals and research questions, this section entails four major parts: participants, instruments, procedures and data analysis.

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were selected from either the Kish Language Institute or the Hafez kindergarten located in Shiraz, Iran. They ranged in age from two to six years old. Four subjects were selected from each age of which two belonged to the working class and the other two to the middle class families. They were 10 boys and 10 girls. Considering the degree of education, career and income, the parents of the middle class group were graduated from universities and at least had bachelor degrees and their careers were professionals, managers teachers, engineers, etc. whereas the

educational background of the working-class group parents was either diploma or under diploma and they were either housewives or had manual low-level jobs if any.

3.2. Instruments

Interviews and recordings were two instruments used in this study. To decide about the social class of participants, first some background questions regarding the family situation including mother's education and career, family income, mothers' personality, and children's personality were asked in the form of an interview. Then, in order to record the conversations between mothers and children, tape-recording at home was used. Each recording lasted 30 minutes.

3.3. Procedure

First, for the purpose of investigating the background of every subject and controlling the variables, like personality, family background, education, etc. an interview was used. Then, recording the conversations between mothers and children started. To reduce the anxiety of the participants and their parents as well before the recording, we tried to establish a close and friendly relationship with them. After that, each participant's conversation with his/her mother which was of 30 minutes of length was recorded. Next, each recording was transcribed. And finally, the data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.4. Data Analysis

In this study, both a quantitative and a qualitative approach were used to investigate the relationship between mothers' input and children's language acquisition. About quantitative approach, both Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

A *t*-test was used to find out the significant difference between different social class mothers' input. For the aim of calculating how many times the verbal input would happen during the recording time, six domains were listed and then the mean score was calculated. The six domains included control; negative response; response to the speech; guiding, positive response and negative emotion. For example, "Hurry up. Eat your meal quickly." was an instance of 'control domain'; "No, don't do that." of 'negative response domain' and "You are so great." of 'positive response domain'. If mothers or children response to others' talk, it belonged to 'response to the speech domain'; "You are so great." to 'positive response domain'; "At the beginning, you have to put it on the top, and then....." to 'guiding domain' and finally, "You are not good. You are stupid." to 'bad emotion domain'. Having categorized the verbal input, a T-test was used to examine the difference between them.

After that a Correlation analysis was used to discover if there was a significant difference between mothers' verbal input and children's output. From the six domains, we tried to find out if mothers' verbal input would have any impacts on children's language acquisition.

4. Results

In this section, the observed data were analyzed in accordance with the research question. In the first part, a *t*-test was used to show the significant difference between different social class mothers' input. In the second part, Correlation coefficients were used to present the significant difference between mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition.

Regarding the significant difference between different social class mothers' input, based on Table 1, we divided all the verbal input into six basic categories (A-control, B-negative response, C-response to speech, D-positive response, E-guiding and F-bad emotion.).

Table 1 Significance of Differences between Different Social Class Mothers (working vs. middle-class)

Mean, Standard Derivations and *t*-test

Categories Nation		Frequency	Mean	SD	Significance
A Control	Middle-class	31.00	6.20	2.16	.11
	Working-class	48.00	9.60	3.64	.12
B Negative response	Middle-class	18.00	3.60	3.36	.64

	Working-class	14.00	2.80	1.48	.65
C Response to speech	Middle-class	70.00	14.00	9.82	.052
	Working-class	19.00	3.80	1.92	.080
D Positive response	Middle-class	21.00	4.20	1.6	.39
	Working-class	15.00	3.00	2.44	.40
E Guiding	Middle-class	64.00	12.80	3.70	.00**
	Working-class	27.00	5.40	1.94	.01**
F Bad emotion	Middle-class	10.00	2.00	1.2	.32
	Working-class	11.00	3.00	1.58	.31

p< .05 has significant difference

As Table 1 shows the working-class mothers used more control input to their children. Moreover, comparing the Mean in C (Response to speech), middle-class mothers talked more to their children, whereas working-class mothers tended to talk less to their children. Besides, we found that just in E (guiding) there is a significant difference between middle-class and working-class mothers' verbal input. This difference can be accounted for by considering the fact that the less tendency of the working-class mothers to talk to their children causes them to talk to them only when they want to direct or control them to do some tasks. On the other hand, middle-class mothers due to having higher educational degrees, mostly try to guide their children to complete the tasks.

In addition, to answer question number two, we used Correlation coefficients to investigate the relationship between mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition. We found that only in A (Control), B(Negative response), D(Guiding) and F(Bad emotion) there are significant relationships between mothers' verbal input and children's verbal output in middle-class families. In other words, in middle-class families when mothers used verbal input such as control, negative response, positive response and bad emotion, children who are affected by these inputs used more similar outputs. These findings are presented in the following tables.

Table 2 The Mean and Derivation of the six Categories between Mothers and Children of the middle-class group
Descriptive statistics

Categories		Mean		SD
A Control	Mother		6.20	2.16
	Child		5.40	1.14
B Negative response	Mother		3.60	3.36

	Child		4.60	3.91
C Response to speech	Mother		14.00	9.82
	Child		12.20	5.58
D Positive response	Mother		4.20	1.64
	Child		4.00	2.82
E Guiding	Mother		12.80	3.70
	Child		1.80	2.49
F Bad emotion	Mother		2.00	1.22
	Child		3.80	4.14

Table 3 The Significant Relationship between Mothers' Verbal Input and Children's Language Acquisition (Taiwan)
Correlation Coefficient

Categories	Correlation between child and mother	
A Control	Pearson correlation coefficient	.971**
	Significance	.006
B Negative response	Pearson correlation coefficient	.973**
	Significance	.005
C Response to speech	Pearson correlation coefficient	.793
	Significance	.110
D Positive response	Pearson correlation coefficient	.968**
	Significance	.007

E Guiding	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	-.494 .398
F Bad emotion	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.886** .045

$p < .05$ (Significance)

** Correlation Coefficient: $r > .80$

Table 3 shows the significance of the relationship between middle-class mothers' input and their children's output. From the table we inferred that in Categories A, B, D, and F, there are significant relationships. ($P < .05$) Furthermore, there are high correlations in the four categories. From the table, the Correlation Coefficient is high ($r > .80$). Also it was found that most categories of mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition have high correlations. However, about Category C and E, we found that there is no significant relationship in middle-class mothers' verbal input and their children's language acquisition.

Table 4 The Mean and Derivation of the six Categories between Mothers and Children of the working-class
Descriptive statistics

Categories		Mean	SD
A Control	Mother	9.60	3.64
	Child	7.00	2.64
B Negative response	Mother	2.80	1.48
	Child	3.80	1.78
C Response to speech	Mother	3.80	1.92
	Child	3.80	1.48
D Positive response	Mother	3.00	2.44
	Child	3.00	1.58
E Guiding	Mother	5.40	1.94
	Child	3.20	2.16
F Bad emotion	Mother	2.00	1.22
	Child	3.80	4.14

Table 5 The Significant Relationship between working-class Mothers' Verbal Input and Children's Language Acquisition
Correlation Coefficient

Categories	Correlation between child and mother	
A Control	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.959** .010
B Negative response	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.358 .554
C Response to speech	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.946** .015
D Positive response	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.968** .007
E Guiding	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.568 .318
F Bad emotion	Pearson correlation coefficient Significance	.435 .464

$p < .05$ (Significance)

** Correlation Coefficient: $r > .80$

Table 5 presents the significance of the relationship between working-class mothers' verbal input and their children's output. According to this table, in Categories A, C and D, there are significant relationships. We found that in these three categories, there are significances. ($P < .05$) Moreover, there are high correlations in these three categories. From the table, it is concluded that the Correlation Coefficient is high ($r > .80$). However, about the other categories B(Negative response), E(Guiding), and F(Bad emotion), there is no significant relationship between working-class mothers' verbal input and their children's language acquisition or output. From the finding, we found that in this table, just three categories of mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition have high correlation.

5. Results and Discussion

As it was mentioned before, the purpose of this study is to determine first whether there is a significant difference between the verbal input of mothers from different social classes (working vs. middle-class) and second whether there is a significant relationship between mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition. We used *t*-test to examine the difference among different social class mothers. In addition, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the significant relationship between mothers and children.

In a nut shell, considering research question number one, we find out that only in the category E (guiding), there is a significant difference between different social class mothers' input. In other categories no significant difference was seen. This finding is in agreement with what Hoff-Ginsberg (1991) has found according to which low-income mothers talk less to their children and that is reason for them to use less guiding to their children. Therefore, it can be inferred that the difference that exists in mothers' social class can have some influence on their children's language production.

In addition, about the significant relationship between mothers' input and children's output, we find that only in categories A (control) and D (positive response), middle and working-class families have the same result. There is a high relationship between mothers' verbal input and children's language acquisition. On the contrary, in category E (guiding), there is no significant relationship. Other categories present that there are different results in different social-class mothers which might lead to different outputs on the part of their children and that in turn can highlight the prominent roles mothers play in the process of their children's language acquisition.

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REPAIR OPERATIONS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ORAL DISCOURSE OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to investigate how replacement and insertion operations, as two of the self-initiated repair operations, are practiced and prioritized by Iranian male and female EFL learners in oral reproduction of short stories. In addition, the present study examined the relationship between gender and frequencies in employing repair practices. To this end, thirty female and thirty male learners of English as a foreign language in an oral reproduction course at Khorasgan university (Iran) were required to reproduce two short stories as their final exam. To collect data, two short stories were selected from *Oral Reproduction of Stories by Abbas Ali Rezai*, and participants were voice recorded. By transcribing the data and using appropriate statistical measures, data were analyzed, and the results revealed that Iranian male and female EFL learners produced replacement repair practices more frequently. Furthermore, the results indicated that female students produced more repair practices in total. The findings presented here may facilitate improvements in classroom research and raise awareness in both teachers and students.

Keywords: self-initiated repair, repair operations, replacement, insertion, oral reproduction

The topic of language repair has been one of the most engrossing areas in the recent second language research. As it is evident, students in educational EFL settings frequently encounter conversational challenges when they are to interact with other interlocutors such as other students or teachers i.e. they mostly experience moments of conversational breakdowns for various reasons. In fact, they struggle to transmit a comprehensible message to their interlocutors, and they sometimes fail to do so. Therefore, Leonard (1983) states that competent communicators learn to regulate and modify messages within a conversation. Speech modification includes planning to select appropriate words, reducing the complexity of utterances, or elaborating on a statement for clarification. When individuals do not properly regulate or modify messages, a communication breakdown may occur. Interactants, thus, try to make repairs to their utterances in order to maintain communication.

Language repair was first defined by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) as the set of practices by which a co-interactant interrupts the ongoing course of action to attend to possible trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding the talk. Thus, repair is used as an important communication strategy to maintain the conversation and avoid breakdowns. 'Trouble' includes such things as "misarticulation, malapropisms, use of a wrong word, unavailability of a word when needed, failure to hear or to be heard, trouble on the part of the recipient in understanding, incorrect understandings by recipients" (Schegloff, 1987a : 210), among others. Repair is used to ensure "that the interaction does not freeze in its place when trouble arises, that inter-subjectivity is maintained or restored, and that the turn and sequence and activity can progress to possible completion" (Schegloff, 2007b : xiv).

A key distinction has been provided by conversation analysts between *initiating* repair and actually making the repair by giving the repair solution. In fact, this is an important distinction because repair can be initiated by one party and completed by another. Mostly, repair is initiated by the speaker of the *trouble-source* or *repairable* (these terms are used interchangeably in the literature), and this is referred to as *self-initiated* repair. Generally the speaker who self-initiates repair also completes the repair by producing a repair solution (Kitzinger & Lerner, 2010).

In self-initiated self-repair, then, a current speaker stops what s/he is saying to deal with something which is being treated as a problem in what s/he has said, or started to say, or may be

about to say – for example, cutting off the talk to replace a word uttered in error with the correct word. By contrast, in *other* - initiated repair someone other than the speaker of the trouble -source initiates repair. Hence, it is the recipient of a turn - at - talk (rather than its speaker) who initiates repair on it (Schegloff, et al., 1977).

Self-initiated repair operations identified by Schegloff (2007b) are: replacing, inserting, deleting, searching, parenthesizing, aborting, sequence jumping, recycling, reformatting and reordering. Replacing and inserting are the focus of the present study. In fact, replacement involves “ a speaker’ s substituting for a wholly or partially articulated element of a turn - in - progress another, different element, while retaining the sense that this is the same utterance ” (Schegloff, 2008). Inserting is another very common repair operation and, as with replacing, it is used across many different languages. Wilkinson and Weatherall (2011: 71) describe insertion as distinctive in that it “retains and *modifies* the original formulation, rather than, for example, deleting it or replacing it.” The inserted material mostly comes to modify the original reference formulation to *make* it more identified as a unique referent.

Replacement repairs come in various forms such as antonyms or synonyms, alternative formulations of the trouble - source term. Also, they can substitute a full - form for an indexical reference, or a new full - form reference for the trouble - source reference, either for the same referent or for a different one. Replacing can extract an individual from a collectivity or conversely can aggregate an individual to a collectivity by replacing (e.g. “ I ” with “ we ”) (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007a). Speakers can also use replacement to change the tense of a verb (e.g. from past to present).

Insertion is mostly used to achieve two particular goals : The most common end is for the inserted material to modify the original reference formulation so as to *specify* it more closely by identifying a unique referent. Another common objective in which inserted material can modify an original formulation is to *intensify* the meaning of the words it modifies (Wilkinson and Weatherall, 2011).

Cut-offs are a common way of halting progressivity in English (and in many other languages). So, too, are various other hitches in speaking – including sound stretches and other delaying productions (e.g. “um”, or “ uh ”). Such hitches do not initiate repair by themselves, but rather alert recipients to the possibility of a repair of trouble (if it was trouble) only becoming evident from an inspection of what happens next. Nevertheless, Repairs can also be initiated tacitly, without any explicit advance indication that progressivity is being suspended; in such instances it is only apparent on production of the repair solution that a repair is being effected, and that the onward progressivity of the turn has been suspended for the purposes of that repair (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2010). There is no one - to - one relationship between the method of repair initiation and the repair operation: repair initiated with a cut - off can turn out to be replacing, inserting, deleting, or any other of the full range of repair operations.

On the basis of such assumptions, the present research aims to investigate whether the two repair operations, replacement and insertion, are used in the oral discourse of Iranian EFL learners. This study also aims to identify how repair operations are prioritized by male and female students in terms of actual practices to regulate and maintain conversation, pass comprehensible messages to their interlocutors and achieve their communicative goals. The findings will hopefully provide insights into how important these practices are in real life communication; in addition, classroom research may benefit from the findings as further research can be implemented to find out how teachers and students can take advantage of such communication strategies.

Indeed, a couple of prior studies have been carried out on language repair. For example, Nagano (1997: 81) in his study on the self-repair of Japanese learners of English concludes that “... the self-repair of Japanese speakers of English is not very different in some ways from that of the L1 speakers in Levelt's study”.

Research has also shown that repair, which is a language phenomenon, is necessary for keeping communication smooth and accurate, and it has been evident in the literature that language learners are able to employ many repair strategies in second language interaction (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 2000, 2007; Watterson, 2008). Additionally, It is evident in language repair research that both native and non-native speakers of English use repair practices while negotiating meaning in order to understand or make themselves understood (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

Drew (1997) suggests that "self-repair is also a mechanism of remedying mistakes in conversation". 'Mistakes' may also relate to acceptability problems, such as saying something wrong in a broad sense, that is untrue, inappropriate or irrelevant (Schegloff, 2007b).

According to Schegloff et al. (1977), self-initiated self-repair (self-repair) takes the form of initiation with a non-lexical initiator, followed by the repairing segment (p. 376). These non-lexical initiators include cut-offs, lengthening of sounds, and quasi-lexical fillers such as *uh* and *um*. In order to repair their errors in problematic talk, language users repeat words and use fillers to gain time and achieve their communicative goal. Schegloff et al. (1977) state that self-initiated and self-completed repair (self-initiated self-repair) occurs when the interlocutor who is responsible for the trouble source both initiates and completes the repair.

The problematic talk 'trouble source' can be defined as an utterance or a part of an utterance that is perceived as problematic by at least one of the interlocutors. The speaker may feel that the utterance did not correspond to what he/she wanted to say, while the hearer may be unable to decode the intended meaning of the utterance. The speaker may also assume that the recipient did not understand the utterance in the right way (Faerch & Kasper, 1982:79).

Self-initiation, self-completed repair is the most common repair strategy used (Schegloff et al., 1977). The speaker makes an error, detects it, cuts off what he/she was saying, and repairs the error. Repairs are signaled through the use of strategies, such as interruption, editing expressions (*er*, *em*) and backtracking. Similarly, Berg (1986: 212) admits that the repair process begins with an error. An error means "all kinds of inadvertent behaviors". Errors are usually detected during the articulation of the problematic word, which is usually signaled by the interruption of the flow of speech by the speaker himself or herself.

Research on the repair of second language learners (e.g., Kranke & Christison, 1983; Schegloff, 2000) shows preference for self-initiated repair, although variations can be seen in the amount of initiation depending on the learner's language level (cf. Krahnke & Christison, 1983). Krahnke and Christison (1983) remark that "...language learners have demonstrated ability to utilize non-language-specific techniques of interaction maintenance which also facilitate their comprehension, and we can assume, their acquisition of the new language" (p. 234).

When EFL learners come across situations in which they make conversational mistakes, repair comes to help to smooth the way to return the conversation to normalcy. However, lack of linguistic knowledge may impede them from using repair practices or lengthen the time before repair is produced. According to Faerch and Kasper (1983), during the planning and execution phases, L2 speakers encounter problems due to their lack of linguistic resources; therefore, they modify their plan and use their existing knowledge, usually consciously, with the intention of sending a comprehensible message and achieving their communicative goal.

As a matter of fact repair operations take various forms as mentioned previously. To demonstrate the difference, the following examples show how learners make repairs through inserting and replacing their utterances (taken from the data of the present research):

- (1)
- 1 S: Buh the men we:re the men **are were** surprise'd
- 2 T: [nod]
- (2)
- 1 S: The man **said told** his son he should'n heve done id
- 2 T: Okay
- (3)
- 1 S: ...He jus wanid ta know if he'd err (0.2) he'd **perfectly** done the job
- 2 T: Aha
- (4)
- 1 S: ...The summer wez n- **really** nice
- 2 T:

As it is evident from these repair examples, students in examples (1) and (2) substituted new utterances for their troubled utterances without any advance indications to let the interlocutor become aware of the suspension of the turn; additionally, in examples (3) and (4), students alerted the cut-off by using sound stretches and inserting new utterances.

Replacement is a common repair practice whose role in communication could be one of the "most effective strategies for promoting comprehension that a speaker can use" (Hoekje, 1984: 10). However, research literature on repair operations in Iranian EFL learners' discourse is not quite rich. Hence, the need for more research on repair practices, especially repair operations, is felt as syllabus designers, teachers, students, and other researchers can benefit from the findings of this type of research.

Fotovatnia and Dorri's study (2013) concentrated on repair strategies, used by Iranian EFL learners, in classroom talk; nevertheless, repair operations were not the focus of their study and short story retelling task was not used to collect data either. The focus of the present study is to investigate replacement and insertion operations practiced by male and female Iranian EFL learners in oral reproduction of stories. In fact, the present study compares replacing and inserting repair practices produced by Iranian male and female EFL learners in retelling short stories. More specifically, the aim of the present research is to answer the following questions:

1. Are replacement and insertion repair operations employed by both Iranian male and female EFL students in retelling short stories?
2. Which repair operation is more frequently practiced by Iranian male learners of English?
3. Which repair operation is more frequently practiced by Iranian female learners of English?
4. Is there a relationship between gender and frequency of repair practices as a whole?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were thirty male and thirty female third-year EFL students enrolled in the oral reproduction course at Khorasan university, Iran. In December 2014, these participants, ranging from age 20 to 24, performed a story-retelling task as their final exam. They were all selected from the oral reproduction of short stories course offered to juniors. To control the effect of prior English studies, all students who had enrolled in this class took an Oxford Placement Test [OPT, Allan, 2004]. And, sixty participants (thirty males and thirty females), were selected for the subsequent stages of the study. Also, students were not informed that they were selected for this study to keep the natural state of their performance. However, the researcher let them know the fact after the exam.

Materials and Procedure

Prior to the study, the Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 2004) was used to assess the participants' homogeneity in terms of proficiency. The test had 100 multiple choice items. Along with Allan's (2004) scoring guidelines, 40 of the participants who scored higher than 68 out of 100 were selected as upper-intermediate learners for the main phase of the study. Two short stories were selected from *Oral Reproduction of stories* (Rezai, 2013): *The Six Rows of Pompons* and *All Summer in a Day*, which were thought to be interesting, and within the proficiency level of the students, after consultations with three university professors. All participants were assigned to read the stories and prepare for oral reproduction as their final exam. The participants were individually audio-recorded in the researcher's office while retelling the stories to the researcher. The researcher used gestures, such as nodding, to show that he was following, and interested, and to encourage the participants to continue their retelling. Since real-life conversations require more interaction between speakers, the researcher also tried to interrupt the participants, using words and expressions, such as *then, aha, OK, oh my God!, Did he do that? Oh Really!, and What happened then?* This had a positive impact on the participants' performance, and their motivation to complete the task. The participants' production was carefully transcribed. All pauses and sound elongations were included in the transcription. In the transcription, every pause was shown in seconds, which was measured with the use of a stop watch. Markee (2000) suggests that the entire speech event should be transcribed to "provide an exhaustive account of the data potentially available for analysis" (p. 105).

The researcher was interested in analyzing the oral production of the participants because the interlocutor who was the researcher of the present study himself, did not produce much discourse. Basing on repair operations, the researcher detected both operations in the transcription of the spoken discourse of Iranian learners of English, and then assigned them into two categories: replacement and insertion. Next, frequencies and percentages of both repair operation practices were calculated for

males and females. Finally, to find out any statistical differences in the use of repair practices between the two groups of EFL learners, a t-test was run.

It should be noted that in order to maximize the reliability of the researcher's classification, it was passed to three intra-raters, who are professors of Applied Linguistics at the University of Isfahan. In order to make the raters' task easier, the operations were highlighted and classified in context. That is, the whole utterance in which repair was practiced was transcribed. The raters were asked to verify whether that the researcher's classification was accurate based on the definition of each operation. Their comments were taken into consideration and after necessary rectifications, the final categories and frequencies were ready.

Results

Table1. Frequencies and percentages of repair practices of the first group (Females)

Repair Operation	Frequency	Percentage
Replacement	169	77.55
Insertion	49	22.45
Total	218	100%

As can be seen in Table 1, the participants in the first group recorded 218 instances of repair practices while retelling the two stories. It was observed that they tried their best to report as many events as they could; even very specific details were reported. This was evident in the average number of words used in their oral production which by means of MS Office word count, was found to be 550 words per story on average. It was also observed that all the participants in the first group used some instances of repair operations, either replacing or inserting. They practiced the two operations under investigation at the rate of 169 and 49 instances, respectively.

Table2. Frequencies and percentages of repair practices of the second group (Males)

Repair Operation	Frequency	Percentage
Replacement	144	77.83
Insertion	41	22.17
Total	185	100%

Table 2 above shows that the male learners used fewer repair practices than the females; they employed a total number of 185 instances of repair practices, representing both operations. Contrary to the participants of the first group, it was noted that the male participants described only the key events; very specific details were not reported. This was manifested in the average number of words they produced, which was 440. Again, participants of the second group produced replacing repairs more frequently (144 cases).

In order to find out whether the differences in repair practices were significant in terms of gender differences, a t- test was applied. As Table 3 below shows, the female participants' mean score was 7.27, while the male participants' mean score was 6.17, indicating that the females produced more cases of repair on the average.

Table3. Independent t-test output

Group Statistics						
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	
Total Repair Practices	Males	30	6.17	2.276	.415	
	Females	30	7.27	1.929	.352	

Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
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		F	Sig.	T		Sig. df (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total Repair Practices	Equal variances assumed	.719	.400	-2.02	58	.048	-1.10	.545	-2.19	-.010
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.02	56.48	.048	-1.10	.545	-2.19	-.009

As it is evident, "The mean score of the females' group ($M = 7.27$, $SD = 1.92$) is significantly higher ($t = -2.02$, $df = 58$, two-tailed $p = .048$) than that of the male participants ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 2.27$)".

Discussion

Above all, the results of the present study confirm that replacement and insertion operations are frequently used by both Iranian female and male EFL learners. Also, the use of the two repair operations by Iranian EFL learners reveal that the findings are in line with the results of previous research on language repair (Fox et al., 2010). However, it was found that there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of the frequency of repair practices.

The statistical analysis presented in Tables 1&2 revealed that the learners in the first group significantly produced more repair practices including replacing and inserting repair instances in the story retelling task, when compared to those in the second group. This may have been due to a number of reasons. As stated previously, the number of words uttered by females exceeded that of words produced by males, which might be attributed to a number of hypotheses which could be confirmed by further research since linguistic background was controlled through the application of an OPT.

Replacement operation as a self-initiated repair practice was used by both groups as an attempt made by the speaker to plan for a new utterance or to gain time to recall the next lexical item, when s/he felt that s/he made an error. Another point is that the male participants produced fewer repair instances, which could be attributed to the fact that they were more concise in story-retelling, i.e. they reported only the major events in both stories. To answer why, applying further research is suggested.

Also, Self-initiated repair was used when the speakers encountered problems with retrieving different items of the stories such as names of characters, story events, and main ideas. Additionally, it was noticed that repair practices were not always successful; that is, the speakers tried to correct what they thought to be a mistake, but they did not do that successfully. This finding is thus a confirmation of the view that self-initiated repair is a well-organized, orderly, and rule-governed phenomenon and not a chaotic aspect of spoken discourse (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Furthermore, it was found that participants in both groups were keen on taking risks to transmit comprehensible messages to their interlocutor, who was the researcher in the present study. They practiced repairs to retrieve ideas and lexical items and maintain conversation, and to produce correct forms or ideas. The participants' use of such repairs made their oral production comprehensible, despite the presence of hesitations and pauses.

Implications

An appreciation of the principles and practices of language repair can develop awareness on the part of teachers of the nature of talk, which is the target of the teaching of speaking and listening skills in second-language contexts. In fact, teachers can use the findings of this study to inform their evaluations of their learners' performance in terms of how far they stand from real-world discourse. Thus, teachers can teach the systematic features of repair to let their students be aware of different repair operations in ESL or EFL contexts. Furthermore, classroom researchers engrossed in

interactional competence may carry out further research to recognize how repair takes various forms between activities during continued contact.

Another implication is awareness of the intricacies of the repair practices of the target language can help learners communicate more effectively and avoid pragmatic failure. More pertinently, familiarity with the typical operations of repair can assist in the development of interactional competence. That is, learners get a better grasp of their own oral productions and find necessary strategies to deal with their own conversational breakdowns and in case of retelling short stories, students may find pre-planned strategies which can help them to perform the task more successfully.

The present study suffered from several limitations such as time and small samples. Also, this research included only students with an upper-intermediate level of proficiency; therefore, generalizations cannot be made to all levels of proficiency.

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THE IMPACT OF PRAGMATIC AWARENESS TECHNIQUES ON EFL LEARNER 'S REAL LIFE USE OF L2

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ABSTRACT

It is broadly acknowledged that teaching and learning languages involve not only grammatical or lexical systems but also the other aspects of language that are invisible, as they are often the most difficult to teach . The aim of this study is to find out whether explicit and implicit instructions of compliment will be effective in helping Iranian EFL learners gain pragmatic knowledge and achieve pragmatic appropriateness in on-line communication. Participants in this study are randomly distributed into a control group(N=30) and an experimental group(N=30). Compliment and compliment response were taught to the two groups in explicit and implicit ways. A pre-test and a post- test were given before and after the treatment to measure the participants 'pragmatics' competence in compliment knowledge The data needed for this study were collected from classes in Pardis cultural & educational institute in Chalus male=20,female=30). An OPT (OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST) was administered to them in order to homogenize them. written discourse completion test (WDCT) is used in order to take advantage of triangulation by contrasting data . The results showed that the explicit group showed greater progress than implicit group.

Keywords: Pragmatic competence, explicit instruction, implicit instruction, compliment

1.Introduction

Since the adoption of the communicative approach to second language teaching, the idea of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has been introduced into language education and become one of the main concerns of linguistic scholars (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981). 'Pragmatic competence' can be specifically defined as "knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out, and the ability to use language appropriately according to context" (Kasper 1997). According to Crozet (2003) some of the rules that govern interactions but that are not immediately obvious have been referred to as *invisible* rules .Kasper (1997) and Rose and Kasper (2001) extensively discuss results of previous studies on pragmatic instruction and conclude that pragmatics can indeed be taught. teachers and researchers are aware of the need to improve students' communicative competence and try out new ideas to contribute to meeting that need. Teaching pragmatic competence is widely regarded as an integral part of learning and teaching a language, and has been widely investigated (Bardovi-Harlig 1996; Rose and Kasper 2001; Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin 2005). Kasper (1989) includes the ability by learners to use speech acts in socially appropriate ways as part of what she calls a speaker's declarative knowledge of the target language. Thomas (1983) call it pragmatic failure, which occurs when learners transfer first language (L1) pragmatic rules into second language (L2) domains. This transfer of rules can lead to stereotyping about particular speech communities, as speakers may be perceived as being rude or inconsiderate. Teaching communication according to the sociocultural rules that govern speech acts in a given speech. Bardovi-Harlig (1996) argues that the classroom is a

place where pragmatic instruction can occur. They conclude that pragmatics has shown that explicit instruction of the target language pragmatic rules is effective in acquiring pragmatic competence. Rose and Kasper (2001) provide further insights into the benefits of both implicit and explicit teaching of pragmatic skills, as well as instructional methods for teaching and testing them. Through this study, I hope to find out how effective explicit and implicit instructions are in helping students gain pragmatic knowledge and the ability to use them appropriately in communication. Many studies have found that instruction of pragmatic knowledge can facilitate the development of EFL learners' pragmatic competence.

2. Statement of the problem

This study is going to show the impact of pragmatic techniques on Persian EFL learners who suffer from using informal L2 language speech properly in different contexts. L2 learners are not able to manifest or render the informal speech accurately in different contexts. For the most part of the sentences that native speakers utter or write are generally novel and to some extent problematic for the L2 learner. It seems that the learners are not being subjected to some valid texts and piece of conversation. Research into the pragmatic competence of adult foreign and second languages learners has established that grammatical development does not guarantee a corresponding level of pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harling and Dornyei, 1997) and that even advanced learners may fail to comprehend or convey the intended intentions and politeness values. The responsibility for teaching the pragmatic aspects of languages use falls on teachers. However, as language teachers, we face certain challenges. These include lack of adequate materials and training, which are the result of a lack of emphasis on pragmatic issues in ESL teaching methodology courses. My goal in this paper is to discuss the possibility of teaching pragmatics to ELLs. I will first define what pragmatic competence is, then some of the teaching method and techniques for raising the pragmatic awareness of students will be presented.

3. Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to find out whether particular instruction explicitly or implicitly will be valuable in helping Persian EFL learners increase pragmatic knowledge and attain pragmatic appropriateness in using compliments communication. The development of pragmatic rules of language use is essential for language learners. It is crucial to understand and produce language that is appropriate to the situations in which one is functioning, since failure to do so may cause users to miss key points that are being communicated or to have their messages misunderstood. The researcher is going to investigate the effect of explicit vs implicit teaching on EFL students' pragmatic awareness in the actual use of compliment formulas.

4. Review of literature

Kasper (1989) includes the ability by learners to use speech acts in socially suitable ways as part of what she calls a speaker's declarative knowledge of the target language. Studies of cross-cultural pragmatics description that the way speech acts are realized varies across languages. Teaching communication according to the socio cultural rules that direct speech acts in a given speech community is a valuable way to make students aware of what is valued within a culture and how this is communicated. Rose and Kasper (2001) emphasize the superlative thing pragmatists can do for English speakers is to make active with describing and explaining inter language make contact with from a world and intercultural point of view, rather than marker the native-like English as a normal form of world communication. Many scholars (e.g., Weizman, 1985) has focused on the issue of how to teach our students to be appropriate knowledge of pragmatics. In Weizman's terms (1985), pragmatics can be taught by speech act strategies in different cultures. For instance for compliment language learner communicative acts regularly contain pragmatic errors, or deified, in that they fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force or politeness value.

Leech (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) analysis pragmatics as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context (p.3). pragmatic competence has been recognized as one of the vital components of communicative competence Hymes (1972) coined the term "communicative competence." Through this term, Hymes was able to emphasize the importance of a language user

not only being able to be appropriate and use grammatical rules but also to form accurate utterances and know how to use them properly.

As leech (1990) points out, "the transfer of the norms of one community to another community may well lead to pragmatic failure (i.e., break down in communication), and to judgment that the speaker is in some way being impolite" (p.231). In the equal way, Blum-Kulka y Olshtain (1986: 166) consider that pragmatic failure takes place "... whenever two speakers fail to understand each other's intentions". therefore, training Culture: Is It Possible to keep away from Pragmatic Failure?). In organize to keep the "face" of both parties, both the speaker and listener use exacting communication strategies to assuage the communication (Koike 1992). Planned by Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987), there are two major types of politeness, both established based on Erving Goffman's notion of face .the first type of politeness, negative politeness, refers to making an unremarkable request with admiration to the other person's accurate to act freely. According to Koike (1992:21) it refers to the "consideration of the listener's wish to be unimpeded in taking action and having attention." This type of politeness is based on the notion of negative face, or "they want of every 'competent adult member' that his action be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62). Positive politeness, additional , pursues a association between both parties, respective of a person's need to be liked and understood. This type of politeness is consequent from positive face, or "they want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 62). According to Koike (1992), it can be defined as the speaker's effort to construct the hearer aware that the needs of both parties are somewhat similar. In new years when Richard Watts proposed "it would be one which forms of human interaction could be interpreted and described as instances of politeness and in which forms of linguistic usage in any language community could be observed and analysed as helping to construct and reproduce politeness" (2003: 49).

In order to avoid potential missteps in cross cultural communication, language learners must not only develop their overall proficiency and accuracy in using a language, but also seek to expand pragmatic competence in the language (canaleswain, 1980; Gumpers, 1982; Hymes, 1972; wolfson, 1983). Recently, numerous studies in second language learning have been conducted to examine the subject of pedagogical intervention and its significance to pragmatic competence (such as Félix-Brasdefer 2008 . According to Schmidt (1993: 35), "consciously paying attention to the relevant features in the input and attempting to analyze their significance in terms of deeper generalizations are both highly facilitative." Bardovi-Harlig (2001), he concludes that certain aspects of pragmatic competence do not and will not have the opportunity to develop properly without training. (Teichler & Steube 1991: 325). in general, language researchers have known that these fascination programs are one of the more successful ways for students to know-how the dynamic association between language and culture (Gorka & Niesenbaum 2001:101), where one entity is a direct reflection of the other. Freed (1995) contends that the arrangement of classroom teaching with extended apply in an fascination setting is measured one of the foremost methods to attain communicative competence.

DeCapua (1998) asserts, "Unlike grammatical errors that are usually recognized by native speakers, pragmatic errors are more difficult to detect, and language learners who make such errors may be considered rule by native speakers "As Holmes (1992) puts it , "learning another language involves a great deal more than learning the literal meaning of the words, how to put them together, and how to pronounce them. We need to know what they mean in the cultural context in which they are normally used" (p.305). In fact, research studies have revealed that even the speech acts of advanced foreign language learners

contain nonnative pragmatic features arising from pragmatic transfer (e.g., Scarcella, 1983; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; keshavarz, Eslami, & Ghahraman, 2006). instructions also help adult learners develop new representations of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge not existing in their L1, by means of instruction, including input exposure to pragmatic realizations, discussions of the metapragmatic knowledge underlying communicative action, and engagement in communicative activities where learners can practice using the linguistic knowledge they have acquired (Bialystok, 1993).

Savignon's (1991) justification "the communicative competence needed for participation includes not only grammatical competence, but pragmatic competence" (p.262). Pragmatic competence consists of the information that speaker-hearers use in order to keep in communication, as well as how speech acts are profitably performed (Ellis, 1994, p. 719). Koike (1989b) emphasizes the speaker's capability, and according to him, pragmatic competence lies in the speaker's information and use of rules of

suitability and politeness which persuade the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts (p.279). In Bialystok's (1993) explanation, "pragmatic competence entails a variety of abilities concerned with the use and interpretation of language in contexts. It includes speakers' ability to use language for different purposes to request, to instruct, to effect change. It includes listeners' ability to get past the language and understand the speaker's real intentions such as compliments. Hymes' primary acknowledgement of the role of framework in communication serves as a frame of location in present-day communicative teaching (Savignon 1997).

A compliment can be used both as a speech act alone, but also as a part of many others, and is commonly considered a positive politeness strategy. Compliments are expressions of positive assessment and judgment on the addressee's appearance or accomplishments. Compliments in each culture in some way approve and as Wolfson (1983) states, "compliments differ cross-culturally not only in the way they are structured but also in their distribution, their frequency of occurrence, and the function they serve" (p.87). Moreover, the article of compliment may differ from culture to culture. For instance, in the American culture it is pretty normal to openly compliment on the appearance of one's wife, e.g., *Your wife is so beautiful!* while, in the Iranian culture such a compliment will, in most cases, create problems for both the complimenter and receiver. The answer to a compliment may also vary from culture to culture. For instance, in the Iranian culture, the response to compliment on belongings, such as *I like your sunglasses* is usually the offer of that item to the complimenter. (Presumably the reader is familiar with the common phrase in Persian: /qabeli nadâérâd, piʃke/ = *They are worthless, you can have them!*). but in the American culture, the suitable response in this case would be: *Thank you, I like them, too.* If the receiver of the compliment in Iran does not offer the item of possession to the speaker, he/she may use expressions as the following examples:

1. Speaker A: parhânet xeili qâfâenge. 'Your shirt is very nice.'

Speaker B: tʃeʃmatu:n qâfâenge mibine 'It's your eyes which see them nice'.

2. Speaker A: (Commenting on a meal) qazatu:n xeili xoʃmâeze bu:d, dstetu:n dard nækone. 'Your food was very delicious, your hands won't have pain.'

Speaker B: xoʃhalâem ke du:t daʃtid. 'I'm glad you liked it'

3. Student: (At the end of a class): ostad xâeste næbaʃid
'Professor, don't be tired' instead of 'Good job', 'well done'.

Professor: motʃâkerâem 'Thanks'.

4. Visitor (commenting on the host's son): tʃe pesâere xu:bi!

'what a good boy!' Host: dâestetu:n ra mibusâed 'He kisses your hand' instead of 'Thanks'.

Lucía Fernández Amaya (2008) in an article entitled "Teaching Culture: Is It Possible to Avoid Pragmatic Failure? Says that The main purpose of learning a second language is communication. Nevertheless, many students are surprised when they realise that, in spite of having a perfect dominion of the L2 grammar rules, they have difficulties at interpersonal level when establishing a conversation with native speakers. She concludes that the resulting lack of pragmatic competence on the part of L2 students can lead to pragmatic failure and, more importantly, to a complete communication breakdown.

ANTONIO JOSÉ BACELAR DA SILVA in a study by the name of THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION ON PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT: TEACHING POLITE REFUSALS IN ENGLISH tries to investigate whether relatively explicit instruction may be facilitative for L2 pragmatic development, and the most appropriate and effective ways to deliver the pragmatic information to L2 learners. He further concludes that the instructional approach enhanced the L2 pragmatic ability of performing the speech act in focus. This suggests that L2 pedagogy which aims at providing learners with meta pragmatic information associated with meaningful opportunities for language use may result in gains in learners' L2 pragmatic development.

Author name(s): Grace Hui Chin Lin, Simon Chun Feng Su, Max Ming Hsuang Ho (2009) in a study by the name of Pragmatics and Communicative Competences believes that It is necessary and important to teach pragmatics at school in our globalized world in order to avoid as much as misunderstanding, which is likely to stem from cultural difference. As a result, greater importance should be attached to diverse customs and pragmatics.

This conceptual paper aims to deal with the basic theoretical foundations of pragmatics. Moreover, a type of speech act, "traditional dialogues of giving and accepting presents" will be compared and contrasted through the author's previous empirical studies. The significance of this study is that the

readers will be able to distinguish various types of communicative competences that Canale (1980) has identified and defined.

Vittoria Grossi (2009) in a study entitled "Teaching pragmatic competence: Compliments and compliment responses in the ESL classroom" discusses how teaching compliments and compliment responses could be approached in the adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. A review of the literature suggests that explicit instruction has some positive effects on the acquisition of these speech acts.

Research Questions of the Study

The research questions were as follows:

1-Do explicit pragmatic techniques bring about a significant difference in conversational ability (regarding compliments) of Intermediate EFL learners?

2-Do implicit pragmatic techniques bring about a significant difference in conversational ability (regarding compliment) of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

Hypothesis of the Study

H0: Explicit pragmatic techniques have no effect on Iranian EFL learner' conversational ability (regarding compliments).

H1: Implicit pragmatic techniques have no effect on Iranian EFL learner' conversational ability (regarding compliments).

Research Design and Methodology participants

The population from which the participants were selected for this study included Iranian EFL learners whose first language was Persian and who were studying English in a language institute in Chalus , Mzandaran. The participants in the current study were 60 EFL learners (female=40 , male=20) from Pardis cultural & educational institute and they were at the intermediate level. To be certain of the homogeneity of the participants in terms of proficiency, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used among 100 EFL learners.

Instruments and Materials

A pre-test and a post- test were given before and after the treatment to measure the participants 'pragmatics' competence in compliment knowledge and production before and after the treatment. Both tests were composed of a written discourse completion task (WDCT) and Role-play is an instrument for increasing student's pragmatic awareness in class. Role plays like those used in this study are similar to discourse completion tests but are performed in the oral mode. The OPT test used in this study was scored on the basis of a standard criterion . The criterion for scoring both in the pre-test and post -test was a maximum score of 30.

procedure

In this research there were two groups: the experimental group which received the knowledge of compliment through explicit instruction for 10-sessions and this group received some type of additional input that the control group which received knowledge of compliment through implicit instruction didn't enjoy that. Here , Instructions for the explicit group comprised of explanations on the use of specific routine formulas, viewing video extracts containing these formulas, the use of handouts which illustrated and explained the differences in the usage of the routine formulas in certain social contexts and inevitable discussions. The implicit group was not provided any of the explicit pragmatic activities. There were significant differences in the performance of the two groups. : Experimental group (N=30) and control group (N=30) .Both groups took a pre - test , participants' age and gender are not considered important in this research. Afterwards, the experimental group received the knowledge of pragmatics through explicit instruction For 10-sessions and this group received some type of additional input that the control group did not have access to .

Data Analysis

The responses come from discourse completion test , the criteria in judging are the same. First, the responses to the ten scenarios will be differentiated according to the language use as positive politeness, negative politeness,

or not doing face threatening act. Then, the responses are analyzed in detail . After that the results are evaluated generally to see the whole picture of language use of all groups of respondents. Then, each group and function will be analyzed in detail. The analysis will be compared within the group (e.g. student) and among different groups by using percentage. however, this study employs descriptive analysis which is concerned with summarizing and describing data based on the theoretical framework. I would like to explain further about how the responses were handled. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences version 16 (SPSS,16).The descriptive statistic of the participants and the tests will be arranged, and the results of both pre-test and post -test will be analyzed using the in dependent sample t-test and paired sample t-test used in order to compare the means of the two groups.

demographic information

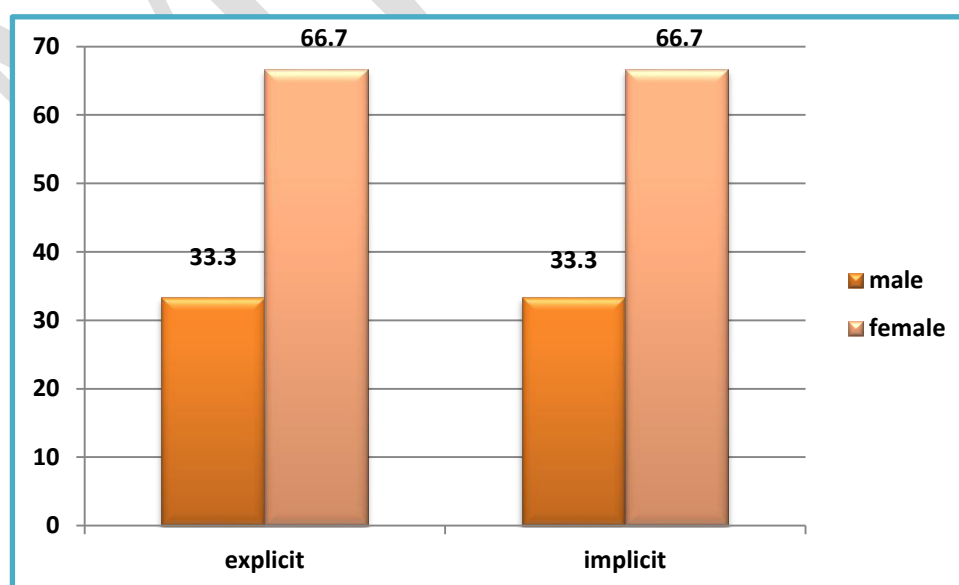
. Demographic information is provided through tables and figures

Table.1 frequency distribution of the sample based on their sex

group			Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
explicit	Valid	male	20	33.3	33.3
		female	40	66.7	100.0
		Total	60	100.0	
implicit	Valid	male	20	33.3	33.3
		female	40	66.7	100.0
		Total	60	100.0	

As it is shown in table 1, in both groups, 33.3% are male and 66.7% are female students.

figure.2 frequency distribution of the sample based on their sex



Based on the hypothesis, the effect of explicit vs implicit teaching will be different on learning compliment formulas.

Table.3 explicit vs implicit descriptive statistics before teaching

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre	explicit	60	4.28	2.871
	implicit	60	4.45	2.439

Table. 4 comparison of explicit vs implicit means before teaching

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
pre	-.343	118	.732

Based on the information provided in table 4 the independent significant level is equal to 0.732 which is bigger than 0.05. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between the mean of two groups before teaching.

Table.5 descriptive statistics of the explicit group before and after teaching

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	pre	4.28	60	2.871
	post	6.77	60	2.086

Table.6 comparison of the mean scores in the explicit group before and after teaching

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	pre - post	-5.987	59	.000

Based on the information provided in Table 6 the paired significance level is smaller than 0.05, so that there is significant difference between the mean scores in the explicit group before and after teaching.

Table. 7 Implicit descriptive statistics before and after teaching

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	pre	4.45	60	2.439
	post	5.82	60	2.467

Table 8 comparison of the mean scores in the implicit group before and after teaching

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
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Pair 1	pre - post	-4.026	59
			.000

Based on the information provided in table 8 the paired significance level of is smaller than 0.05, so that there is significant difference between the mean scores of implicit group before and after teaching. The independent t-test was used To study and compare the effect of explicit vs implicit teaching on learning.

Table. 9 explicit vs Implicit descriptive statistics before teaching

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
post	explicit	60	6.77	2.086
	implicit	60	5.82	2.467

According to table 4.1 that shows the descriptive analysis of pre-test scores of the experimental and control group of the study, there are 30 students in each group (N=30). The mean of the pre-test of the experimental group (4.45) and control group (4.28) are approximately close to each other. This means that two groups of the study are nearly at the same level of knowledge of pragmatic in using compliment formulas before administration of the treatment of the study.

8.Results

This section focuses on the inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). To maintain the effect of implicit vs explicit pragmatic techniques on Iranian EFL learners ' conversational ability in using compliment formulas, an independent-sample t-test and paired samples t-test was carried out. In order to see which variable was more effective, a paired-sample t-test was run to compare the pre-test post-test scores of each group and to check the effectiveness of each group and to check the effectiveness of different teaching (implicit vs. explicit teaching) on pragmatic development in two groups.

Table. 10 comparison of the mean scores in the explicit vs implicit group after teaching

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
post	2.278	118	.025

Based on the information provided in table 10, the independent t-test significance level is smaller than 0.05. So that there is significant difference between the mean scores of explicit vs implicit group after teaching. In other words explicit teaching had been significantly more effective than implicit teaching in learning compliment formulas.

Figure. 11 comparison of the mean scores in the explicit vs implicit group before teaching

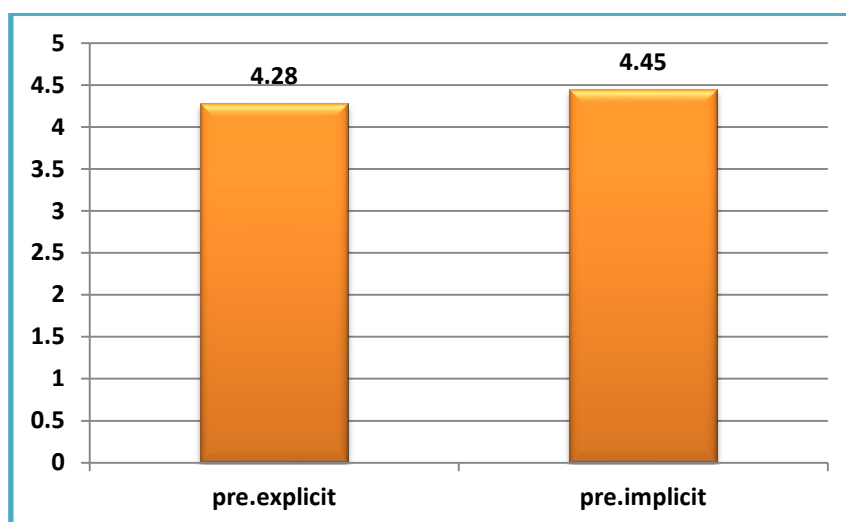


Figure. 12 comparison of the mean scores in the explicit group before and after teaching

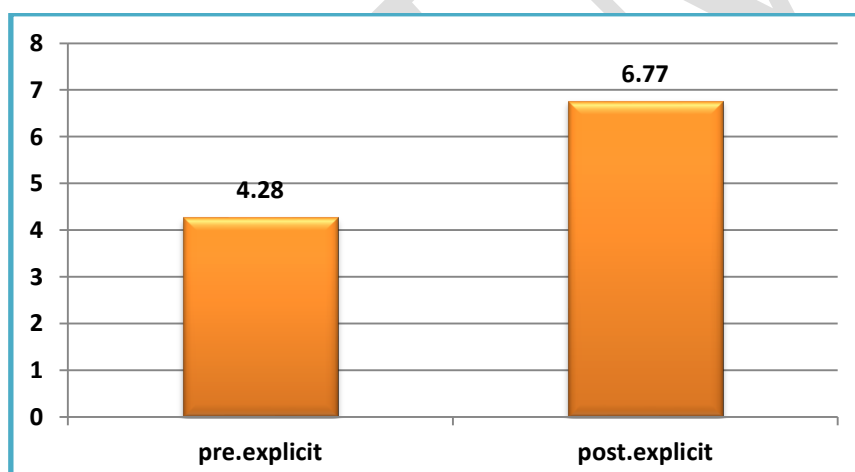


Figure. 13 comparison of the mean scores in the implicit group before and after teaching

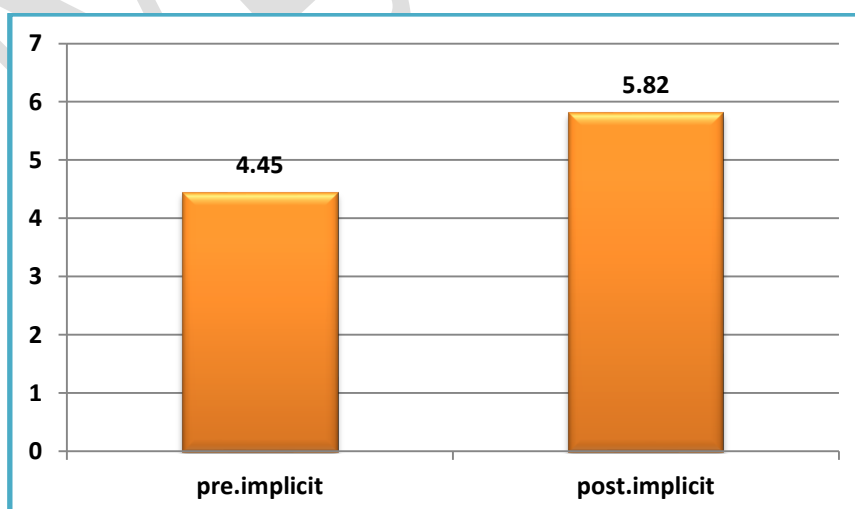
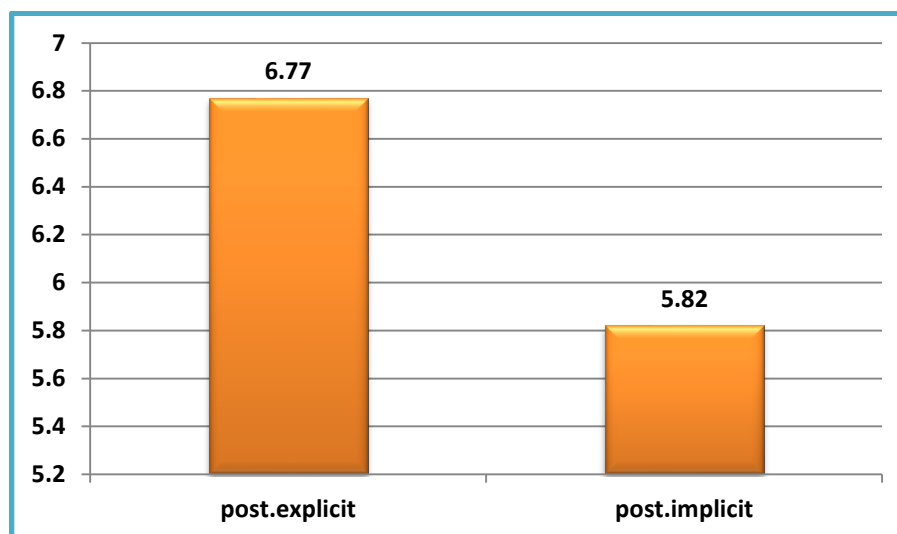


Figure. 14 comparison of the mean scores in the explicit vs implicit group after teaching



As the mean scores of the two groups suggest (experimental = 6.77. control = 5.82), experimental group performed better than the control group. It shows that explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching to raise knowledge of pragmatic awareness in intermediate level.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of explicit vs. implicit teaching on learner' pragmatics awareness. A number of studies have highlighted the role of direct (explicit) instruction in developing pragmatic knowledge in the language classroom (Bardovi 2001;Martinez-Flor&Alcon Soler,2007;Nikula,2008;Rose&Kwai fun,2001;Savignon&Wang2003).

The classroom has received special attention in relation to developing learners 'pragmatic competence in both second and foreign language contexts(Rose&Kasper,2001)because this is the setting where most initial language learning occurs. Explicit instruction is generally teacher-centered. However, one study looked at including implicit instruction for pragmatic learning. This study examined the effectiveness of explicit and implicit classroom instruction in terms of raising learners' pragmatic awareness as well as strategies to support this learning. All together 60 EFL students (20 males and 40 females) participated in the research . The study employed a rating assessment test, which included a pre-test and a post-test to rate the effects of instruction on student's awareness of suggestions. Explicit instruction involves guiding learners' attention towards the target forms with the aim of discussing those forms and, in contrast, implicit instruction aims to attract the learners' attention without any type of metalinguistic explanation while minimizing the interruption of the communicative situation(Doughty,2003).

Explicit and implicit instruction was investigated in Alcon-Soler's (2005)study to learn the extent to which these two instructional paradigms influenced learners' knowledge and ability to use compliment strategies as a communication tool. As described in the result section, and based on the findings of this study, a relationship between pragmatic awareness does exist in a way that learning occurred through teaching both explicitly and implicitly. The participants in both groups performed nearly the same in the way that all in the both groups benefited from these treatments. As is apparent, the students in experimental group performed better as a result of receiving explicit teaching treatment. The study considered the effect of explicit vs. implicit teaching on arising pragmatic awareness .The analysis of hypothesis, it can be claimed that explicit teaching helped students more to come over some problems of communication. It is worth nothing that experimental group , performed better than the control group.

Conclusion

This study investigated the EFL learners' knowledge of pragmatic awareness by analyzing the data. The study's finding strengthen the notion that further L2 development requires learners' noticing the target language features (Schmidt,1993,2001).Research on instruction, more specifically, has explored the teachability of different pragmatic features (Kasper&Rose,2002).The importance of instruction in pragmatics is emphasized in the EFL learning context. Appropriate and adequate instruction in pragmatic could facilitate EFL learners to possess sufficient pragmatic knowledge and become pragmatically competent in communication. Otherwise, pragmatic failure may arise, which may lead to communicative failure. The findings indicated that both explicit and implicit instructional approaches were very helpful in developing learners' pragmatic awareness in the EFL classroom. The results showed that learners in explicit group appeared to have mastered compliment formulas in communication more than implicit group. However , explicit instruction facilitated learners' production of compliments more than implicit instruction.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEARNING STYLES AND STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY HIGH AND LOW PROFICIENT EFL LEARNERS: AN IRANIAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

Class management on part of teacher's informed by their students' learning styles and strategies is one of the hotly debated issues which is nowadays highly appealing to all stake-holders in the realm of second language acquisition. This paper presents the results of a comparative investigation into the learning styles and strategies of high and low proficient language learners. The participants for the study were 57 students studying teaching English at Tabriz Azad University. Having taken a PET exam, the participants were categorized as high and low proficient learners. Of these, 29 Participants whose scores were above the mean were classified as high proficient learners and those of 28 participants whose scores were below the mean were considered as low proficient learners. All of the participants completed the Willing's Style and Strategy (1994) questionnaire through which the data were collected on their learning style and strategy preferences. Based upon the findings, whereas the *authority-oriented* style proved to be the most dominant style adapted by the low proficient learners, *communicative* style turned out to be the high proficient learners' most dominant style. In addition, the results revealed that there were no significant differences between the low and high proficient learners in terms of any of the individual strategies.

Keywords: Learning styles; Learning strategies; High proficient language learner; Low proficient language learner;

1. Introduction

Incorporating learning strategies and learning-how-to-learn into language curricula has been of growing interest since late 1980's. Such a focus helps students learn more efficiently and facilitates the activation of a learner-centered philosophy (Nunan, 1988, 1995 a, b). Generally speaking, learner's being well-developed in learning-how-to learn skills leads to their being more effective classroom learning opportunities and will then result in students' being sufficiently prepared for keeping language learning outside of the classroom (Wong & Nunan, 2011).

Learning-how-to-learn rather mastery of bodies of factual information has increasingly been the focus of the university level instruction. Tsui (2006) stated that learning is not about cramming in information. It is about learning by doing. It is about looking at issues in various ways and developing capacities, especially the ability to dig below the surface to reach the truth.

It is believed that learning styles and preferred learning approaches influence students' learning (Abu-Moghli, Khalaf, Halabi & Wardam, 2005). This is the baseline for finding any evident correlation between learning styles and learning outcomes (Cassidy & Eachus, 2000; Giordano & Rochford, 2005; Kia, Alipour & Ghaderi, 2009; Marefat, 2007; Moenikia & Zahed-Babelan, 2010; Ounwattana & Mounghchoo, 2008; Saricaoğlu & Arikan, 2009). Many scholars tried to define the term "Learning

Styles" in various ways. Learning styles can be the indicator of the way a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the environment and as a criterion for individual differences (Carson & Longhini, 2000). Loo (2004) cited a Kolb's (1984) definition of learning styles as the ways through which people produce concepts, rules and principles which directs them in new situations. Pierce (2000) defines learning styles as the way student prefers in learning materials (cited in Seif, 2001). Hartley (1998) interpreted learning styles as the approaches in which each person deals distinctively with different learning tasks. Oxford (2003) introduced or defined learning styles as the common approaches students apply to learn a new language or any other subject.

Research into learning styles and strategies has focused on a wide variety of questions and issues. These include the relationship between learning strategy preferences and other learner characteristics such as educational level, ethnic background and first language; the issue of whether high proficient learners share certain style and strategy preferences; whether strategies can be explicitly taught, and, if so, whether strategy training actually makes a difference to second language acquisition.

2. Literature Review

Since the mid 1970s, there has been substantial growth in the literature on learning styles (e.g., Oxford, 1993, Oxford et al., 1992, Oxford and Anderson, 1995, Reid, 1987, Reid, 1995, Reid, 1998, Wintergerst et al., 2001 and Wintergerst et al., 2003), on learning strategies (e.g., Anderson, 2005, Cohen, 1998, Naiman et al., 1978, O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, Oxford, 1990a, Oxford, 1996, Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995, Oxford and Ehrman, 1995, Rubin, 1975, Stern, 1975 and Wenden and Rubin, 1987) and on the relationship between learning styles and strategies (e.g., Carson and Longhini, 2002, Ehrman et al., 2003, Ehrman and Oxford, 1990, Ely and Pease-Alvarez, 1996, Oxford, 1990b, Oxford, 2001, Oxford, 2003 and Rossi-Le, 1995; Wong and Nunan, 2011). In these studies, learning styles and strategies have been variously described and defined.

Learning styles are general approaches to language learning, while learning strategies are specific ways to deal with language tasks in particular contexts (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003; cited in Wong & Nunan, 2011). Kinsella (1995) states that 'Styles' is the more general term, being "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (p. 171). Learners deploy these styles which seem to be quite stable regardless of the subject being studied or the skill being mastered.

Learning style is a group of interrelated characteristics in which the general is larger than the specific i.e. learning style is Gestalt in which internal and external operations are derived from individual's neural biology. It combines his personality and growth and shows them as a behavior (Keefe & Ferrell, 1990; cited in Moeinikia & Zahed-Babelan, 2010). Styles and strategies applied in language seem to be among the most important variables having impact on second language performance.

Learning is under the influence of individuals' styles and learning outcome is higher for students who are able to use multiple learning styles (Felder, 1995; Reid, 1987; Reid, 1998; Claxton & Murell, 1987; Mulalic, Mohd Shah & Ahmad, 2009). Learning strategies are the specific mental and communicative procedures that learners employ in order to learn and use language (Chamot, 2005; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, cited in Wong & Nunan, 2011). Although in most classrooms learners are unaware of these strategies, every task and exercise will be underpinned by at least one strategy. According to Macaro (2001), one of the hypotheses being tested by learning strategy researchers is that awareness and deployment of strategies will lead to more effective language acquisition. The goal of learning strategies, as mentioned by Weinstein and Mayer (1986) is to "affect the learner's motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge" (p. 315). Learning strategies enable students to take more responsibilities of their own language learning and personal development. "Learners' proactive contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of their own learning" (Dörnyei, 2005) is essential in developing skills in learning-how-to-learn.

Learners' learning styles and their own preferences may differ in various situations. For instance, some learners, prefer to learn by reading textbooks, while others prefer a verbal explanation (Riazi & Riasati, 2007, cited in Bidabadi & Yamat, 2010). In addition, people may differ in how they most effectively show their understanding; either orally or in writing and through graphs or figures. Concerning the importance of learning styles in various contexts, and in order to explain individuals'

learning style preferences, several learning style models have been developed. The “Memletics Model” is one of the learning style models assessed by the Memletics Learning Styles Inventory, which is based on the concept that everyone has a mix of learning styles, classifying learning styles into seven different types of learners: visual, aural, verbal, logical, physical, solitary, and social (advanogy.com, 2003-2007).

In relation to language learning styles, Willing (1994) identified four major styles: communicative, analytical, authority-oriented and concrete. These styles were derived from learner strategy preferences, which, in Willing’s data, clustered in the following ways.

Communicative: These learners were defined by the following learning strategies: they like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English, watching television in English, using English out of class, learning new words by hearing them, and learning by conversation.

Analytical: These learners like studying grammar, studying English books and newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes, and working on problems set by the teacher.

Authority-oriented: The learners prefer the teacher to explain everything, having their own textbook, writing everything in a notebook, studying grammar, learning by reading, and learning new words by seeing them.

Concrete: These learners tend to like games, pictures, film, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs, and practicing English outside class.

Oxford (1990a) draws a distinction between direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memorizing, analyzing, reasoning and guessing intelligently. These are specific procedures that learners can use to improve their language skills. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, include things such as evaluating one’s learning and cooperating with others.

Learning styles are general approaches to language learning, while learning strategies are specific ways to deal with language tasks in particular contexts (Cohen, 2003 and Oxford, 2003). The research perhaps most closely related to the links between learning styles and strategies is Oxford’s (1993) study on the five learning styles contrasts identified in her Style Analysis Survey (SAS): visual versus auditory (the use of physical senses for study and work), extroversion versus introversion (dealing with other people), intuitive-random versus concrete-sequential (handling possibilities), closure-oriented versus open (approaching tasks), global versus analytic (dealing with ideas). Each of the five style contrasts constitutes a comparative style continuum. It is important for learners to identify these learning styles and recognize their strengths and thus expand their learning potential. Oxford (1993) notes that once learners are aware of their own learning styles, it enables them to adapt their learning strategies to suit different learning tasks in particular contexts. Learners can take advantages of their learning styles by matching learning strategies with their styles; similarly, learners can compensate for the disadvantages of their learning styles to balance their learning by adjusting learning strategies (cited in Wong & Nunan, 2011)

Incorporating a learning-how-to-learn dimension into language pedagogy has been argued for in a range of pedagogical contexts and situations. In his overview of research into learning-how-to-learn, Nunan (1999: 171-2), for example, argues that knowledge of strategies is important, because the greater awareness you have of what you are doing, if you are conscious of the processes underlying the learning that you are involved in, then learning will be more effective. ... Research shows that learners who are taught the strategies underlying their learning are more highly motivated than those who are not. Research has also shown that not all learners automatically know which strategies work best for them. For this reason, explicit strategy training, coupled with thinking about how one goes about learning and experimenting with different strategies, can lead to more effective learning. Cohen (1998), and Wenden (2002), also advocate the incorporation of learner strategy training into learning programs.

Despite the considerable interest in learning styles and strategies, investigations into the effect of learner strategy training on language acquisition are relatively uncommon, and the results are rather mixed. In the 1980s, when this line of research started to gain traction, Cohen and Aphek (1980) investigated the effect of strategy training on vocabulary acquisition. They found that certain strategies such as the paired associates technique resulted in successful acquisition. At about the same time, Carroll (1981) investigated inductive learning. In this study, the ability to derive rules from samples of language was positively correlated with language aptitude. O’Malley et al. (1985) studied the effect of different types of strategy training (metacognitive, cognitive, and socio affective) on

different language skills. This research found that training had a significant effect on speaking but not on listening.

A decade later, in an investigation into the effect of providing opportunities for reflection, self-reporting and self-monitoring among university students, Nunan (1995a) found that opportunities to reflect on learning led to greater sensitivity to the learning process over time. Students were also able to make greater connections between their English classes and content courses conducted in English. Finally, opportunities to keep guided journals helped learners to develop skills for articulating what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it. The research did not, however, establish a correlation between strategy training and acquisition.

A major investigation into learning strategy preferences by adult immigrants was carried out by Willing (1994). Willing set out to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between strategy preferences and biographical characteristics such as first language background and level of education. The research failed to establish any such relationships, and Willing concluded that learning style differences were due to personality and cognitive style rather than factors such as ethnicity and educational attainment.

A study by Nunan (1997) further investigated the effects of strategy training on four key aspects of the learning process: student motivation, student knowledge of strategies, the perceived utility of strategies, and actual strategy use. In a formal experiment, in which the experimental group was systematically trained in a range of strategies, subjects outperformed the control subjects on measures of motivation, knowledge and perceived utility. Again, however, the relationship between strategy training and acquisition remains indirect.

Li and Qin (2006) looked at the relationship between learning styles and strategies in tertiary-level English learners in China. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including questionnaires and interview, the researchers were able to demonstrate that learning styles have a significant influence on learners' learning strategy choices. Styles may thus have an impact on learning outcomes. Based on their research, the investigators conclude that learner training and helping learners identify their strengths and weaknesses can have a positive impact on learning outcomes.

A study by Wang (1992) of 490 undergraduate students of English in Guangdong, China, using Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) found: (1) learning styles are one of the main aspects reflecting learner differences in English language learning; (2) the Chinese undergraduate students of English investigated preferred kinesthetic learning most and group learning least; (3) learning styles were affected by the length of time of English learning; (4) learning styles were related to EFL achievements; (5) students who are not good at listening and reading were more likely to prefer visual learning. Wang's (1992) study seems to support and add to previous research by Reid (1987) in relation to the findings regarding nonnative speaker students and Chinese students.

In summary, there is some evidence to support that notion that incorporating a learning-how-to-learn dimension into the language curriculum has a positive impact on second language acquisition, although the evidence of a direct relationship is relative scant. Training has a significant impact on motivation, aptitude, knowledge of strategies, and the perceived usefulness of directly applying strategies to language learning and use. What is uncertain is whether all strategies have an equal impact on these constructs and, ultimately, on acquisition, or whether some strategies are more potent than others.

The search for the 'good language learner' has provided a sub-theme within the research literature into learning styles and strategies. Rubin (1975) took the lead in studying the good language learner through classroom observations and identified seven strategies favored by them. Stern (1975) noted ten strategies of good language learning and described successful language learners in the aspects of personal characteristics, styles, and strategies. Naiman et al. (1978) used an interview questionnaire to study 34 good L2 language learners and found five major learning strategies shared among them. These studies documented some major characteristics of the good language learner, including awareness of learning styles and strategies, autonomy and self-direction in the learning process, and active language use.

Jones et al. (1987) set out to determine whether there were differences in the strategy awareness of effective and ineffective learners. This research revealed that effective learners were aware of the processes underlying their own learning and sought to match strategies to learning goals. Nunan

(1991) found that effective language learners displayed a high degree of autonomy, and were able to reflect on and articulate the processes underlying their own learning. Similar findings are documented in Benson (2001) and Benson and Nunan (2005). One key finding in the latter study was that effective learners not only developed a high degree of autonomy but that the development of autonomy appeared to be associated with a view of language as a tool for communication rather than as a subject to be studied in the same way as other school subjects.

The relationship between language proficiency and self-directed language learning was explored by Gan (2004). Three hundred and fifty-seven students from two mid-eastern universities in China completed a survey probing self-directed language learning attitudes and strategies. Interestingly, attitudes to SDLL did not seem to have a strong direct effect on language proficiency. Of four SDLL attitudinal factors, "only perceptions of confidence and abilities in carrying out self-directed language learning emerged as a sub-variable that was significantly associated with learner achievement." (Gan, 2004: 401). The study did reveal, however, that learners overall were positive towards SDLL and the results cast doubt on the stereotypical notion of the passive Asian learner.

In a follow-up study, Gan et al. (2004) carried out a qualitative investigation into the attitudes and strategies of nine successful and nine unsuccessful Chinese learners of English as a foreign language. In this study, attitudes towards the learning of the target language rather than specific strategies seemed to differentiate the successful from the unsuccessful learners.

In a study with a slightly different focus, although one that used proficiency level and patterns of variation in strategy use as variables, Green and Oxford (1995) found a significant relationship between strategy use and language learning success. Active use of the target language, with a strong emphasis on practice in naturalistic situations, was the most important factor in the development of proficiency in a second language.

In an overview paper reviewing changing perspectives on good language learners, Norton and Toohey (2001) provide an excellent overview of what has been learned to date about the 'good' language learner and highlight changing conceptions of the good language learner. They argue that sociocultural perspectives offer more useful insights into the nature of the good language learner than psycholinguistic ones, and conclude from the studies they reviewed, that ...the proficiencies of the good language learners in our studies were bound up not only in what they did individually but also in the possibilities their various communities offered them. Our research and recent theoretical discussions have convinced us that understanding good language learning requires attention to social practices in the contexts in which individuals learn L2s. As well, we have argued for the importance of examining the ways in which learners exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in those contexts. (Norton and Toohey, 2001: 318)

In this section, we have reviewed what the literature has to say on the characteristics of the good language learner. The research has identified a range of strategies of the good language learner, but there are no comparative investigations of the strategy use of high proficient versus low proficient learners. Two groups of researchers (Jones et al. and Gan et al.) did carry out comparative investigations of effective versus ineffective learners. However the focus of these studies was on differences in strategy awareness, and attitudes to learning, rather than on differences in the use of specific strategies.

From these two separate but related strands of research, we concluded that there was a gap in the literature relating to possible differences in the strategy use of high proficient and low proficient language learners. There is also a paucity of data on the relationship between strategies and language proficiency. Therefore, the aim of the study is to explore whether there are identifiable differences in learning styles, and strategy preferences between high proficient and low proficient learners studying at the university level in the Iranian context, and whether any differences are consistent with findings in other contexts. Language proficiency was determined in terms of grades obtained on PET exam. The aim of the research is to investigate whether there were attitudes, beliefs and practices that differentiated learners who did well within the Iranian education system, from those who did not. Ultimately, the research was intended to provide practical guidelines for teachers wishing to add a learning-how-to-learn dimension to their teaching.

3. Research Questions:

Drawing on the literature, the following research questions are posed about the two groups of learners (those who did well on PET exam and those who did not do well on it):

1. Are there any significant differences between Iranian EFL learners' learning styles across high proficient and low proficient learners?
2. Are there any differences in the individual learning strategy preferences of high proficient and low proficient learners?

4. Participants

Fifty seven Students studying teaching English at Tabriz Azad University participated in the current study. They were both male and female students whose ages ranged from twenty two to twenty eight years old. They were categorized as high proficient and low proficient learners after taking a PET exam. Of these, 29 Participants whose scores were above the mean were classified as high proficient learners and those of 28 participants whose scores were below the mean were considered as low proficient learners.

5. Instruments

The instrumentation used to collect data included: (1) A general proficiency test, a modified version of preliminary English Test (PET, 2004), was used to evaluate the participants' level in terms of language proficiency. It is a standardized Cambridge English Exam for the speakers of other languages (TESOL) at intermediate level. Because of time restrictions at university level, the researcher only included the reading section and other parts of the test were excluded. The total test score was 35.

2) Style and Strategy Questionnaire developed by Willing (2004), was administered to the participants. This scale includes thirty four-point Likert items with a four –point rating scale: no, a little, good, best. Of thirty items, items 4, 15, 16, 22, 25, 28, 29 refer to communicative style while items 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 21 are indicative of Authority- oriented style. Moreover, items 9, 12, 13, 18, 20, 24, 27 are sign of analytical style whereas items 2, 3, 5, 14, 23, 26, 30 refer to Concrete style. This survey asked participants to indicate their attitude towards thirty key in-class and out-of-class strategies by rating them on a four Likert scale. (For detailed information see the appendix one)

6. Procedure

Having evaluated the participants' level in terms of language proficiency through PET exam, the researcher categorized them into high and low proficient language learners. 'High proficient' learners were defined as those who obtained above the mean on the examination. 'Low proficient' learners were those who obtained below the mean. Afterwards, a questionnaire developed by Willing (1994) was administered. This survey asked participants to indicate their attitude towards thirty key in-class and out-of-class strategies by rating them on a four point scale. A chi- square was utilized to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire.

7. Results

Employing ex post facto criterion groups design, the present study aimed at investigating possible differences in learning styles, learning strategies of high and low proficient learners of English as a foreign language. 'High proficient and 'low proficient' learners were defined in terms of their scores on a standardized proficiency test of PET. The participants were 57 Students studying teaching English at Tabriz Azad University.

The distribution of the learning styles of high and low proficient learners is displayed in Table 1. From Table 1 below, it can be seen that the dominant style for high proficient students was communicative' students taking part in the survey being assigned to this style. This was followed by ' analytical ' 'authority-oriented ' then ' concrete style. However, "Authority – oriented " style is the dominant style in the low proficient learners. This was also followed by ' communicative', 'analytical ' and 'concrete' styles respectively. (Note that the nine learners had equal standings on at least two styles. Hence, they were discarded from the study.) In order to see if the difference is meaningful (or the relationship between the variables is statistically significant), a chi-square test was run.

Table 1. Learning style preferences of more and less effective students (n = 48).

	Style				Total
	Communicative	Authority-oriented	Analytical	Concrete	
High proficient	9	4	7	2	22
Low proficient	8	9	5	4	26

The results of the chi-square turned out to be: d.f.: 3; chi-square = 2.322; $p = .50$. Hence, it is observed that there is no relationship between proficiency and learning style preference.

However, it is observed in Table 1 that two cells have frequencies of less than 5. Hence, the results of the chi-square test may be dubious. In order to overcome this problem, Fisher's Exact Test was run. The results turned out not to be significant again.

Although there was not any significant difference between the learning style preferences of high proficient and low proficient learners, there might be such a difference at the level of the individual strategies employed. Hence, chi-square tests were run for each individual item.

The results revealed that there were no significant differences between high and low proficient learners on any of the individual strategies. Hence, it is natural that they did not show any significantly different style preferences. (Refer to appendix two)

From a pedagogical perspective, we are left with the question of how teachers can help the less effective learners in their classrooms. It might be tempting to recommend a 'doctor knows best' approach, insisting that less effective learners following the strategies and practices that characterize more effective learners. However, coercion is inimitable to our educational stance, and has never proved to be effective in the longer term.

8. Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

In his original study, Willing (1994) was able to relate the four language learning styles to cognitive models developed in psychology by Kolb (1976) and others. The key variables differentiating the four language learning styles were cognitive style (field dependent versus field independent) and personality (active versus passive). The dominant style of the high proficient language learners was communicative. These learners can be characterized as field independent and active. Willing suggests that these learners exhibit a degree of autonomy and goes on to say that "There can be a certain self-directedness involved in deliberately using interactions for learning purposes, and in this way an underlying field-independence may show itself" (Willing, 1994, p. 153). This finding is supported by subsequent research (see, for example, Nunan, 1991 and Gan, 2004 and others).

The dominant style for the low proficient language learners, on the other hand, was authority-oriented. These learners exhibit characteristics of field-dependence and passivity. This learner type prefers structure and sequential progression. They do better in 'traditional' classrooms and look on teachers as authority figures.

The style profiles appear to reflect other aspects of the survey. The high proficient language learners were field independent and active in their approach to learning. This is consistent with the finding that the high proficient language learners spend significantly more time activating their English out of class than low proficient learners. A caveat is in order. As already mentioned, the four learning styles identified in the study were represented in both groups, and in fact, the 'communicative' and 'authority-oriented' groups were represented in the low proficient groups in almost equal numbers.

The data yielded by this study reveal that styles and strategies are complex and multifaceted. Although the study revealed that nearly 50% of high proficient learners were 'communicative' in their overall learning style, and that this was significant, as we have already mentioned, all styles were represented to varying degrees in both groups and, in fact, in all learners. We would be cautious, therefore, in arguing that any one style is superior. Rather, we feel, along with Christison (2003) and others, that pedagogy should be style-neutral, and that the focus should be on encouraging learners to 'stretch their styles'. We interpret this to mean that teachers should add a learning-how-to-learn

dimension to their teaching that encourages learners to develop an extensive and varied repertoire of techniques and approaches to their learning.

Looking at the data from the study as a whole, we would see the main difference between the high and low proficient learners as being attitudinal. The high proficient learners in this study were more active and more prepared to take control of their own learning. They spent significantly more time out of class practicing their English, and displayed a greater degree of autonomy than the low proficient learners. This is consistent with results obtained from qualitative research (Benson, 2001 and Benson, 2003, Wong and Nunan 2011).

So what can be done to help low proficient language learners? Following on from what has just been said, attitudinal change is critical. Learners who appear to be relatively ineffective in their efforts to master language should be encouraged to see language as a tool for communicating rather than as a body of content to be memorized. Fostering reflective learning, developing independent learning strategies and encouraging a reduced dependence on the teacher are also recommended.

Learners should also be encouraged to develop a greater range of strategies and to activate their language outside of the classroom. They should, in short, be encouraged to think about the processes underlying their own learning, and to see that, ultimately, they are responsible for their own learning (Nunan, 1995b).

Following Christison (2003), we suggest that teachers audit their own classroom practices to identify the strategies that they themselves favor. Teaching style and learning style are closely related. In fact, as Christison suggests, they can be seen as two sides of one coin. Learners are more likely to 'stretch' their own learning style and develop greater flexibility as learners if teachers 'stretch' their own teaching style and develop greater flexibility as teachers. Stretching their style and increasing the range of teaching strategies they employ will help teachers cater to the different learner types that will almost certainly exist in their classrooms.

Many research studies such as Smith (1985), Claxton & Murrell (1987), Willing (1988), and Riazi & Riasati (2007) claim that matching learning methods with learning style preferences lead to academic achievements. So, learners' learning styles and teacher instructional methods should be matched in order to enrich the students' learning outcomes (performances) and provide an everlasting flexible environment for the students.

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THE EFFECT OF DISCUSSION-BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE SPEAKING ABILITY OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL FEMALE ENGLISH LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether discussion-based activities had any impacts on the development of speaking capability of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level. 59 students served as the participants in this research. In pre-test the subjects were interviewed on topics that were chosen from interchange series books and all the oral productions were voice-recorded. One rater concerned in each interview to rate them first and after six month they were corrected again by the same rater. After calculating intra-rater reliability of the pre-test, the subjects assigned into two groups of 30 members as control group and 29 members of experimental group randomly. Calculating independent samples t-test showed that the two groups were homogeneous. During 12 session experimental group underwent discussed on the given topics but control group was taught through according to the routine method of teaching. The results demonstrated that the experimental group which received discussion-based activities as the treatment outperformed control group.

Keywords: Discussion-based activities, speaking, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.

1. Introduction

There are many reasons to suppose that English is the world's most common language. Speaking English not only can allow you to travel and do business and still be able to talk to a large majority of people no matter where you go but also can convey information and ideas, and maintain social relationship by communicating with others. It is worth to point out that McDonough and Shaw (2003) devoted considerable attention to speaking skills and said: "With the recent growth of English as an international language of communication, there is clearly a need for many learners to speak and interact in a multiplicity of situations through the language, be it for foreign travel, business or other professional reasons." (p.133).

As McCarthy(1991) mentioned, it is undeniable fact that: "Interactional talk has as its primary functions the lubrication of the social wheels, establishing roles and relationships with another person, confirming and consolidating relationships, expressing solidarity, and so on" (p.136).

In sum, speaking is a key to communication. By considering what good speakers do, what speaking tasks can be used in class, and what specific needs learners report, teachers can help learners improve their speaking and overall oral competency.

Many language learners show great regard for speaking ability as the gauge of knowing a language. It is a commonsense understanding that students' speaking respect to optimal level is not often met by a straight forward process. Because the elements of speaking are numerous and not always easy to identify. However, learning speaking involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking a question or obtaining a turn.

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As Burkhart(1998) mentioned that teachers should also be aware of these three aspects of knowledge that speaking encompasses. First, mechanics: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar. Second, functions: transaction or interaction. Third, Social/Cultural rules and norms.

Harmer(2007)explains three primary reasons for getting students to speak in the classroom. Firstly, rehearsal opportunities- chances to practice real-life speaking . Secondly, providing feedback for both teacher and students. And finally, activating the various elements of language they have stored in their brain. Discussion, whether unplanned or planed, has the great benefits of fostering fluent language use. He also focused his efforts on discussion-based activities and stated that discussions range from highly formal, whole-group staged events to informal small-group interaction. Buzz groups, instant comment, formal debates, unplanned discussion and reaching a consensus come into the category of different formats of discussion.

The fundamental goal of this current study was to investigate whether the discussion-based activities have any substantial effects on the speaking skill of EFL learners in order to enable them to reach a high level of communication proficiency, whereby they can communicate fluently, accurately, and appropriately. So, this paper not only took as a basic premise that using discussion-based activities was an attempt to magnify one of the most effective factors that has main role in improving speaking skill, but also it investigated innovative techniques for teaching speaking skills in order to obtain the tips that focusing on them are necessary for English teachers and for the EFL learners .With such purposes in mind, this study sought answers to the following question:

Do discussion- based activities have any significant effects on the speaking ability of Iranian intermediate EFL female English learners?

Ur(2012)stated that speaking is the most essential among all the four skills, not only people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language but also language learners are mainly interested in learning to communicate orally.

Richards, Rodgers and Theodore (2003) stated that the use of discussion groups, group work, and pair work has often been supported both in teaching languages and in other subjects. Generally, such groups are used to provide a change from the normal pace of classroom events and to rise the amount of student participation in lessons. These activities are carefully planned to maximize students` interaction and to facilitate students` contributions to each other`s learning .

With respect to speaking improvement, Williams and Burden (1997) stated that by using group work in a language , enhancing language learning and developing the self-image and motivation of the group members will be happened.

West(1997) noted that small-group and pair work dramatically foster the learning process. when learners know each other, they will be willing to talk about a variety of topics in groups. And, once the learners feel comfortable in their groups, they can help each other fill in the gaps in their language abilities.

Thornbury (2005) explained that the main characteristic of the best discussions in class are those that happen without any pre-planning and pre-organizing, and they should occur suddenly , because the learners feel they want to talk spontaneously, either because of something personal that a learner reports or because a topic or a text in the course causes some debate.

Celce-Murica (2001) stated that discussions are the most widely used activity in the oral skills class. The class should go through the following procedures: Not only the learners are introduced to a topic via a reading, a listening passage, or a videotape but also they are asked to get into groups to discuss a related topic in order to find a solution, a response, or the like. Teachers have got the leading role in planning and setting up a discussion activity.

Kotsko (2009) in his article drew a comparison between lecture-based and an ideal discussion-based classes. The first were widely criticized in different aspects such as failing to teach students in an enduring way, causing a passive learning style, forgetting the information soon after the exam, By contrast, students are unlikely to forget what they learn in the context of a discussion, because they have to work hard to come up with their own answers.

Kachorek and Olds (2009) indicated that there were general strategies of using discussion question effectively that might account for what went well in discussion-based classes such as starting with open-ended questions, , asking questions with multiple answers, utilizing follow-Up questions, knowing which types of questions do what, relating the material to students` lives, asking about the content, not the participant, using Small groups, decentralizing.

Some positive characteristics of discussion-based classes were set out in details by Weir(2009). They include: Student-centered classes are better than presentation-style counterparts, skillfully done discussions empower students to understand the complicated of a subject rather than just trying to figure out your grading angle, give the teacher a chance to get to know students, be astonished by them, and learn from them.

Zuraidah(2008) had conducted a study about speaking as a productive skill in ESL classroom. Discussions, presentations, negotiation, and even debates are the various forms of speaking at the workplace . In order to involve ESL learners in discussion activities plenty of room should be given for real-life speaking context for instance, organizing events, participation in students' meeting and social work. Common activities like group discussions and group presentations which strengthen relationship and togetherness are striking features of an ideal class. In this condition, one of the benefits of discussion-based class is empowerment and learners' autonomy.

Oradee conducted a study for the purposes of studying speaking skills of grade 11 students by using three communicative activities(discussion, problem-solving, and role-playing), and studying the students' attitude towards teaching English speaking skills using the three communicative activities. The sample group consisted of 49students at a secondary school in Udon Thani, Thailand, classified by high, medium, and low according to their abilities of English speaking proficiency level. There search findings were as follows: First, the students' English speaking abilities after using the three communicative activities were significantly higher than before their use. and second, the students' attitude towards teaching English speaking skills using the three communicative activities were rated as good .

Hassani(2008)did a study to investigate whether brainstorming, group brainstorming, had any impacts on the development of speaking capability of Iranian EFL learners at lower intermediate level or not. The results of this study demonstrated that the experimental group which received group brainstorming as the treatment outperformed the control group, so; the null hypothesis- group brainstorming does not have any significant impact on the development of Iranian EFL learners' speaking capability at lower intermediate level- was rejected.

In this section, it is worth pointing out that Tavoosi (2005) investigated the study in terms of whether friendship among pairs has any impact on increasing the learners' speaking Proficiency. Both the experimental group and the control group were given pair work and group work to practice the oral language. The difference lied in the fact that within the same classes, some students might have worked with their friends, with which it is meant that it were the students who had to choose who they wanted to work with (without the teacher's influence), while for the other pairs; it was the teacher who chose the pairs to work with one another. After at least two months of observation, the post test was taken and it showed that the pairs that they have chosen their own partner have the crucial progress than the pairs that their members have chosen by the teacher.

Finally, Sheikhezadei (2010) carried out a research to find out whether meta-linguistic corrective feedback has any impact on the speaking development of learners with different levels of language proficiency. The analyzed results showed that meta-linguistic corrective feedback has a statistically significant impact on the speaking development of Iranian EFL learners. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the analyses related to the second research question revealed that the impact of meta-linguistic corrective feedback on the Iranian EFL learners' speaking development at different levels of language proficiency was not significant; although, the obtained t-values were not the same. Thus, the second null hypothesis was not rejected.

2. Method

Design

In this study, quantitative research was utilized, the subjects assigned into two groups as control group and experimental group randomly. the subjects in experimental group underwent treatment through the activities that they discussed on the given topics in group , the teacher as a facilitator guided an informal discussion involving the entire class by asking questions, clarifying student points of view, and makes provisional summaries to assist students with the given topic. After treatment, both experimental and control group were interviewed again. Then, based on SPSS software descriptive statistics calculated the gained data.

Participants

The present study was conducted with 59 female participants at intermediate level studying EFL at Saei English language institute in Nasimshar, Tehran.

Instruments/ Materials

The following instruments had been used in this study:

1. Interchange Placement Test for determining the level of 81 participants.
2. Interview questions from Interchange Series for applying Pre- test and Post-test.
3. FSI(Foreign Service Institute) as a practical testing kit were administered by (Adams. and Frith,1979) (Cited in Hughes,2003).
4. SPSS Software

Procedure

At the beginning, Interchange placement test was administered among 81 students in order to find out whether they are in intermediate or not, then fifty nine students whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below average mean score served as the participants in this research. The students were assigned into two groups of thirty members as control group and twenty nine experimental group randomly. The researcher used semi-structured interviews for the test. All the oral productions of subjects were recorded. Set of subjects in experimental group were taught all the lessons through discussion-based activities during 12 sessions 90 minutes. But the students in control group were taught the routine method of teaching at the institute. In post- test the subjects of control group and experimental group were interviewed with the same characteristics of administration and scoring as in the pre-test. A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean difference between the gained scores of experimental and control groups. Finally, based on the result by using of SPSS software to find out whether the null hypothesis rejected or not.

Data Analysis

After preparing a checklist based on American FSI procedures in order to convert qualitative data into quantitative (numerical) data. There, for the analysis of data the researcher used SPSS to calculate the descriptive statistics such as Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. So in order to establish the reliability of the test used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of pre- tests. The correlation was significant, $r = .90$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to claim that the test scoring was reliable. Then, in order to attest the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups The t-table was employed to see whether there was a significant difference between the mean score of pre-test of experimental and control groups. The value of obtained was consulted with the value of t-table. The data analysis in this revealed that the t- observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973$, $P > .33$. so the null hypothesis was accepted that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. It was time to establish the reliability of the posttest used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test. The correlation was significant, $r = .83$, $P < .00$. so the post-test was reliable. Finally, the post test scores were analyzed through independent samples t-test. It should be noted that outliers were removed from the analysis. The remaining were 27 students in the experimental group and 27 students in the control group The t-observed was significant ($t(1,52) = 2.14$, $P < .03$). The interpretation was that there was significant difference between the two groups. The mean of the experimental group is 11.34 points higher than that of the control group. Hence, the conclusion was that the treatment in the experimental group has been successful.

3. Result

In the first phase, I had to prove the reliability of pre-test. In order to establish the reliability of the test used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test. As the results, showed (Table 1) the correlation was significant, $r = .90$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to claim that the test scoring was reliable.

Table 1: Intra-rater reliability for the Pre-test (Correlations)

		Total1	Total2
Total1	Pearson Correlation	1	.902**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Total2	Pearson Correlation	.902**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second phase, the students were assigned into two groups of thirty members as control group and twenty nine experimental group randomly, Then it was necessary to find out whether two mentioned groups are homogenous or not. In order to attest the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups an independent samples t-test was carried out on the pretest given to the two groups. The data analysis revealed that the t- observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973$, $P > .33$. It was safe to accept the null hypothesis that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous and the findings of the posttest would be a function of the treatment. (Table 2)

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test of the Pretest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference			Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	.167	.685	.973	57	.335	5.35517	5.50492			-5.66823	16.37858
	Equal variances not assumed			.972	56.579	.335	5.35517	5.50984			-5.67987	16.39022

The third phase, it was the time to calculate the post-test reliability. In order to establish the reliability of the posttest used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test.

As the results showed the correlation was significant, $r = .83$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to consider the test was reliable. (Table 3)

Table 3: Intra-rater reliability for the posttest

		Total1	Total2
Total1	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	59	59
Total2	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the final phase, I had to reject the null hypothesis, if I wanted to prove the positive effect of my treatment on the experimental group. The post test scores were analyzed through independent samples t-test. It should be noted that outliers were removed from the analysis. The remaining are 27 out of 29 students in the experimental group and 27 out of 30 students in the control group. As the table showed the t-observed is significant ($t(1,52) = 2.14, P < .03$). The interpretation is that there was significant difference between the two groups. It was safe to claim that the treatment had been effective. (Table 4)

Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test for the two groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Total	Equal variances assumed	3.178	.080	2.145	52	.037	11.33333	5.28479	.72863 21.93804
	Equal variances not assumed			2.145	49.793	.037	11.33333	5.28479	.71743 21.94923

As (Table 5) below shows, the mean of the experimental group was 11.34 points higher than that of the control group. Hence, the conclusion was that the treatment in the experimental group has been successful.

Table 5: Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Experimental	27	44.4815	21.36383	4.11147
	Control	27	33.1481	17.25310	3.32036

4. discussion and conclusions

Based on the result of the test statistics run to the findings of this study, the reliability of pretest was proved because the correlation was significant, $r = .90, P < .00$. (Table 1). In order to attest the homogeneity of control and experimental groups an independent samples t-test was carried out on the pretest given to the two groups. The data analysis revealed that the t-observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973, P > .33$. It was safe to accept the null hypothesis that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous and the findings of the posttest would be a function of the treatment. After treatment, to establish the intra-rater reliability of posttest used in this research study, the correlation was significant, $r = .83, P < .00$. It was safe, then, to consider the test was reliable (Table 3). After removing some outliers from the analysis. The remaining are 27 out of 29 students in the experimental group and 27 out of 30 students in the control group. The t-observed is significant ($t(1,52) = 2.14, P < .03$). The interpretation is that there was significant difference between the two groups. It was safe to claim that the treatment had been effective. (Table 4). As (Table 5) below shows,

the mean of the experimental group was 11.34 points higher than that of the control group. Hence, the conclusion was that the treatment in the experimental group has been successful.

In this study, the researcher tried to deal with speaking as one of four basic skills and highlight its importance in every day situations. The researcher pointed out that discussion-based activities play a crucial role in our lives and we can share our knowledge. To feel confident while learning to speak a foreign language, the students were supposed to be put in a safe environment. The advantages of this kind of activities such as reducing tension in class, creating a pleasant atmosphere and building up students' independence and confidence had been mentioned before. All activities were aimed at practicing speaking in English lessons, focusing on either fluency or accuracy. By means of this thesis, it was realized to be practical for the teachers in order to handle discussion in their classes. Likewise, by applying different discussion-based activities, the learners involved and practiced their language with their classmates in class, they also could use their just learned vocabularies and selected the appropriated words and expressions to discuss the given topics with their friends in acceptable pronunciation and in correct structures. On the other hand, these activities fostered the learners fluency and accuracy because the students were given the opportunity to practice the correct use of English as a foreign language over and over. Hence, the discussion-based activities seemed to be essential for preparing students for the real world and make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them. They can be done in preparation for job interviews. It is also expected to be used by the teachers whose aim is to improve their students' communicative skills although it may have some weak points.

Overall, the findings of the study indicated that discussion-based activities are valid practices for developing students' speaking skills. Furthermore, the results of the analyses of the post interview confirmed that learners had positive attitude towards these kinds of activities.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT (EQ) AND THEIR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to explore the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency. It also investigates whether there was any significant difference between Iranian male and female, and employed and unemployed EFL learners regarding their emotional quotient. One hundred and twenty three male and female students, who study B.A. and M.A. in English language teaching, literature and translation at the English departments of Birjand's Azad and state Universities, participated in the study, fifty eight of whom were males and sixty five of whom were females. Moreover, fifty two of the participants were employed and seventy one of them were unemployed with an age range of 23 to 32 years old. The data were obtained through the application of Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory. Data analysis indicated that there was a strong, positive correlation between the proficiency test and total EQ. Also, the results suggested that there is no significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding their EQ. In addition, there is a statistical difference between Iranian employed and unemployed EFL learners in regard with their EQ.

Keywords: Emotional quotient, Language proficiency, EFL learner, Emotional Quotient Inventory

1. Introduction

As a general concept, Intelligence consists of social and emotional factors in addition to the cognitive factors (Wechsler, 1989). Brown (2007) states that "the management of core emotions controls efficient mental and cognitive processing" (p. 109). He contends that, based on Goleman (1995), the emotional mind is far quicker than the rational mind, springing into action without even pausing to think what it is doing. Goleman (1995) emphasized that, intelligence quotient (IQ) contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, the rest is related to other factors such as emotional intelligence (EI). EI is defined as "the cooperative combination of intelligence and emotion" (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004, p. 197). EQ, as an approximately new behavioral model, makes us capable of perceiving, using, understanding, and managing our emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Research has indicated that EQ plays more important role than IQ in life success and education (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Many studies come to the conclusion that EQ is significant for work settings

(Carmeli, 2003), and classrooms (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004), enhances performance in interviewing (Fox & Spector, 2000), and contextual performance (Carmeli, 2003) (as cited in Pishghadam, 2009). As Human beings, we are very emotional. Emotions dominate all our thoughts, actions and reflections. In fact, we are influenced by our emotion (Brown, 2007).

In spite of the lack of attention to emotions in teaching contexts, learning and teacher training courses, recent studies on EQ made plenty of changes. Recent studies have demonstrated that EQ is significant for classrooms (Petrides et al., 2004), and it may affect academic achievement in various ways. Put it differently, as language is a social behavior and involves the external expression of emotions, affective and social language learning strategies also play significant roles in determining one's academic success (Petrides et al., 2004).

Goleman (1995) asserts that EQ is a group of acquired skills and competencies which predict positive outcomes at home with one's family, in school, and at work. People who have them are healthier, less depressed, more productive at work, and have better relationships. In his belief, EQ is defined as the ability to love and be loved by friends, partner and family members.

Goleman (1995) proposed that nearly 80% of the difference among people in different forms of success which is not accounted for by IQ and similar tests could be explained by other features that constitute EQ. Goleman defines EQ as including "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope" (p. 34). Later, he reformulated his first definition of EQ and divided EQ into 25 different emotional competencies, among them political awareness, service orientation, self-confidence, consciousness, and achievement drive (Goleman, 1998).

Recently, the effect of EQ on academic success has received considerable attention in education (Elias, Arnold, & Hussey, 2003). Nevertheless, as Brackett and Katulak (2007) assert, just few studies have been carried out to investigate EQ in English as a Foreign/Second Language (ESL/EFL) contexts, given the idea that the EQ serves both internal mechanisms and external environment in language learning process (Goleman, 2000).

Researchers have recently started to explore the effects of EQ in the educational context and few studies have concentrated on the overall impacts of EQ on second or foreign language learning. These few studies have only been associated with particular aspects as management, self-esteem, anxiety, strategy use, or motivation. Moreover, other studies about intelligence have investigated the relationship between IQ and different aspects of language learning. Similarly, most researchers who work on the EQ concept have not attempted to investigate the relationship between EQ and foreign or second language learning and they mostly explored the relationship between EQ and other psychological or educational factors. Taking the above mentioned factors into account, the present study is an attempt to determine whether EQ, as an interpersonal and innate potential, has any relationship with language proficiency of participants. It also tries to investigate whether there is any significant difference between Iranian male and female, and employed and unemployed English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners' EQ scores.

The study, therefore, seeks answers to the following questions:

Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency?

Question 2: Is there any significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding their emotional quotient?

Question 3: Is there any significant difference between Iranian employed and unemployed EFL learners regarding their emotional quotient?

2. Review of Literature

The term EQ is well known worldwide and broadly used nearly everywhere. Much academic research is currently focused on EQ and analyzing its effect on one's performance in personal and professional life. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined EQ as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Mayer and Salovey (1997) later

defined EQ as the capability of perceiving emotions, assessing and generating emotions so as to help thought, understanding emotions and emotional knowledge, and reflectively regulating emotion so as to enhance emotional and intellectual growth.

The encyclopedia of Applied Psychology states that there exist three major EQ models:

- a) The Mayer-Salovey model: It views EQ as the capability of perceiving, understanding, managing and using emotions to facilitate thinking;
- b) The Goleman model: It defines EQ as an array of emotional and social competencies which assist managerial performance.
- c) The Bar-On model: It describes EQ as a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators which influence intelligent behavior.

Among these EQ models, Mayer and Salovey's model is a mental ability model and Bar-On's and Goleman's model are mixed EQ model. The mental ability model considers emotions and the relationship between emotions and thoughts (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). The mixed model "treat mental abilities and a variety of other characteristics such as motivation, states of consciousness (e.g., "flow") and social activity as a single entity" (ibid, p. 403).

Davis (2004) states several psychologists are not certain if emotional intelligence can be measured at all. Pfeiffer (2001) has the same perspective as he states that "there is no objective, theoretically grounded measure of emotional intelligence up to now, and no measure of EI can stand up to scientific scrutiny and no measure is reliable and valid" (p. 139).

Bar-On employed his own scale for measuring EQ. He developed the EQ-i (Emotional Quotient Inventory) in 1980 with the purpose of measuring one's ability of being successful in terms of meeting the demands coming from the environment and dealing with the pressures (Bar-On, 2002). On the basis of the Bar-On model, EQ is related to the emotional, personal, and social aspects of intelligence (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). EQ is consisted of capabilities pertained to understanding oneself and others, relating to people, adapting to changing environmental demands, and managing emotions (ibid.).

In a study regarding the psychometric features of EQ-i, Dawada and Hart (2000) propose that "overall,...the EQ- i is a promising measure of emotional intelligence". Internal consistency was measured making use of Cronbach's alpha and item homogeneity was evaluated employing mean inter- item correlation. Internal consistency of the EQ total and composite scales was found to be fairly good (alpha's = .81 to .96), while the internal consistency of the subscales was variable. The EQ total scale was found to be less homogenous than the composite scales. Convergent and discriminant validity was addressed, resulting in similar findings as those described above (as cited in Shuler, 2004).

Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, and Majeski (2004) conducted a study aiming at investigating the relationship between EQ and academic success. In this study, the short form of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:Short) was administered to 372 freshman students who were in Ontario University and their grades were taken into account for measuring their success. The findings showed that there was a close relationship between academic success and different dimensions of EQ (intrapersonal, stress management, and adaptability).

Barisonek (2005) explored the relationship between EQ and academic achievement and between EQ and academic production of third and sixth grade students who were in public elementary school in Western New York. For measuring academic achievement of the students, Terra-Nova achievement test was administered and for measuring academic production of the students, teacher-assigned numerical grades were used utilized. EQ of the students was measured by the Youth Version of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory. In this study, 44 African-American third and sixth grade students were chosen as participants. The results showed that there was no relationship between EQ and academic production (grades).

More recently, Walker (2006) examined the relationship between EQ and academic success in College. In this study, the short version of the Bar-On EQ Inventory was administered to 1205 fourth-year students in order to measure their EQ. As for the analysis, correlations between EQ and other variables such as gender, ethnicity, American College Test (ACT) scores, grade point average, number of terms completed, and number of hours failed within the first four semesters were calculated. The results showed that there were significant relationships between EQ and academic success of the participants at the University of Southern Mississippi, between each of the five EQ sub-skills and semester grade point averages of the first four regular semesters, between EQ and ACT scores,

between EQ and gender, and between EQ and ethnicity. However, there was no relationship between the number of hours students failed in the semester and their EQ scores.

Further, Fahim and Pishgadam (2007) conducted a study to explore the role of emotional, psychometric, and verbal intelligence in the academic success in English language in Iran context. In this study, 508 university students were chosen as participants who were from four different universities in Iran. To measure EQ, EQ Inventory was used, and the participants' IQ and verbal intelligence were assessed via Wechsler's Adult Intelligence Scale. The results revealed that there was a relationship between each of the intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood subscales of EQ and the academic success assessed by General Point Average. Moreover, IQ did not correlate with academic success; however, there was a strong relationship between IQ and verbal intelligence.

Razmjoo (2008) conducted a study in which the researcher aimed to investigate the relationship between EQ and language proficiency of Iranian EFL PhD candidates, to explore whether one of the emotional intelligence type is predictor of language proficiency, and to examine the effect of gender on language proficiency and types of intelligences. The subjects of the study were 278 (179 males, 99 females) PhD candidates at Shiraz University. An EQ questionnaire and a 100-item language proficiency test were distributed among the candidates. The data revealed that there was no significant relationship between language proficiency and the combination of intelligences in general and the types of intelligence in particular. Likewise, no significant difference was found between male and female students and between their EI and language proficiency.

Rouhani (2008) carried out a study searching for the effect of a cognitive affective course that includes literary excerpts used as reading materials, on both emotional intelligence skills and foreign language anxiety. The literary excerpts were used for various reasons such as learning materials, the basis for some classroom activities like group work, peer-led discussion and journal writings. By doing so, the students were given the chance to put themselves into the shoes of the characters, or give meaning to the events or settings in the literary excerpts, show their feelings and thoughts and use emotional knowledge in order to find solutions to the problems. What is found out at the end of the study is that there is a considerable change in both emotional intelligence skills and foreign language anxiety scores of the students in the experimental group compared to those of the students in the control group. The more the score of emotional intelligence skills of the experimental group increased, the more the foreign language anxiety score of the same group decreased.

Pishgadam and Moafian (2008) looked into the role of Iranian EFL teachers' EQ in their success in language teaching at high school level. They selected a population of 93 English language teachers from different high schools in Mashhad, a city in the north-east of Iran. At the end of the schooling year, the teachers were asked to fill out the Persian version of MIDAS. Simultaneously, another questionnaire, entitled the Students' View of an Ideal Teacher was distributed among the students (N=2287) of the above-mentioned teachers. In using the questionnaire, the researchers aimed at evaluating the performance of teachers regarding their teaching skills, personality, supplementary programs, activities, and social-educational life by their students. No significant relationship was found between their success and other types of intelligences. Furthermore, it was found that there was no significant difference between gender and EQ regarding the teaching success.

Bradshaw (2008) investigated the relationship between EQ and academic achievement in African American female college students. Sixty successful undergraduate female African American college students who were from local colleges and universities in a mid-Atlantic area were chosen as participants. In this study, four instruments were used and they were: a) the Subject Demographic Survey, b) the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso EQ Test, c) the Short version of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Test, and d) the Second Edition of the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test. In addition to administering these quantitative data collection instruments to the participants, in-depth qualitative interviews were held with 20 African female successful students in order to support the quantitative results. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between African American female college students' EQ level and their academic performance, but there was a weak relationship between stress management and academic performance of the students.

A study carried out by Razmjoo, Sahragard, and Sadri (2009) was aimed at identifying the relationship between EQ, vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners. The subjects of the study were 100 senior students who were English language teacher trainees at Shiraz Azad University between 2006 and 2007. Data analysis of the findings

(descriptive and inferential) revealed that there is a relationship between EQ and vocabulary learning knowledge.

Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2009) conducted a study with EFL teachers instead of students, searched for the relationship between the EQs of EFL teachers and their pedagogical success in language institutions. Also, they investigated the relationship between their EQ and the year of teaching experience in addition to their ages. Their study included 89 EFL teachers from various language schools in Iran. The teachers were given Bar-On's 'EQ-i' and the students taught by each teacher were asked to complete a questionnaire for them with the aim of making an evaluation of the teaching-related characteristics of their own EFL teachers. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the EQ of EFL teachers and how their students' evaluation of their teaching-related characteristics. In addition to these results, there were significant correlations between EFL teachers' EQ and the year of teaching experience as well as their ages.

In another study conducted by Pishghadam (2009), which questions the role of emotional intelligence skills in foreign language learning, 508 second-year college students participated and they were asked to complete Bar-On EQ-i. He investigated the relationship between the students' EQ-I scores and their academic records in addition to their scores in four language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. When the relationship between the General Point Average, emotional intelligence and four language skills is taken into consideration, it can be said that the total EQ and its subscales are not good predictors of foreign language learning. However, Pishghadam (2009) put forward just the opposite by saying that all subscales were significant predictors of General Point Average. It was found out that skills of reading were greatly related to stress management, adaptability and general mood competencies. On the other hand, intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management and general mood competencies were important in predicting how well students' listening skills were. In addition to these, the study showed a strong relationship between the speaking skills of the students and their intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management and general mood EQ. It was also found out at the end of the study that there is a relationship between writing skills and stress management EQ.

Motallebzadeh (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationships between EQ and reading comprehension and between EQ and structural ability of Iranian students. The study was carried out in Islamic Azad University and 250 students were chosen as participants. In this study, 193 participants were females and 57 participants were males and their age ranges were between 17 and 26. In the study, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was used to measure EQ of the students and Michigan English Language Assessment Battery was used to measure the reading and structural abilities of the students. The results showed that there was a strong relationship between EQ and reading and between EQ and structural ability of the Iranian students. He stated that EQ played a significant role in improving structural and reading abilities.

Shahmohadi and Hasanzadeh (2011) conducted a study about EQ and its predictive impact on EFL learners' success in Iran context. In this study, the short form of the EQ was administered to 111 high intermediate level language learners, and an English final achievement test containing structures, vocabulary, reading, and listening components was used to measure English language test performance of the participants. They found no relationship between EQ and English language test performance based on the learners' scores on an English final achievement test. However, there was a relationship between each of intrapersonal and general mood categories of the EQ and English language test performance. Moreover, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences predicted language success.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 123 male and female M.A. and B.A students studying English language teaching, literature and translation at the English departments of Birjand's Azad and state Universities. Fifty eight of the participants were males and 65 of them were females. Moreover, 52 of the participants were employed and seventy one of them were unemployed with an age range of 23 to 32 years old. They were advanced and high -intermediate learners. The sampling process was based on convenience, due to availability reasons.

3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments employed in this study are as follows: (a) Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (b) Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory.

3.2.1 Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency

The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) includes grammar, vocabulary, and reading sections, which consist of 40, 40, and 20 items, respectively.

The grammar part includes 40 multiple-choice items. The questions cover a wide range of grammatical structures including choosing a suitable pronoun form, verb form, or word order, and identifying the appropriate use of prepositions and prepositional phrases.

The vocabulary section contains 40 multiple-choice items. Unlike the grammar section in which the item stems are based on a conversation between two people, the vocabulary test items are based on one or two short sentences.

The reading section consists of 20 items. Test-takers read an item prompt and are asked to select an appropriate response out of four written alternatives. The average length of the items in the reading section is approximately 20 words.

MTELP yields an overall score (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension) that is reliable, and the test is valid measure of English language proficiency (English Language Institute, the University of Michigan, 1977).

In order to estimate how reliable the use of the MTELP is, the researcher administered the test to a pilot group of forty three students in the Azad University of Zahedan who were MA students of English Teaching. KR-21 formula was used for the computation of the internal consistency of the test. The reliability index for the MTELP in this study was found to be 0.86, which is considered a high reliability.

3.2.2 Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory

Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory consists of 133 five-point response scale whose answers range from 1 (very seldom or not true of me) to 5 (very often true of me or true of me). The instrument is intended for individuals at least 16 years old. It is written at a sixth-grade reading level and, on average, takes 40 minutes to complete (Bar-On, 2004). Items are presented to subjects in the form of declarative statements. Scores are summed to yield a total score of EQ, five higher-order composite dimensions, and 15 lower-order composite dimensions.

In the questionnaire, there are five basic skills aimed to be measured in addition to 15 factorial components. Intrapersonal EQ is the first main skill and there are 40 items about it. It includes 8 items in itself; emotional self-awareness, having 8 items; assertiveness, 7 items; self-regard, 9 items; self-actualization, 9 items; and independence, 7 items. The second one is interpersonal EQ and there are 29 items related to it. It is divided into empathy having 8 items, interpersonal relationship having 11 items, and social responsibility having 10 items. Adaptability EQ is the third one and it has 26 items. These 26 items are separated into problem solving, which has 8 items, reality testing 10 items, and flexibility 8 items. The fourth is stress management EQ and it includes 18 items. They are divided into stress tolerance consisting of 9 items and impulse control of 9 items. The fifth and last one is general mood EQ and it has 17 items. They are divided into happiness, including 9 items, and optimism, 8 items (Bar-On, 1997). There are 15 questions in the questionnaire related to scales, which are designed to measure the validity of the responses. The responses are based on a 5-point Likert type scale (1. Very seldom or not true for me, 2. Seldom true for me, 3. Sometimes true for me, 4. Often true for me, 5. Very often true for me or true for me). (as cited in Ergün, 2011)

In this study, to avoid cross-cultural differences and probable misunderstanding regarding the content of the questionnaire, the translated Persian version of this questionnaire was employed. This adapted final form was reduced into 90 items and the Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was reported as .80 (Samouei, 2002). In another study, Dehshiri (2003) reported that the Persian version has generally good internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. As he states, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .76 and the results of the factor analysis provided convincing support for the inventory hypothesized structure.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

In order to investigate the research hypotheses, this study was carried out using the empirical method. The researcher requested to the Head of the department for permission to administer the research instruments in the selected classes in collaboration with class teachers. In the beginning, at first session, all of the participants (123 students) took the MTELP to reveal their proficiency level.

During the second session, to begin the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, the project was explained to the participants in the study in order to guarantee their cooperation. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory survey was administered so that the EQ profiles of the participants could be prepared. All the participants were given an oral description of objectives and procedures of the test and the questionnaire. They were also assured that the results would be kept confidential. They had ample time to go over the questionnaire items and answer them.

After collecting the data, appropriate statistical tests were used to find out the significance of the results.

4. Results

As mentioned before, the aim of this study was to determine whether EQ has any relationship with language proficiency of the participants. In addition, this research also investigated any probable relationships between Iranian male and female, and employed and unemployed EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency. This section reports the results of testing research hypotheses to show whether they are confirmed or rejected.

4.1 Research hypothesis 1

The first null hypothesis is as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency.

In the following lines, the data analyses and results are presented. The descriptive statistics (the mean and the standard deviation) of the proficiency test, EQ, and its components are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Proficiency Test, EQ, and its Components

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Proficiency	68.86	9.969	123
Total EQ	250.54	29.309	123
Problem solving	18.92	6.034	123
Happiness	21.13	4.692	123
Independence	16.40	3.686	123
Stress toleration	17.55	5.851	123
Self-actualization	18.95	5.353	123
Emotional self-awareness	19.14	5.826	123
Reality testing	18.84	5.175	123
Interpersonal relationship	18.98	4.598	123
Optimism	16.55	5.547	123
Self-regard	17.83	5.240	123
Impulse control	18.04	5.946	123
Flexibility	18.06	5.910	123
Social responsibility	18.67	5.166	123

Empathy	18.53	6.060	123
Assertiveness	18.17	5.123	123

In order to find out if there is any significant relationship between proficiency test and EQ, Pearson correlation was conducted. Table 2 demonstrates the result of the Pearson correlation.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation: Proficiency Test with EQ and its Components

Correlations		
		proficiency
Total EQ	Pearson Correlation	.958**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Problem solving	Pearson Correlation	.877**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
happiness	Pearson Correlation	-.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.163
	N	123
independence	Pearson Correlation	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.804
	N	123
Stress toleration	Pearson Correlation	.892**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Self-actualization	Pearson Correlation	.855**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Emotional self-awareness	Pearson Correlation	.743**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Reality testing	Pearson Correlation	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Interpersonal relationship	Pearson Correlation	-.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062
	N	123
optimism	Pearson Correlation	.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Self-regard	Pearson Correlation	.281**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	123
Impulse control	Pearson Correlation	.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.613
	N	123
flexibility	Pearson Correlation	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123

Social responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
empathy	Pearson Correlation	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.720
	N	123
assertiveness	Pearson Correlation	.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123

As it is indicated in Table 2, There was a strong, positive correlation between the proficiency test and total EQ, $r = 0.985$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, it can be claimed that the first null hypothesis is rejected. It was concluded that there is a significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency.

In Table 2, it is also shown that there is a significant relationship between some components of EQ (e.g., Problem solving, Stress toleration, Self-actualization, Emotional self-awareness, etc.) with participants' performance on the proficiency test.

4.2 Research hypothesis 2

The second null hypothesis is as follows:

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding their emotional quotient.

In this part, the results of the data analyses are given. The descriptive statistics of total EQ scores of the males and females are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Total EQ Scores of the Males and Females

	Gender N		Mean	Std. Deviation
Total EQ	Male	58	249.90	14.62
	Female	55	251.19	14.36

As indicated in Table 3, for total EQ, as far as males are concerned, the mean score was 249.90 and the SD was 14.62, whereas for the females, the mean score was 251.19 and the SD was 14.36.

To make certain if there is any significant difference between the mean scores of the males' and females' total EQ, the researcher ran an independent-samples t-test. Table 4 demonstrates the result of the independent-samples t-test.

Table 4
Independent Samples t-test: Males' and Females' Total EQ

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Error Difference	Lower Upper

EQ	Equal variances assumed	.06	.81	-.49	121	.625	-1.28	2.61	-6.48	3.90
	Equal variances not assumed			-.49	118.9	.625	-1.28	2.62	-6.47	3.90

As displayed in Table 4, there was no statistical difference between males' and females' EQ scores, $t(121) = -.49$, $p < 0.05$. It can be claimed that the second null hypothesis is confirmed. It was concluded that there is no significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding their EQ.

4.3 Research hypothesis 3

The third null hypothesis is as follows:

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between Iranian employed and unemployed EFL learners regarding their emotional quotient.

In the following, the descriptive statistics of total EQ scores of the employed and unemployed are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Total EQ Scores of the Employed and Unemployed

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total EQ	Employed	52	254.34	13.40
	Unemployed	71	246.74	14.04

As indicated in Table 5, for total EQ, as far as the employed learners are concerned, the mean score was 254.34 and the SD was 13.40, whereas for the unemployed learners, the mean score was 246.74 and the SD was 14.04.

To make sure if there is any significant difference between the mean scores of the employed and unemployed participants' total EQ, the researcher ran an independent-samples t-test. Table 6 shows the result of the independent-samples t-test.

Table 6
Independent Samples t-test: The Employed and Unemployed Participants' Total EQ

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances t-test for Equality of Means								
EQ		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EQ	Equal variances assumed	.51	.47	3.61	121	.00	9.09	2.51	4.11	14.07
	Equal variances not assumed			3.64	112.8	.00	9.09	2.50	1.14	14.04

As demonstrated in Table 6, there is a statistical difference between the employed and unemployed learners' EQ scores, $t(121) = 3.61$, $p < 0.05$. It can be claimed that the third null hypothesis is rejected.

It was concluded that there is a statistical difference between Iranian employed and unemployed EFL learners regarding their EQ.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The related research questions were answered on the basis of the students' performance on Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory and Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency. Regarding the first research question, the participants' performance showed a significant relationship between the participants' EQ and their proficiency test scores. In other words, the results indicated there was a significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their language proficiency. In terms of the second research question, in regard with the difference between males' and females' EQ scores, the total EQ scores of males and females did not display any significant difference. Considering the third research question, regarding the difference between the employed and unemployed participants' EQ scores, the total EQ scores of the employed and unemployed learners showed a statistical difference. In other words, the employed learners' total EQ was higher than the unemployed learners'.

The above findings regarding the participants' EQ and their proficiency test scores are consistent with the results of some previous studies. A study carried out by Razmjoo, Sahragard, and Sadri (2009) was aimed at identifying the relationship between EI, vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners. Data analysis of the findings revealed that there is a relationship between EI and vocabulary learning knowledge.

Parker et al. (2004) conducted a study aiming at investigating the relationship between EQ and academic success. The findings showed that there was a close relationship between academic success and different dimensions of EQ (intrapersonal, stress management, and adaptability).

In another study conducted by Pishghadam (2009), which questions the role of EQ skills in foreign language learning, the study showed a strong relationship between the speaking skills of the students and their intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management and general mood EQ. It was also found out at the end of the study that there is a relationship between writing skills and stress management EQ.

More recently, Walker (2006) examined the relationship between EQ and academic success in College. The results showed that there were significant relationships between EQ and academic success of the participants at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Further, Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) conducted a study to explore the role of emotional, psychometric, and verbal intelligence in the academic success in English language in Iran context. The results revealed that there was a relationship between each of the intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood subscales of EQ and the academic success assessed by General Point Average.

Motallebzadeh (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationships between EQ and reading comprehension and between EQ and structural ability of Iranian students. The results showed that there was a strong relationship between EQ and reading and between EQ and structural ability of the Iranian students.

However, this study's result is not compatible with some previous studies, some of which stated below.

Razmjoo (2008) did a study in which the researcher aimed to investigate the relationship between EQ and language proficiency of Iranian EFL PhD candidates. The data revealed that there was no significant relationship between language proficiency and the combination of intelligences in general and the types of intelligence in particular.

Pishghadam and Moafian (2008) looked into the role of Iranian EFL teachers' EQ in their success in language teaching at high school level. No significant relationship was found between their success and other types of intelligences.

Barisonek (2005) explored the relationship between EQ and academic achievement and between EQ and academic production of third and sixth grade students who were in public elementary school in Western New York. The results showed that there was no relationship between EQ and academic production (grades).

Shahmohadi and Hasanazadeh (2011) conducted a study about EQ and its predictive impact on EFL learners' success in Iran context. They found no relationship between EQ and English language test performance based on the learners' scores on an English final achievement test.

Regarding the relationship between males' and females' proficiency and their EQ are not consistent with the results of Razmjoo (2008) who aimed to investigate the relationship between EQ and language proficiency of Iranian EFL PhD candidates, to examine the effect of gender on language proficiency and types of intelligences. The data revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students and between their EQ and language proficiency.

The findings do not also support Pishghadam and Moafian's (2008) findings that looked into the role of Iranian EFL teachers' EQ in their success in language teaching at high school level. It was found that there was no significant difference between gender and EQ regarding the teaching success.

As far as the researcher knows, since no studies regarding the relationship between the employed and unemployed participants' proficiency and their EQ have been conducted, the findings of the present study could not be compared with the relevant previous studies.

6. Conclusion

In the educational system, cognitive elements of intelligence are usually emphasized and the expression of emotions is rarely stressed. The present study helps to highlight the importance of emotions, since students need to be emotionally strong to deal with the complexity of their lives. Teachers should know their own EQ and employ it for better communication with their students in order for creating a good classroom environment.

The findings of this research can have several implications for language teachers, materials developers, and researchers. This study is particularly helpful for teachers to understand the possible effect of various underlying psychological features of their students on their language proficiency. Teachers and educators can take advantage of this study to understand how to treat students with different EQs during the process of language learning.

Though this study involved several limitations that put constraint on its generalizability, it provides a basis for further exploration of the field. On the basis of this research experience, some suggestions are proposed for future research. First, subjects of the study can be selected from different majors of English and also from different universities which may improve the validity of the results of the research. Second, EQ's relationship with other language skills and sub-skills can be explored. Third, it is suggested to consider age as a variable in future studies since the EQ might be different in different age groups.

EQ has considerable contribution to success in the field of education. Affective component of intelligence is as significant as its cognitive component for academic success. Therefore, EQ should be considered in the process of teaching and learning language.

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THE EFFECT OF PLANNED DISCUSSION ON PARAMETERS OF SPEAKING SKILL OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL FEMALE ENGLISH LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper was to investigate whether planned discussion had equal effect on the parameters of speaking skill namely accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level at Saei English language institute in Nasimshar, Tehran. 59 students served as the participants in this research. In pre-test the subjects were interviewed on topics that were chosen from interchange series books and all the oral productions were voice-recorded. One rater concerned in each interview to rate them first and after six month they were corrected again by the same rater. After calculating intra-rater reliability of the pre-test, the subjects assigned into two groups of 30 members as control group and 29 members of experimental group randomly. Calculating independent samples t-test showed that the two groups were homogeneous. During 12 session experimental group underwent discussed on the given topics but control group was taught through according to the routine method of teaching. The results of pretest and posttest of both groups were compared. The null hypotheses could be rejected in terms of grammar but it couldn't be rejected in terms of accent, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Although, the difference of the students' posttest attainment probably relates to students' pre-existing differences or the treatment.

Keywords: Planned discussion, speaking, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.

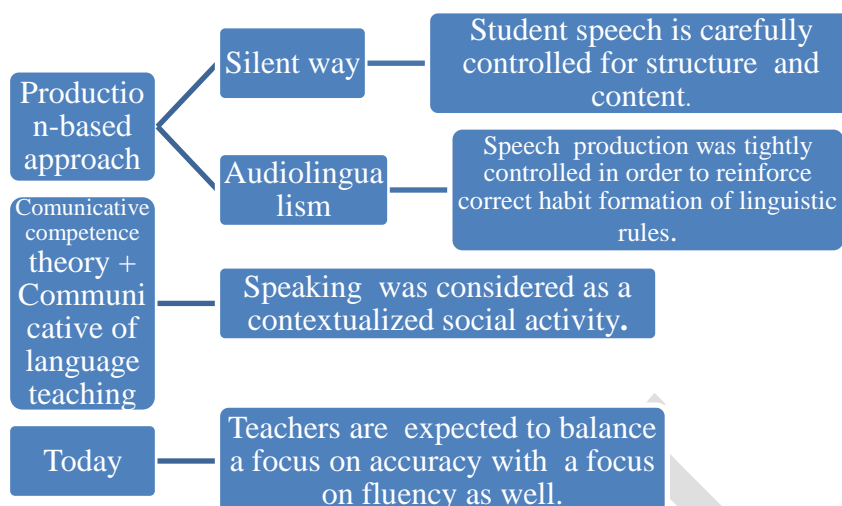
Introduction

While learning multiple languages is excellent as it allows you to speak with a larger group of global people, speaking English has some importance aspects like English is the world's most common language. It can't be denied that this international language may help the learners prepare better for their career in the future because it does not only equip learners with a necessary source of information of social and culture knowledge, but also gives them up-to-date information concerning a different issues in our society.

The following figure (figure 1) shows the role of speaking in Language history (Celce- Murcia, 2001)

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Chun (2006) did an essay about four skills of language. The real purpose of language learning is to enhance the speakers' four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with the base of wide range of vocabulary and good structure, but this is not the optimal objective. The last end is to empower speakers to use the language by using all the abilities of the four skills. Speaking is often linked to listening. This relationship is connected with the communicative activities between two people.

A study was carried out by Lawtie (2004) about teaching speaking skill, she tried to focus her effort on the reasons why teaching speaking skill is important and how to tackle the problems that may happen in the class. Motivation and communication are valid reasons in order to teach this skill for the learners. The teacher also should encourage the students to ask for things and to ask questions in English and give positive feedback to shy students to speak more. Another way to get students motivated to speak more is to use a percentage of their final grade to speaking skills and let the students know they are being assessed continually on their speaking practice in class during the term. An interesting example of focusing on interactional task especially discussion comes from (Nunan, 1985), he presents a typology of activity according to the learner response (Figure 2)

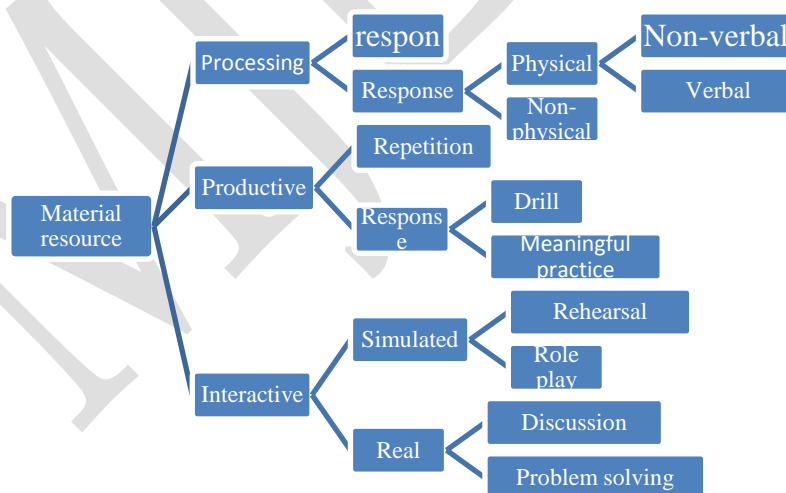


Figure 2: Nunan's typology of activities according to learner responses (p.55)

Scrivener (2011) stated: "why a discussion lesson is often more likely to produce silence or a purposeless sentences than a lively debate. As a student you probably lose interest in the subject, no relevant knowledge or experience, no motivation, no great desire need to speak about it and you haven't had time to think. Hence, as a result of all of these, there was nothing to say. If we, as a teacher want to get students talking in class, we need to answer all these objections."

Kachorek and Olds (2009) indicated that there were general strategies of using discussion question effectively such as starting with open-ended questions, asking questions with multiple answers,

utilizing follow-Up questions, knowing which types of questions do what, relating the material to students' lives, asking about the content, not the participant, using Small groups, decentralizing. In order to get the highly effective discussion, they also went through the following procedures: Self-presentation, framing the Discussion, clarifying your discussion goals, offering a shared point of departure, modeling behaviors for the students, returning to the discussion goals, summarizing important points, asking students a closing question, assigning reading or homework, making yourself available.

Yellin, Blake and DeVries did an article about developing speaking skills. The key to reassuring speaking skills in the classroom is providing the pleasant environment. They also switched their attention to the discussion strategy, The goal of all kinds of discussion like transactional literature discussions, panel discussions and debates is to reach some sort of agreement. The topics should be clearly understood by everyone before starting the discussion, It is advisable to follow six steps for transactional literature discussions: Getting ready, reading and stopping to think aloud, writing a short self-selected response, using the RQL2 strategy (Respond about likes or dislikes; Question aspects of the story they did not understand; Listen to classmates; Link story to one's life) , writing in their diary and reviewing.

Harmer(2007)explains that discussion, whether unplanned or planned, has the great benefits of fostering fluent language use. Although the results of unplanned are often more successful .

The elements of speaking are numerous and not always easy to identify. As Burkhart(1998) mentioned that teachers should also be aware of mechanics aspect of speaking encompasses: pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Harmer(2007) also believed that if students want to be able to speak fluently in English, it is necessary for them to be able pronounce phoneme correctly, use correct stress and intonation patterns and speak in connected speech. It is also simply to make the point that speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of speaking is that it is almost always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker. This means that a variety of demands are in place at once: monitoring and understanding the other speaker(s), thinking about one's own contribution, producing that contribution, monitoring its effect, and so on. As Hughes (2003) was engrossed in FSI as a practical testing kit were administered by (Adams. and Frith,1979).He went into details and clarified the following parameters for evaluating of speaking skill: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.

The ultimate goal of this study was to look into whether planned discussion has any marked effects on the components of speaking skill of EFL learners in order to enhance their ability to reach a high stage of communication proficiency. Thus, in this paper, making use of planned discussion was an attempt to exaggerate one of the most highly effective elements that played an active role in improving speaking skill. With such purposes in mind, this study came up with the answers to the following question:

Does planned discussion have equal effect on parameters of speaking, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL female English learners?

Lightfoot(2007) published an article about group discussion. She stated that the subsequent sub-skills which students will need to be able to effectively participate in a group discussion like: analyzing, persuading, controlling emotions, supporting, using functional language. In addition to, she considered some keys such as giving the students some planning time, choosing topics, getting them to brainstorm, ensuring a balance between input and practice, using a variety of types, encouraging group discussions outside class time and giving some extra feedback when setting up group discussions in the classroom to ensure that they run successfully.

Hovhannisyan(2012) carried out a study in the Experimental English Classes in the Department of English Programs at the American University of Armenia (AUA) . Two groups participated in the experiment: the experimental, which received the treatment by reading the books of graded readers series in addition to the textbook and the control group which used only their textbooks. Not only the findings of the study indicated that graded readers are valid tools for developing students' speaking skills but also the results confirmed that learners had positive attitude towards the graded readers, as they provided the students with a lot of interactive activities which created an environment that was fun, enjoyable and effective for improving the students' speaking skills.

Baghdasaryan (2011) conducted a research in the field of technology and language teaching and learning . Accordingly, this experimental study revealed the effect of a 7-week instructional treatment

on speaking skill, in which speaking was addressed to be developed in terms of the integration of digital storytelling. 12 learners, assigned to the experimental group and the same number to the control group participated in the study. The learners' oral performance was elicited by means of interactional tasks based on the pre and post test. The results displayed that there was a trend towards significant gains in the learners' oral production after the treatment. It also documented the learners' positive attitude towards the program and revealed the students' learning strategies.

Nikoghosian (2011) did a research. This study investigated the effects of practice in retelling stories on the improvement of students' oral proficiency. The subjects in this study were 30 students of English language courses of the Experimental English Classes in the American University of Armenia. Students were beginner language learners. At each of the 17 sessions, the subjects listened to the teacher telling a story and then they retold the story. At the beginning of the two- month semester, the students took an oral test which aimed to evaluate their oral proficiency before the treatment. Besides the pre-test there was a post- test with the same procedures. The results of this study did not support the hypothesis that by storytelling, students' oral proficiency will be developed. The findings of this study show that the students of the experimental group did not demonstrate improvement.

Zargaryan(2011) did a study about on line learning in order to improve speaking skill .E-learning is an approach that enhances and facilitates learning through the use of computer-based tools. One of the newest members of e-learning tools is Voki which may have the potential to change the dynamics of the classroom making it more learner-centered. From two groups involved in the study, the experimental group received the treatment, whereas the control group received placebo. The findings of the study indicated that the application of Voki might be an appropriate method for improving EFL learners' speaking skills. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the data confirmed that learners had positive attitude towards the program, as it provided a learning environment that was fun, enjoyable, stress free and effective for improving their speaking skills. Moreover, it was revealed that participants had a number of learning strategies that they used when creating their Vokis.

Gabrielyan (2011) did the study to investigate what effect role play can have on the improvement of the EFL students' speaking skills. Two groups were involved in the study, the experimental and the comparison. In this study 22 EFL students were selected as a convenient sample. Their age ranged from 11 -15. They were all non-native speakers of English living in Armenia. Their English language proficiency level was pre- intermediate. The results obtained from the pre-test and post -test revealed that there was a significant increase in both the experimental and the control groups. The results not only revealed that the students' attitude towards role play was quite positive also revealed positive effects of students' attitude.

Dilbandyan (2011) conducted a research to investigate what effect the oral translation activities would have on students' oral performance, as well as to see what attitude the students had towards having oral translation activities. The study was carried out in the Experimental English Classes (EEC) at the American University of Armenia (hereinafter AUA). Two groups were involved in the study. The results revealed that that there was no significant difference between the performances of the two groups.

Zamani Farahani (2003) found a relationship between participants' role(in learner-learner VS. teacher-learner) and speaking skill performance, finally, To see whether the difference between the means of two groups important or not, a t-test was computed and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Mehdizadeh Baghbani (2007) conducted a study to investigate the effect of two types of correction techniques(explicit and implicit) on the improvement of oral accuracy of 106 Iranian EFL learners, including both sexes, who are learning English at an English institute. The findings of this study, based on the statistical analysis of Mann-Whitney U test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, reveal that there is no superiority of any one correction technique over another in improving EFL learners' oral accuracy.

2. Method

Design

In this study, quantitative research was applied, After interviewing in pretest the subjects assigned into two groups as control group and experimental group randomly. the subjects in experimental group underwent the following treatment :holding topic-based sessions, starting with open-ended and multiple answers questions, relating the questions to students' lives, offering a shared point of departure, summarizing important points, assigning reading or homework. After treatment, both

experimental and control group were interviewed again. Then, based on SPSS software descriptive statistics calculated the gained data.

Participants

In pre-test 59 female students served as the participants at intermediate level studying EFL. They were interviewed on topics that were chosen from interchange series books and all the oral productions were voice-recorded in pre- and post test. There were 29 subjects in experimental group and 30 subjects in control group .

Instruments/ Materials

The following instruments had been used in this study:

5. Interview questions from Interchange Series for applying Pre- test and Post-test.
6. FSI(Foreign Service Institute) as a practical testing kit were administered by (Adams. and Frith,1979) (Cited in Hughes,2003).
7. SPSS Software

Procedure

The students were assigned into two groups of thirty members as control group and twenty nine experimental group randomly .The researcher used semi-structured interviews for the test. All the oral productions of subjects were recorded. Subjects in experimental group were taught all the lessons through planned discussion -based activities during 12 sessions. But the students in control group were taught the routine method of teaching at the institute. In post- test the subjects of control group and experimental group were interviewed with the same characteristics of administration and scoring as in the pre-test. Finally, based on the result by using of SPSS soft ware to find out whether the null hypothesis were rejected or not.

Data Analysis

After preparing a checklist based on American FSI procedures in order to convert qualitative data into quantitative (numerical) data. There, for the analysis of data the researcher used SPSS to calculate the descriptive statistics So in order to establish the reliability of the test used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of pre- tests. The correlation was significant, $r = .90$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to claim that the test scoring was reliable. Then, in order to attest the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups The t-table was employed to see whether there was a significant difference between the mean score of pre-test of experimental and control groups. The value of obtained was consulted with the value of t-table. The data analysis in this revealed that the t- observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973$, $P > .33$. so the null hypothesis was accepted that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. It was time to establish the reliability of the posttest used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test. The correlation was significant, $r = .83$, $P < .00$. so the post-test was reliable. Finally, the post test scores were analyzed through multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) . Based on the results, the treatment has been effective with grammar, $F(1,52) = 6.68$, $P < .01$. It must be added that the mean of the experimental and control groups are respectively, 15.11 and 9.77. The observed F for other parameters is not significant. It follows that the treatment did not have significant influence on accent, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students.

3. Result

In first phase, the researcher had to prove the reliability of pre-test. In order to establish the reliability of the test used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test.

As the results, showed (Table 1) the correlation was significant, $r = .90$, $P < .00$.

It was safe, then, to claim that the test scoring was reliable.

Table 1: Intra-rater reliability for the Pre-test (Correlations)

	Total1	Total2
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Total1	Pearson Correlation	1	.902**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Total2	Pearson Correlation	.902**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In second phase, the students were assigned into two groups of thirty members as control group and twenty nine experimental group randomly, Then it was necessary to find out whether two mentioned groups are homogenous or not. In order to attest the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups an independent samples t-test was carried out on the pretest given to the two groups. The data analysis revealed that the t- observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973$, $P > .33$. It was safe to accept the null hypothesis that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous and the findings of the posttest would be a function of the treatment. (Table 2)

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test of the Pretest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	.167	.685	.973	57	.335	5.35517	5.50492		-5.66823	16.37858
	Equal variances not assumed			.972	56.579	.335	5.35517	5.50984		-5.67987	16.39022

The third phase, it was the time to calculate the post-test reliability. In order to establish the reliability of the posttest used in this research study, the intra-rater reliability was estimated through correlation between two administrations of the test.

As the results showed the correlation was significant, $r = .83$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to consider the test was reliable. (Table 3)

Table 3: Intra-rater reliability for the posttest

		Total1	Total2
Total1	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Total2	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

Table 3: Intra-rater reliability for the posttest

		Total1	Total2
Total1	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Total2	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In final phase, I had to reject the null hypothesis, if I wanted to prove the positive effect of treatment on experimental group. Post test scores were analyzed through multivariate analysis of variance. The MANOVA results are reported here:

First, equality of variance is checked. As it can be seen in the following table, Levine's Test, all of the variables, except the grammar, recorded non-significant values; therefore, the researcher can assume equal variances. However, as to the grammar, he can not assume equal variances. Accordingly, the researcher has to set a more conservative alpha level for determining significance for the grammar in the F-test. Pallant quotes Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) as suggesting an alpha of .025 or .01.

Table 4: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Accent	2.292	1	52	.136
Grammar	6.957	1	52	.011
Vocabulary	2.228	1	52	.142
Fluency	.464	1	52	.499
Comprehension	.056	1	52	.814

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Group

Second, multivariate tests are checked. This set of multivariate tests of significance indicates whether there are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on a linear combinations of the dependent variables, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The multivariate tests of significance produced are Wilks' Lambda, Pillai's trace, Hotelling's Trace and Roy's Largest Root. All the values of these tests for the independent variable, are not significant, $F(1,52) = 2.08$, $P > .08$, Wilk Lambda = .82. Therefore, there is not statistically significant difference among accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students combined together.

Table 5: Multivariate Tests^a

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.978	421.160 ^b	5.000	48.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.022	421.160 ^b	5.000	48.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	43.871	421.160 ^b	5.000	48.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	43.871	421.160 ^b	5.000	48.000	.000
Group	Pillai's Trace	.178	2.081 ^b	5.000	48.000	.084
	Wilks' Lambda	.822	2.081 ^b	5.000	48.000	.084
	Hotelling's Trace	.217	2.081 ^b	5.000	48.000	.084
	Roy's Largest Root	.217	2.081 ^b	5.000	48.000	.084

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

If someone can assume that parameters of speaking, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency,

and comprehension stand alone, he may resort to the fact that since all values produced by MANOVA

(Wilks' Lambda, Pillai's trace, Hotelling's Trace and Roy's Largest Root) are equal, he is allowed to stick to the results displayed in the following table (Table 6). Based on the results, the treatment has been effective

with grammar, $F(1,52) = 6.68$, $P < .01$. It must be added that the mean of the experimental and control groups are respectively, 15.11 and 9.77. The observed F for other parameters is not significant. It follows

that the treatment did not have significant influence on accent, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students.

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Accent	.074 ^a	1	.074	.531	.470	.010
	Grammar	384.000 ^b	1	384.000	6.680	.013	.114
	Vocabulary	75.852 ^c	1	75.852	3.219	.079	.058
	Fluency	12.519 ^d	1	12.519	1.648	.205	.031
	Comprehension	90.741 ^e	1	90.741	3.185	.080	.058
Intercept	Accent	240.667	1	240.667	1723.959	.000	.971
	Grammar	8362.667	1	8362.667	145.470	.000	.737
	Vocabulary	3850.667	1	3850.667	163.393	.000	.759
	Fluency	1084.519	1	1084.519	142.785	.000	.733
	Comprehension	6936.000	1	6936.000	243.490	.000	.824
Group	Accent	.074	1	.074	.531	.470	.010
	Grammar	384.000	1	384.000	6.680	.013	.114
	Vocabulary	75.852	1	75.852	3.219	.079	.058
	Fluency	12.519	1	12.519	1.648	.205	.031
	Comprehension	90.741	1	90.741	3.185	.080	.058
Error	Accent	7.259	52	.140			
	Grammar	2989.333	52	57.487			
	Vocabulary	1225.481	52	23.567			
	Fluency	394.963	52	7.595			
	Comprehension	1481.259	52	28.486			
Total	Accent	248.000	54				
	Grammar	11736.000	54				
	Vocabulary	5152.000	54				
	Fluency	1492.000	54				
	Comprehension	8508.000	54				
Corrected Total	Accent	7.333	53				
	Grammar	3373.333	53				
	Vocabulary	1301.333	53				
	Fluency	407.481	53				
	Comprehension	1572.000	53				

a. R Squared = .010 (Adjusted R Squared = -.009)

b. R Squared = .114 (Adjusted R Squared = .097)

c. R Squared = .058 (Adjusted R Squared = .040)

d. R Squared = .031 (Adjusted R Squared = .012)

e. R Squared = .058 (Adjusted R Squared = .040)

5. Discussion and conclusions

Based on the result of the test statistics run to the findings of this study, the reliability of pretest was proved because the correlation was significant, $r = .90$, $P < .00$. (Table 1). In order to attest the homogeneity of control and experimental groups an independent samples t-test was carried out on the pretest given to the two groups. The data analysis revealed that the t- observed was not significant, $t(1, 57) = .973$, $P > .33$. It was safe to accept the null hypothesis that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous and the findings of the posttest would be a function of the treatment. After treatment, to establish the intra-rater reliability of posttest used in this research study, the correlation was significant, $r = .83$, $P < .00$. It was safe, then, to consider the test was reliable (Table 3). In order to answer the following question "Does the treatment have equal effect on parameters of speaking, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students?" multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized. The following processes are applied:

First, equality of variance was checked. Levine's Test (table 4), all of the variables, except the grammar, recorded non-significant values; therefore, the researcher can assume equal variances. However, as to the grammar, he can not assume equal variances. Second, multivariate tests are checked. This set of multivariate tests of significance indicates whether there are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on a linear combinations of the dependent variables, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (table 5). All the values of these tests for the independent variable, are not significant, $F(1,52) = 2.08$, $P > .08$, Wilk's Lambda = .82. Therefore, there is not statistically significant difference among accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students combined together. If someone can assume that parameters of speaking, namely, accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension stand alone, he may resort to the fact that since all values produced by MANOVA are equal, he is allowed to stick to the results displayed in table 6. Based on the results, the treatment has been effective with grammar, $F(1,52) = 6.68$, $P < .01$.

It must be added that the mean of the experimental and control groups are respectively, 15.11 and 9.77.

The observed F for other parameters is not significant. That is, the treatment did not have significant influence on accent, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students.

In teaching and learning process, particularly in speaking skill, it is essential to implement an appropriate technique. The finding and results of the study imply that planned discussion activities are type of effective activities which can be applied in teaching speaking. The detailed implication of planned discussion activities are as follows: having great motivation to learn, preparing positive atmosphere, student-centered class, teacher's role is facilitator, fostering the learning process, applying abstract ideas, thinking critically, strengthening togetherness among the learners, helping to use functional language and finally, students learn how to make themselves understood politely while disagreeing with the others.

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UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION TOWARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING E-LEARNING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the development of educational opportunities via the internet gives students the chance of education from different places and different learning situation. In Iran, universities are trying to facilitate their educational system with smart technology and to motivate students and teachers with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) using computers and other technologies to take part in electronic classes. The purpose of this study is to consider teachers' and students' perception and teaching satisfaction of teachers who use the technology and also students' expectation and participants in English e-learning. Two groups of English teaching students and their teachers are chosen randomly from University of Guilan in different terms. Teachers and students are given two different kinds of questionnaires. They are supposed to fill in a five-point Likert scale from (1=miserable to 5=excellent). The result shows the teachers and students satisfaction and the educational system defects; on the basis of the results, we suggest some solutions to solve or reform the defects in these two universities.

Keywords: e-learning, information and communication technology, english e-learning

1. Introduction

The term e-learning first used in mid-1990s, with development of World Wide Web and interest in asynchronous discussion groups. Online learning is totally diverse from traditional form of distance learning. Its historical focus on content delivery and autonomous learnings are of major importance. We define e-learning as instruction submitted on a digital device like computer that intends to support learning.

E-learning is divided into two main parts, synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous e-learning is instructor-oriented while asynchronous e-learning is based on self-study of individuals.

As another definition, e-learning is job-transferable knowledge and skills related to organizational performance or leads individuals to their learning ends. Ring and Mathieux (2002) suggested that online learning should have high authenticity, high interactivity and high collaboration. Carliner (1999) defines e-learning as a kind of education that makes help of computer for presenting lessons. Khan (1997) defines online instruction as an innovative approach for transferring instruction to a distance audience using web as the medium.

For learners online learning has no time zone, and place and distance are not a problem. In asynchronous online learning, students have access to online materials anytime, while synchronous online learning is suited for real time instruction between students and instructors. It is also cost saving, because costs of presenting courses are distributed by many more students. If students are taught online without obligation to attend classes, then it can provide courses nationally or even universally from a single place. That could increasingly bring more students to one course.

E-learning uses a mixture of text and audio as well as still and motion visuals to present lessons. Environment influences e-learning in many cases. One of the challenges for institutions that launched online courses is facilitating support services for learners at a distance, because online learners learn at different times, and their service needs don't verify to accustom working hours.

E-learning in Iran started in 2001 with the courses in University of Tehran. University of Tehran offered nine courses in bachelor and master levels. Nowadays many Universities in Iran such as Amir Kabir, Shiraz, and Shahid Beheshti offer e-learning courses; even some religious-based universities use courses on internet.

Among the first pioneers in e-learning, University of Iran Science and Technology started online courses in 2004. It offered computer engineering, industrial engineering, chemical and chemistry engineering and architectural engineering.

University of Guilan has recently provided online courses in master level of English teaching, Persian literature, mathematics, computer engineering, etc.

Course objects include text, audio files, video files, animation and graphics that are accessible to all students at any time. Students should attend online classes wherever and whenever they have access to the internet. Students are required to follow weekly schedule, otherwise they will receive warning and fail the course. Actually because of low bandwidth in Iran audio and video classes are somehow impossible and it is not compulsory.

E-learning system has some benefits, like flexibility in time and place, students can access to learning materials at any time and any place, using multimedia learning material that motivates students to learn, providing many job opportunities for those that are expert in the field of IT, computer programming, etc. providing chances for cultural exchange among different ethnic groups in a country, and lowering stresses of families that don't send their children to other cities for education, so they have opportunity of learning in their own city via the internet.

Among the bottom lines of e-learning we can name unfamiliarity of teachers with this system. Actually teachers that are used to traditional ways of teaching find it difficult to adapt to new way of teaching using technology environment. Lack of human resources and instructors is another bottleneck. It is believed that this courses lack face-to-face class that are needed for some majors like computer, electrical and chemical engineering. Also online courses isolate students, since there is no live interaction.

2. Review of literature

Deploying advanced higher education institutes and colleges with modern e-learning equipment is one of today's essential needs in developing countries like Iran. Based on the results, the main components for e-learning in higher education in Iran were: Students, faculty members, Educational communications, supporting factors and LMS. The findings provide important insight about students' perceptions of e-learning and raise practical considerations for its implementation. One of the studies is a primary effort at providing insightful analyses to the policy makers of developing countries such as Iran's higher agricultural education institutes (Yaghoubi, J., & Malekmohammadi, I. 2008).

A research represented appropriate presentation of materials, providing meaningful learning, and providing opportunities for reflection, rate of understanding the complexity through the links between the concepts, the role of graphs in mental visualization, suitable layout Links, having academic aspect, effectiveness of the lesson feedback, suitable evaluation ways for the multimedia environment (Sasani, M. et al. 2012).

One of the important challenges of most developing countries is lack of high speed internet access, due to lots of factors like limited intermittent electricity, use of expensive low bandwidth satellite technology and inadequately trained personnel.

Fortunately ICT infrastructure started developing by high speed cables in many countries. Some countries like those located on East and Southern Africa have also invested in undersea cables to tap the global Internet super highway.

The history of e-learning in Iran at present time did not go further than 7 years, yet from a realistic viewpoint we shall say that e-based learning in Iran has had a 6 year experience and even younger. Both the private sector and government organizations delivered e-learning in Iran. University of Amirkabir is one of the examples of plenty virtual universities.

Some factors can hinder the success of e-Learning projects in Iran like lack of individuals and organizations with successful e-Learning project implementation expertise both in the Academic and in private sector organizations, technology focus-Iranians by nature, open-source technology-Iranian academics, many small e-Learning projects are running on open source technology, and one-time funding-almost of all e-Learning projects in Iran (Omidnia, S., Masrom, M., & Selamat, H. 2010).

2.1 Aims

This study aims at analyzing the EFL teachers and students' perception and satisfaction of e-learning in the University of Guilan. Identifying the defects and suggesting some solutions in order to improve the e-learning educational system.

2.2 Research Questions: This article seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does EFL professors' perceptions and attitudes toward e-learning improved through time?
2. Are EFL students satisfied with e-learning system?

2.3 Research Hypothesis

This study is formed based on these hypotheses:

1. The EFL professors' perceptions toward e-learning are not positive and may decrease through time.
2. EFL students' satisfaction depends on the facilities and quality of instruction that is provided by their professors and Universities.

3. Methods

3.1 participants: This study was conducted in the University of Guilan among twenty-six EFL students and six teachers. The students were chosen from the same terms in order to compare the expectation and satisfaction in equal situation.

3.2 Materials: Two types of questionnaires were used in this study. Both questionnaires were divided in three sections. The first section of each questionnaire was about students' /teachers' background. The second section consists of 21 statements. The participants were supposed to answer the questions in two rows of five-point Likert scale. The first row asked them about their expectations and the second row asked them about their satisfactions of the same specific point. The last part of the questionnaires includes some open-ended questions which aimed to compensate for the fact that there were no interviews conducted with the participants were utilized.

3.3 Procedure:

One form of the questionnaires was given to twenty-six EFL students of University of Guilan. The other questionnaire is given to their EFL teachers. All questionnaires were sent via the university's virtual site and participants were asked to send the filled questionnaire to a specific email address.

4. Data Analysis

A descriptive statistics was used for quantitative variables with The SPSS statistical software.

The table below presents the relation and connection of teachers with their students in two rows of a(perception) and b(satisfaction). This is the same for the idea of teachers about virtual system and the quality of presenting units via internet (i.e. putting video and audio files) and the quality of system itself whether software and hardware. The number of related questions about each subject is represented and the score given to each item is added up.

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
connectiona	4	17.00	76.00	19.0000	8.00000
connectionb	4	11.00	46.00	11.0000	4.00000
ideaa	2	.00	56.00	28.0000	.00000
ideab	2	2.00	26.00	13.0000	1.00000
unitqualitya	2	15.00	41.00	20.0000	10.00000
unitqualityb	2	10.00	26.00	13.0000	7.07107
systemqualitya	13	17.00	229.00	17.0000	7.00000
systemqualityb	13	13.00	140.00	10.0000	4.00000

Valid N (listwise)

2

Table1. Teachers' perceptions and satisfactions about virtual learning in Guilan University

The bar charts below show the comparison between teachers' perception(a) and their satisfaction(b) about TEFL virtual learning and teaching. The chart presents information about the connection or relation between teachers and student, the quality of virtual site, internet or the system, teachers' idea about virtual learning. The teachers' perception shows higher amount in contrast with their satisfaction.

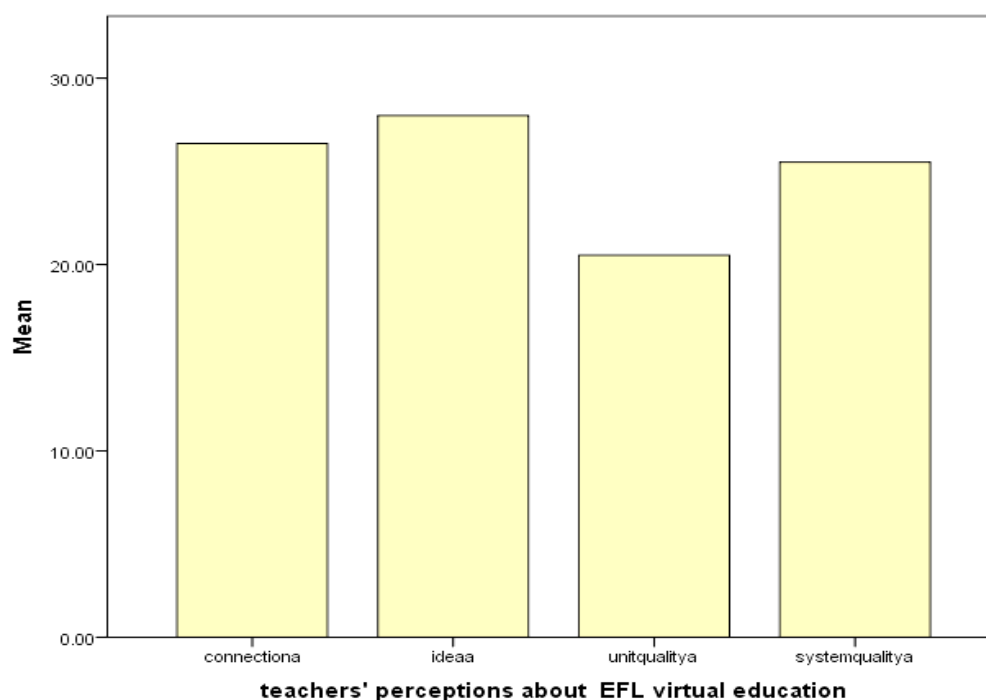


Figure1. Teachers' perception about TEFL e-learning

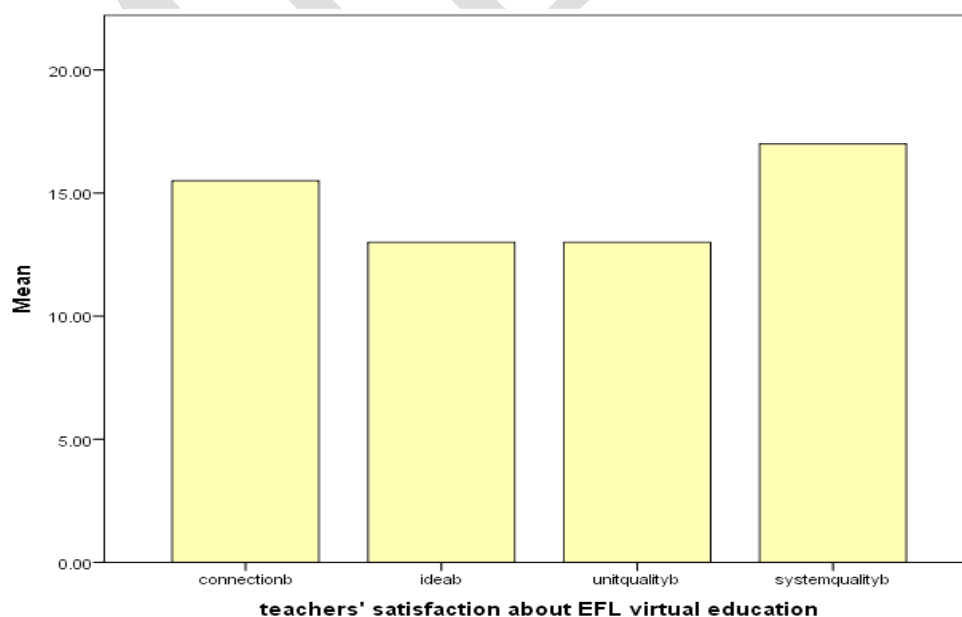


Figure2. Teachers' satisfaction about TEFL e-learning

Teachers' idea about the virtual site and the quality of the lessons are the lowest items in the chart above as they have difficulty with uploading the audio and video files or they are not interested enough to work hard to prepare them. Sometimes it's annoying for them to record their voice or sit and teach in front of the camera. Also because of having a low-speed internet, providing audio or video in the online classes is impossible.

The table below indicates the students' perception and satisfaction about the same items. Moreover, the teachers' idea about the virtual site in previous table changes to the idea of students about teachers' duty about teaching in a different system and via the internet. The number of questions related to each item is represented and the scores given to each item is added up.

Descriptive Statistics
Table2.Students' perception and satisfaction about virtual learning

	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
connectiona	2	5.00	113.0000	3.00000	12.000
connectionb	2	6.00	64.0000	4.00000	18.000
teacherdutyb	2	1.00	118.0000	.00000	.000
teacherdutyb	2	6.00	71.0000	4.00000	18.000
unitqualitya	3	8.00	116.0000	4.00000	19.000
unitqualityb	3	17.00	62.0000	9.00000	91.000
systemqualitya	14	21.00	117.0000	6.00000	37.000
systemqualityb	14	25.00	67.0000	7.00000	58.000
Valid N (listwise)	2				

The following charts indicate that students enter virtual learning system with high expectations. Unfortunately, their satisfaction decreases dramatically after a while. They mostly complain on the internet speed and lack of proper teaching.

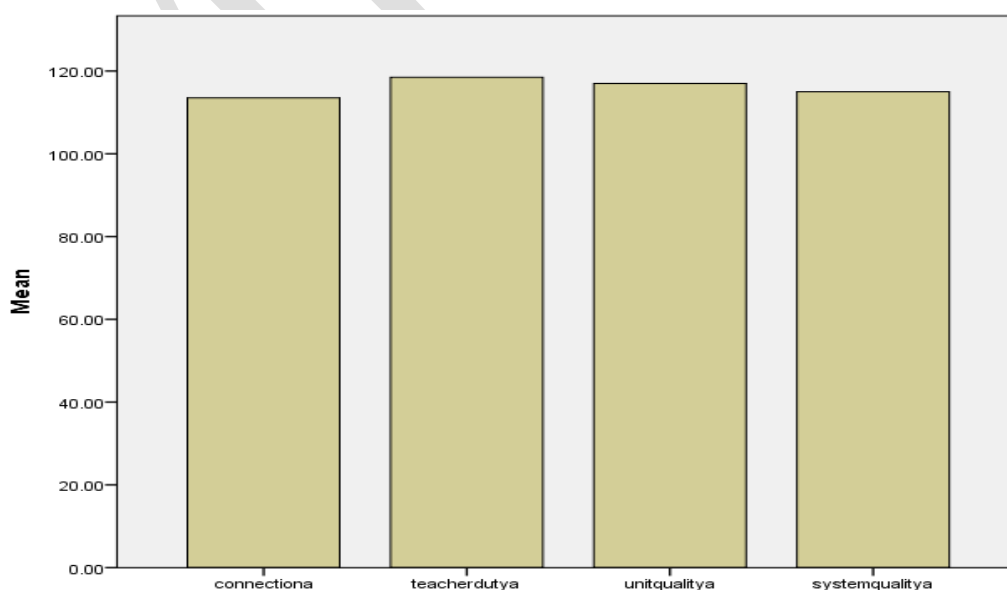


Figure3 .Students' perception about TEFL virtual learning

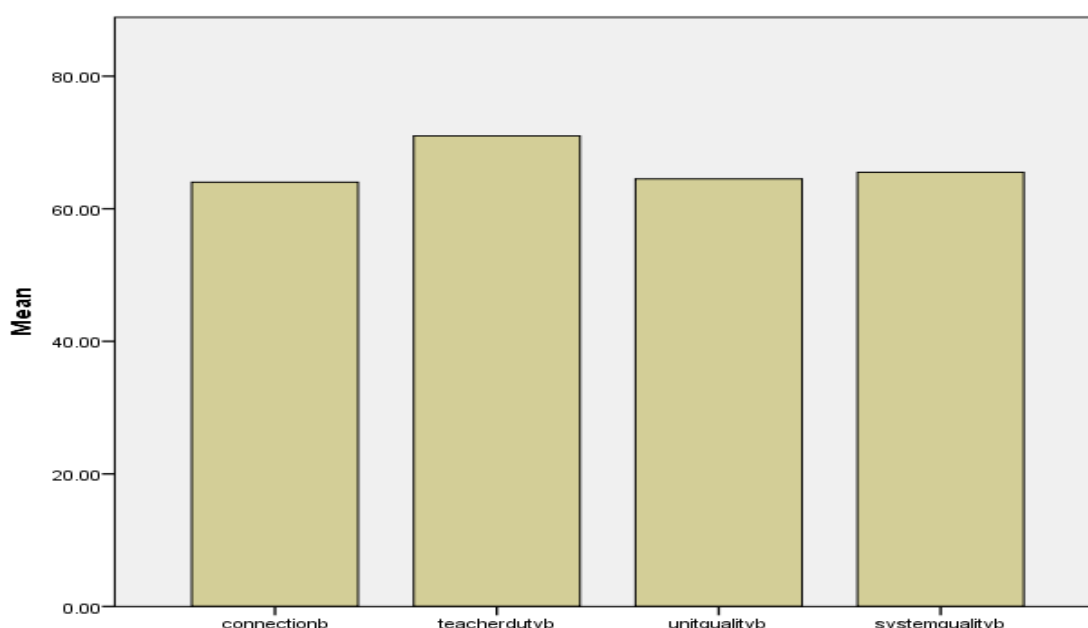


Figure4. Students' satisfaction about TEFL virtual learning

Conclusion

The result of the study reveals that most teachers declared their point of view about virtual teaching as it is a valuable and significant mode of instruction that can offer instruction beyond borders and facilitate the learning process. However, in Iran the infrastructures are not ready to pave the way for the planning, implementation and evaluation of e-learning. Without sound and appropriate foundations, it is difficult to meet success. Soon, there are a lot of people graduated in this way, people who are illiterate or semi-illiterate in the society with high expectations and this would be a disaster to let them to increase in number with the existing inappropriate virtual learning condition. In addition, they suggest that first, the technology implementation is to be planned and experts' advice is to be sought. Any successful program is to be modelled based on other successful curricula implemented in developed countries. Teachers must be trained properly in order to deal with different teaching methods in e-learning and also Lack of enough knowledge about e-learning among teachers, and Not considering it as a normal kind of learning system-> leads to their unwillingness. The instruments have to be developed either software or hardware. As a result most of them did not offer this system to other people because although E-learning provides easy access to learning opportunities and saves the cost and time on the part of the students, and it can expand the type and number of the courses that can be offered, with the recent condition in Iran it's not appropriate to participate in virtual learning.

Some students believe that this system is a very appropriate way to educate for married students and those who work and have children. It's easy to access teachers and classes via the internet and do not pay any money for food and dormitory fees. However, they believe that teachers have no interest and knowledge to work with it. There are no audio and video files most of the time and teachers teach just through typing. The quality of the system and the internet speed is not satisfactory and even the virtual site is complicated and confusing. Peoples view about virtual learning is not positive. Moreover, they don't have much information about this system. They mostly think that students are the only ones who are responsible for studying the lessons and teachers do not have any important role.

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SELF- ASSESSMENT TASK AND READING SKILL OF EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female students among 160 learners of English as a foreign language. The main purpose of the paper is to find out the role of task self-assessment in EFL learning and then improving reading ability. In this study, Oxford placement test, TOEFL test, task self-assessment Questionnaire were used to assess the relationship between task self-assessment and reading comprehension score. One hundred and thirty participants were chosen based on oxford placement test. Reading test was run. A questionnaire was given to students to measure their level of task self-assessment. Spearman rank- order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test by using SPSS 22 to answer the research question and to investigate the possible relationship between task self-assessment, and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners. The finding of the study revealed that there is a medium relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female student.

Keywords: Self-evaluation - Reading skill - Intrinsic motivation - Task self-assessment

1. Introduction

Self-assessment practices in the classroom has an effect on teachers in that they involve “making explicit what is normally implicit” and required the students to become more active and aware of their own learning, as noted by Black et al (2003, p. 60; 2004, p. 16). According to Crooks (2001) explained assessment is “any process that provides information about thinking, achievement or progress of students” (p. 1). Blanche and Merino (1989) summarized the literature on self-assessment of foreign language skills and pointed out that self-assessment accuracy would lead to learner autonomy and help teachers to become aware of learners’ individual needs.

Also, they reported that self-assessment practices “appeared to have increased the learners’ motivation” (p. 324). According to Sullivan and Hall (1997) students who overestimate their performance are not clear about the standard of judging their work and there should be some guidance about the teacher’s expectation. She also found that self-assessment process leads to learners’ autonomy but she did not mention that self-assessment can be useful for employing it in class or not. Brookhart (1997) suggests that self- evaluation encourages students to think of what is important for them in the process of learning.

According Oskarson (1978) Self-assessment which is also known as self-evaluation is a process in which students estimate their own knowledge and skills. Self-assessment is the ability by which students can judge their performance and make decision about themselves and their abilities. Students’ involvement in the teaching-learning process is important for there is much evidence to suggest that students’ self-assessment helps improve their performance. Assessment has “the most powerful influence on student learning” (George & Cowan, 1999, p.8). Reading comprehension strategies help readers get meaning from text. Readers employ prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading.

Yu (2003) states that a good summary can prove useful for assessment of reading comprehension since it contains the relevant important ideas, distinguishes accurate information from opinions, and reflects the structure of the text itself. The implications for this line of research are that children view pictures in books and construct meaning according to (a) their ongoing construction of a sensible story schema from the pictures and (b) their previous experiences with similar pictures, schemata, and stories. Additionally, comprehension requires the application of a variety of strategic processes

(Paris, Wasik, &, 1991; Pressley et al., 1994) that include making inferences, identifying main ideas, summarizing, predicting, monitoring, and backtracking.

These processes of comprehension may be influenced by vocabulary and language development to some extent, but according to Bransford and McCarrell (1974), "Comprehension results only when the comprehender has sufficient a linguistic information to use the cues specified in linguistic input to create some semantic content that allows him to understand" (p.204). The term "task" is often used interchangeably with activity or process. Tasks may be identified and defined at multiple levels of abstraction as required to support the purpose of the analysis. L2 reading research has shown that learner's performance on comprehension task also varies according to the task used.

Wolf (1993) investigated that such variation can be attributed to two factors: the type of task used to assess comprehension and the language in which the task is presented and carried out. In a study where she examined the effects of task type, language of assessment, and target language experience on learners' ability to demonstrate comprehension on post-reading tasks, Wolf found that subjects at both the beginning and advanced levels performed better on selected response tasks than on constructed response tasks. She argues that tasks requiring construction of responses in the target language have a debilitating effect on test-takers' performance.

According to Baniabdelrahman (2010) teachers assess whether students are able to comprehend the general idea of a text; recognize the type of a text, e.g. interactive, informative, narrative, or evaluative; arrange the sequence of information in a text; use pre-reading activities to predict what a text would be about; guess the meanings of particular words from context; extract specific information from a text; and use different reading strategies, e.g. skimming, scanning, speed reading, paced reading, or timed reading. There has been previous work on scoring summaries as part of the automated document summarization task (Nenkova and McKeown, 2011).

In that task, automated systems produce summaries of multiple documents on the same topic and those machine generated summaries are then scored by either human raters or by using automated metrics such as ROUGE. (Madnani, Burstein, Sabatini & O'Reilly, 2013) investigated Automated Scoring of a Summary Writing Task Designed to Measure Reading Comprehension. They introduced the Reading for Understanding cognitive framework and how it motivated the use of a summary writing task in a reading comprehension assessment. They described a preliminary, feature-driven approach to scoring such summaries and showed that it performed quite well for scoring the summaries about two different passages.

The present study has educational significance and extends professionals' understanding of possible relation between task self-assessment and reading skill. This paper makes an attempt to consider the following question: Is there any relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian students?

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the participants were 160 students who were learning English as a foreign language at institute in Iran. They were female students. They were from five different classes and had the same teacher. Their ages varied between 14 to 18 years old. In order to choose a homogenous group the researcher used an oxford placement test. Among these, 130 students who had one SD below the mean and one SD above the mean were selected. All these 130 students involved in the study and took part in all the task self-assessment research.

2.1. Instruments

The instruments for data collection were consisted of oxford placement test, TOEFL test and task self-assessment test. First, The Oxford Placement Test measures students' proficiency. And it was designed to assess students' knowledge. According to Dave Allan (1985) it is designed to measure a test taker's ability to understand a range of grammatical forms and the meanings they convey in a wide range of contexts. Second, TOEFL is a trademark of ETS (Educational Testing Service), a private non-profit organization, which designs and administers the tests. In the present study, the reading test was chosen from Broukal (2005) Published by Peterson's test book.

The reading comprehension test included ten passages, with reading comprehension questions in multiple choice formats. The students had to read a given text then to select the correct item. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was (.742) which means that the test was reliable. The result of reliability indicates that the instrument could be considered as a reliable tool for the main study.

Third, Task self- assessment included the items of self-assessment in the class. This questionnaire was organized by the researcher. The content validity of translation was ensured by two EFL, PhD instructors. In order to check the validity of items, the back translation process was done. The test included 20 questions. It was given to the students and asked them to select the correct item. The scale for task self-assessment questionnaire was five points ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly disagree". The time allotted for the test was 30 minutes. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was (.761) which means that the questionnaire was reliable.

First, in order to select the students among 160 students of five classes, an oxford placement test was run. 130 of them with intermediate level of proficiency selected as a homogenous group. Then the reading test was conducted by the researcher. The time allotted for the test was 60 minutes. After that the task self-assessment questionnaire was run. Spearman rank- order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test using SPSS 22 to answer the research questions and to investigate the possible relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners the output generated from this procedure (Spearman results) was presented below.

Table 1: Correlation between Task Self-Assessment and Reading Skill of Iranian EFL Students
reading scores

Task self-assessment	Correlation Coefficient	+.367**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	130

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The spearman rank- order correlation test measured the association between task self-assessment and reading skill. The correlation reported in the table ($Rho=.367$) indicated the strength of the relationship between these two variables. The value of correlation was statistically significant because the p-value of (.000) was lower than (.01). The result of the Spearman Rank-Order was interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) classification. Cohen (1988, pp. 79-81) suggested the following guidelines for interpreting the results of the correlation coefficient:

Table 2: Cohen's Guidelines for Interpreting the Results of the Correlation Coefficient

Interpretation	Correlation value
Small correlation	.10 to .29
Medium correlation	.30 to .49
Large correlation	.50 to 1.0

The result of the Spearman Rank Order was interpreted based on Cohen's classification .There was a Medium correlation between the two variables ($\rho = .367 \leq .5$), suggesting "Medium" relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

3. Discussion

According to the result of this research, we conclude that when the students' task self-assessment increases, their performances in English reading comprehension increase and vice versa. These findings are consistent with Madnani, Burstein, Sabatini & O'Reilly (2013) investigated Automated Scoring of a Summary Writing Task Designed to Measure Reading Comprehension. They investigated a cognitive framework for measuring reading comprehension that included the use of novel summary writing tasks.

Their results showed that the automated approach performs well on summaries written by students for two different passages. This finding of this thesis are compared with Bagheri and Faghih's (2012)

study which was about the relationship between self-esteem, personality type and reading comprehension on both males and females, which showed a positive relationship between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension, and overall self-esteem and personality type, in general. Likewise, positive relationships between situational and task self-esteem with reading comprehension were shown but there wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension. There wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension.

4. Conclusions

This study investigated the relationship between task self-assessment and reading skill of female students among 160 learners of English as a foreign language. Then 130 students were chosen based on Oxford Placement Test. The task self-assessment questionnaire used for data collection and reading test was run. Based on the information obtained from the study, there was a significant correlation between task self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

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MJLTM

IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHING IMPOLITENESS: GENDER IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

Compared to the robust literature on politeness, the amount of literature concerning impoliteness is paltry (Bousfield, 2008). The present study attempted to investigate Iranian EFL learners' perceptions concerning teaching impoliteness with a focus on gender. To this end, one hundred EFL learners, including fifty male and fifty female ones, participated in the study. They were between 18 and 26 years of old. They were surveyed through a questionnaire on impoliteness. The questionnaire was administered to them. They were given 40 minutes to complete it. The obtained data were analyzed by obtaining a series of Independent samples T-tests. The findings revealed that there were significant differences in the perceptions of male and female EFL learners towards some of the issues related to impoliteness.

Keywords: impoliteness, politeness, gender, EFL learners

1. Introduction

Elen (2001) pointed out that impoliteness has long been neglected in favor of politeness. As Culpeper (2008) stated impoliteness is licensed in many contexts, such as military recruit training and political debates. Culpeper (2011) defines impoliteness as:

"Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviors are viewed negatively—considered "impolite"—when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviors always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence" (p. 254).

Leech (2005) stated "my position incidentally, is that a theory of politeness is inevitably also a theory of impoliteness, since impoliteness is non-observance or violation of the constraints of politeness" (p. 18). According to Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann (2003), impoliteness is the use of strategies that attack the hearer's face and cause social conflict. Impoliteness is activated by particular types of behaviors in particular contexts and includes intentionally caused face-attack (Culpeper, 2011). Fraser and Nolan (1981) mentioned the importance of context:

"No sentence is inherently polite or impolite we often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determine the judgment of politeness" (p. 96).

Culpeper (1996) stated that "each of Brown and Levinson's politeness super-strategies has its opposite impoliteness super-strategy. They are opposite in terms of orientation to face. Instead of enhancing or supporting face, impoliteness super-strategies are a means of attacking face" (p. 356). These strategies are as follows:

1. Bald on record impoliteness - the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.
 2. Positive impoliteness - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.
 3. Negative impoliteness - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.
 4. Sarcasm or mock politeness - the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations.
 5. Withhold politeness - the absence of politeness work where it would be expected.
- (Culpeper 1996, p. 356)

Mugford (2008) argued that the world of L2 is not always a polite and respectful one. L2 learners must be trained to take part in impolite and rude, as well as congenial and social interactions. They should be conscious of impoliteness in the target language.

Garcia-Pastor (2008) studied impoliteness. She analyzed sixteen debates of the 2000 U.S. elections corresponding to twenty hours of ongoing talk and used some impoliteness models including models proposed by Culpeper (1996) and. She discussed strategies used in the debates mentioning some examples of impoliteness strategies.

Ahmadi and Heydari Soureshjani (2011) carried out a study on whether the impoliteness aspect of language should be taught in an Iranian EFL context or not. The participants included language learners, language teachers, Iranian language experts, and non-Iranian language experts. They were surveyed for their ideas toward the impolite language. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the participants' attitudes towards most of the issues related to impoliteness.

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness is complicated and difficult to pin down; it has serious implications for interpersonal communication and society as a whole. So it deserves serious academic study. Also, as Mills (2003) pointed out, there has been a lot less research done on impoliteness than politeness. Therefore, following what was mentioned above regarding the importance of impoliteness, the present study set out to cast more light on the issue of impoliteness in EFL context. The study posed the following research question:

RQ: Does gender make any difference in Iranian EFL learners' perceptions towards teaching impoliteness?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The present study was conducted with 100 Iranian advanced-level EFL learners, including 50 male and 50 female learners, who were studying English at Iran Language Institute in Urmia, Iran. They were between 18 and 26 years old.

2.2. Instruments

In order to obtain the required data, the researchers used a questionnaire designed by Ahmadi and Heydari Soureshjani (2011) (see Appendix I). This questionnaire consisted of thirty one 5-point Likert type items on the impoliteness aspect of language ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". A value of 1 was assigned to strongly agree, and 5 to strongly disagree. They divided the items into seven categories. The first category, including items 2, 8, and 19, compared the importance of impoliteness with that of politeness. The second category, including items 11, 14, 24, and 26, was related to the importance of impoliteness in everyday language use. The third category, including items 5, 6, 9, 10, 16, 28, and 31, was about the overall need for teaching impoliteness. The fourth category, including items 21 and 29, pertained to the way impoliteness should be taught. The fifth category, involving items 1, 3, 4, 7, 12, 15, 18, 25, 27, and 30, was about the levels at which impoliteness should be taught. The sixth category, including items 17 and 23, focused on teaching the impoliteness aspect of language to different genders. The seventh category, including items 13, 20, and 22, addressed the context (i.e., EFL or ESL) of teaching impoliteness. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.68 (Ahmadi & Heydari Soureshjani, 2011).

2.3. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to the participants. Clear enough instructions were provided to them. They were given 40 minutes to complete it.

3. Results

The data obtained through the procedure described above were analyzed using SPSS version 17.0 to answer the research questions. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the participants' responses to each of the seven categories of the questionnaire.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Seven Categories of Impoliteness

Group Statistics					
	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
category1	male	50	6.44	.760	.108
	female	50	6.52	1.282	.181
category 2	male	50	10.84	2.307	.326
	female	50	10.02	3.461	.489
category3	male	50	25.64	5.209	.737
	female	50	16.16	3.501	.495
category 4	male	50	4.24	1.779	.252
	female	50	7.32	1.834	.259
category 5	male	50	28.68	4.744	.671
	female	50	30.08	6.555	.927
category 6	male	50	5.62	1.210	.171
	female	50	5.66	1.239	.175
category 7	male	50	7.54	1.865	.264
	female	50	11.28	1.819	.257

As it is indicated in Table 1 there are some noticeable differences among the means of the two groups, meaning that the groups had different ideas toward different aspects of impoliteness. However, to see whether these differences were significant or not, the researchers run a series of Independent Samples T-tests.

A. Category 1: The importance of impoliteness versus politeness

The results of the independent samples t-tests revealed that there was not a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of the importance of impoliteness versus politeness (Sig.=0.705, $p \leq 0.05$) (Table 2).

Table 2
Independent Samples Test for the Importance of Impoliteness versus Politeness

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
category 1	Equal variances assumed	8.774	.004	-.380	98	.705	-.080	.211	-.498	.338
	Unequal variances assumed									

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
category 1	Equal variances assumed	8.774	.004	-.380	98	.705	-.080	.211	-.498	.338
	Equal variances not assumed			-.380	79.685	.705	-.080	.211	-.499	.339

B. Category 2: The importance of impoliteness in everyday language use

The result of an independent samples t-test in Table 3 for the importance of impoliteness in everyday language use in two groups, $t(98) = 1.394$, $p=.166$, shows that there was not a significant difference between the mean scores of the groups in this regard.

Table 3**Independent Samples Test for the Importance of Impoliteness in Everyday Language Use****Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
category 2	Equal variances assumed	10.041	.002	1.394	98	.166	.820	.588	-.347	1.987
	Equal variances not assumed			1.394	85.356	.167	.820	.588	-.349	1.989

C. Category 3: The need to teach impoliteness

Table 4 depicts the results for the third category in the questionnaire, that is, whether impoliteness needs any instruction or not. The results of the independent samples t-test show that there was a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of the need to teach impoliteness ($t(98) = 10.680$, $p=.000$).

Table 4
Independent Samples Test for the Need to Teach Impoliteness

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower Upper
category 3	Equal variances assumed	5.426	.022	10.680	98	.000	9.480	.888	7.719 11.241
	Equal variances not assumed			10.680	85.772	.000	9.480	.888	7.715 11.245

D: Category 4: Direct vs. indirect teaching of impoliteness

As Table 5 displays, male and female EFL learners differed significantly in their perception of the way impoliteness should be taught (Sig.= 0.00, $p \leq 0.05$).

Table 5
Independent Samples Test for Direct vs. Indirect Teaching of Impoliteness

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower Upper
category 4	Equal variances assumed	.037	.849	-8.522	98	.000	-3.080	.361	-3.797 -2.363
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.522	97.909	.000	-3.080	.361	-3.797 -2.363

E. Category 5: The proficiency level at which impoliteness should be taught

The results of the independent samples t-test revealed that there wasn't a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of the level at which impoliteness should be taught (Sig.=0.224, $p \leq 0.05$) (Table 6).

Table 6

Independent Samples Test for the Proficiency Level at which Impoliteness Should be Taught

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
category 5	Equal variances assumed	7.034	.009	-1.223	98	.224	-1.400	1.144	-3.671	.871
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.223	89.279	.224	-1.400	1.144	-3.674	.874

F. Category 6: Teaching impoliteness to males or females

As Table 7 displays, no significant difference was found among EFL learners' perceptions of whether males and females should be treated differently in teaching the impolite aspects of language. The results of the independent samples t-test (Sig. = 0.871, $p \leq 0.05$) indicated that all the participants held the idea that males and females should be treated equally in receiving instruction on impoliteness.

Table 7

Independent Samples Test for Teaching Impoliteness to Males or Females

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
category 6	Equal variances assumed	.067	.796	-.163	98	.871	-.040	.245	-.526	.446
	Equal variances not assumed			-.163	97.946	.871	-.040	.245	-.526	.446

G. Category 7: Teaching impoliteness in EFL/ESL contexts

Table 8 presents the findings concerning to the context (i.e., EFL/ESL) in which impoliteness should be taught. As Table 8 shows the participants had the same idea regarding this category. No significant difference was found among EFL learners' perceptions of the context in which impoliteness should be taught (Sig. = 0.00, $p \leq 0.05$).

Table 8
Independent Samples Test for Teaching Impoliteness in EFL and ESL Contexts

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
category 7	Equal variances assumed	.010	.921	-10.152	98	.000	-3.740	.368	-4.471 -3.009
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.152	97.938	.000	-3.740	.368	-4.471 -3.009

4. Discussion

The current study aimed at investigating Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of teaching impoliteness across two genders. The results of the study regarding the first category indicated that there was not a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of the importance of impoliteness versus politeness. The finding of the study, regarding the second category, revealed that there was not a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of the importance of impoliteness in everyday language use. This finding, in line with previous research findings (Ahmadi & Heydari Soureshjani, 2011), provided further evidence to support Mugford's (2008) claim that "teachers need to take the lead by preparing learners to communicate in pleasant, not so pleasant and even abusive interactional and transactional situations" (p. 375).

The researchers, also, investigated the EFL learners' perceptions towards the need and the way to teach impoliteness, as was the concern in the third and forth categories. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions in these regards. This finding is in contrast to that of Ahmadi and Heydari Soureshjani (2011). Regarding the need to teach impoliteness, the male participants showed a stronger tendency towards its teaching, while the female participants believed that any instruction of the impoliteness aspect of language may not be ethically appropriate. Regarding the method of teaching impoliteness, the male learners believed it should be taught explicitly and directly whilst the females held a pessimistic view toward direct teaching of impoliteness and preferred indirect and implicit method of teaching.

Concerning the fifth category which addressed the level of proficiency at which impoliteness should be taught, the results indicated that there wasn't a significant difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions in this regard. In fact, both male and female learners believed that higher levels seem more suitable for teaching impoliteness. With regard to the sixth and seventh categories, which addressed the issue of teaching impoliteness to males or females and the context in which it should be taught, respectively, the participants mentioned that both males and females should be treated equally in receiving instruction on impoliteness. They, also, believed that context is not of importance for teaching impoliteness and it can be taught in both EFL and ESL contexts.

The present study suggests that impoliteness is an inevitable aspect of every language. However, due to some social and religious factors in Iran, direct and explicit teaching of impoliteness may not be ethical and self-study or indirect methods of its teaching may be the best possible choices. With regard to gender differences, it is suggested that if the impolite aspect of language is to be taught, there shouldn't be a difference in teaching it to males or females and.

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Appendix I: Impoliteness Questionnaire

1	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught in all levels.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Impoliteness aspect of language has the same significance as the politeness aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught just in high levels.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Impoliteness should be taught just in universities.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Language learners themselves should learn about the impoliteness aspect of language.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Teaching the impoliteness aspect of language or not, makes no difference in learning that language.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Both politeness and impoliteness aspects of language should be taught. But the main focus should be on the politeness aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Politeness aspect of language is more important than the impoliteness aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Teachers should not waste class time by dealing with the impoliteness aspect of language.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Teaching the impoliteness aspect of language will disrupt the order of class.	1	2	3	4	5
11	In being able to communicate in a foreign language just learning the politeness aspect of that language suffice.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught just in intermediate levels.	1	2	3	4	5
13	In foreign language contexts, there is no need to teach	1	2	3	4	5

	impoliteness aspect of language, but in second language contexts, it is a necessity.					
14	Impoliteness aspect of language has not much application in communication.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Teachers should be trained to teach and offer strategies to students for dealing with L2 impoliteness.	1	2	3	4	5
16	There is no need to teach impoliteness aspect of language.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught Just to the male language learners.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught just in beginning levels.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Impoliteness aspect of language is more important than politeness aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
20	In Second language contexts, there is no need to teach impoliteness aspect of language, but in Foreign language contexts, it is a necessity.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught directly.	1	2	3	4	5
22	In both foreign and second language contexts, the impoliteness aspect of language should be taught.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught Just to the female language learners.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Impoliteness is part of daily language use and language learners need to be prepared to cope with these situations.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Both politeness and impoliteness aspects of language should be taught. But the main focus should be on the impoliteness aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
26	True and real communication in any language involves using both politeness and impoliteness strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Impoliteness aspect of language should be taught just in Secondary schools.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Teaching the impoliteness aspect of language is not in agreement with our cultural norms.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Impoliteness should be taught indirectly.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Impoliteness should be taught since the early stages of language learning in elementary schools.	1	2	3	4	5
31	It depends on teachers' view to teach impoliteness aspect of language or not.	1	2	3	4	5

THE EFFECT OF SELF-CORRECTION AND PEER-CORRECTION ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING ACCURACY IMPROVEMENT ACROSS PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

Debate on how teachers should correct EFL learners' written grammatical errors has continued to date. Thus, this study investigated the effect of self-correction and peer-correction on the accuracy improvement of EFL learners across two proficiency levels, that is, low-intermediate and high-intermediate. 40 low-intermediate and 40 high-intermediate EFL learners participated in this study. Moreover, learners in each proficiency level were divided into 2 groups (i.e., 20 peer-correction and 20 self-correction). During 7 sessions, learners' errors were reacted through self-correction and peer-correction. Analysis of the written pieces by means of paired-samples t-tests in the post-test revealed that self-correction groups outperformed the peer-correction ones significantly regarding the accuracy development (i.e., adjectives and adjective clauses in low-intermediate levels and 3 conditional types in high-intermediate level). The findings are beneficial to English language teachers, especially writing instructors, who are concerned about improving EFL learners' writing accuracy.

Keywords: self-correction, peer-correction, writing accuracy

1. Introduction

Since good writing entails the acquisition of various linguistic abilities, including grammatical accuracy, lexicon, syntax, and planning strategies like organization, style and rhetoric, writing instruction is especially important in foreign language classes. Writing is not only an individual act, but it is also a social and interactive process during which the writer attempts to express an idea (Aydin & Yildiz, 2014). According to Hyland (2003), teaching formal elements for the purpose of achieving grammatical accuracy and ensuring the students' use of those structures appropriately for various aims in different situations can be a difficult task for second language writing teachers.

Written error correction is viewed by writing teachers as an important element in improving L2 writing accuracy (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lee, 2004), but there is a lot of debate regarding its effectiveness (Truscott, 1996; Chandler, 2003). Giving feedback to learners' performance is one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher. Schmidt (1990) states that noticing is a necessary element in second language (L2) acquisition and that acquisition happens when learners consciously notice linguistic features. However, most teachers state that all their efforts in marking student essays and giving feedback on grammatical accuracy, particularly when such feedback sometimes seems to be given scant regard by students is in vain (Riddiford, 2006).

Errors are not the result of not learning rather they are the outcome of natural development in language learning. So, in this process the teacher is a facilitator and does not always correct errors. S/he engages the students in the process of correcting errors. A teacher can provide feedback in different ways in class and one of them is teacher correction. In a traditional classroom, a teacher as well as students expects and wants the teacher to give feedback. Since the teacher is the only knowledgeable person who flows information to the students, s/he will decide whether students have learnt or not (Sultana, 2009).

However, self correction is closely linked to learner autonomy as well as the say, "Tell us, we forget; Show us we remember; Involve us, we learn." Self correction is the technique in which students are engaged to correct their own errors. "It can... foster the development of skills needed to regulate their own learning and it places more responsibility for learning on the students (Rief, 1990 as cited in Sultana, 2009)".

Social constructivist theory states that learning is a social activity (Vygotsky, 1978). A learner can develop knowledge when he/she socially interacts with others. Collaborative and peer feedback in second language (L2) writing have proven to be effective means of improving L2 learner's writing skill. They warrant attention because it is proposed that the collaborative dialogue that emerges in the writing process mediates language learning. Attending to talk generated during the co-construction and revision of a piece of writing has allowed some researchers not only to access the cognitive processes learners deploy (Lantof, 2000) but also to keep track of the impact of that talk on language learning as reflected in the students' writing (Swain, 2000).

Moreover, White and Caminero (1995) claim that learners can also benefit from the opportunities of learning from each other through peer feedback. Students learn to communicate effectively, accept different opinions, listen carefully, think critically, and participate efficiently.

In sum, communicative classroom activities allow some attention to form and also can provide opportunities for noticing linguistic features. How to increase student awareness of accuracy in writing is a concern of most teachers of English. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the effects of peer-correction and self-correction on the accuracy improvement of learners across two proficiency levels, namely, low-intermediate and high-intermediate.

2. Literature Review

In learning a foreign language, mistakes occur in all stages of learning. Contrary to what some language learners and teachers believe, mistakes and errors will not disappear simply. Language acquisition will occur if the learner is relaxed and willing to learning. They should have no fear of making mistakes. Creating a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in language classrooms, encouraging peer work or small group work and using appropriate and engaging techniques for language acquisition will reduce the stress in the classroom (Kavaliauskiene, 2003).

The way mistakes can be remedied is also of great importance in reducing fear. Majority of EFL teachers have an active role in error correction. Learners prefer to be passive and depend on teachers' corrections. Nowadays, due to the emphasis on learner-centeredness and autonomy, learner's self-correction of errors is considered more useful for language learning than teacher's correction.

2.1 Self-correction

In self correction or self-repair (Lyster, 1998), the teacher makes the error salient by repeating in speaking, underlining the error in writing. It is a strategy in which students themselves are supposed to read, analyze, correct, and evaluate their own writing through the teacher's indirect feedback (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005). There are several advantages to self-correction. In self-correction, the learner consciously pays attention to his or her erroneous sentence. It increases students' independence from the teacher; moreover, students remember better when they see and get aware of their own mistakes, strengths, and weaknesses in writing, and it saves time in large classes (Yang, 2006). Ancker (2000) states that through self-correction, students attend their errors and attempt to reduce reliance on the teacher, so that they move toward encouraging autonomy.

There are some studies investigating the effect of self-correction. For example, Kubota's (2001) study on lower intermediate university students learning Japanese as a foreign language indicated that due to self-correction, the number of errors in students' writing decreased. Furthermore, Makino (1993, as cited in Lee & Ridley, 1999) states student correction either self-correction or peer-correction is much more effective than teacher correction in the sense that "it allows learners to be the architects of their own learning"(p. 26).

2.2 Peer-correction

Peer feedback is a writing activity in which learners work in groups collaboratively and provide information on each other's writing (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Although some research studies have shown that teacher feedback creates more grammatical comments, peer feedback can produce more comments on each other's writing content, organization, and vocabulary (Paulus, 1999). Many studies

emphasize the use of peer-correction for a number of reasons summarized in Ferris (1995). According to her, it increases learners' confidence and critical thinking skills since they read text written by peers on similar tasks. Through peer-feedback, students receive more feedback than they could through teacher-feedback. Moreover, peer-feedback creates a sense of classroom community (Liu & Hansen, 2002; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Zhang, 1995).

Therefore, peer-correction (feedback) promotes learners' writing accuracy, offers them opportunities to share ideas, give comments, and suggestions and maximizes motivation. Furthermore, White and Caminero (1995) believe that learners have more chance to learn from each other. Students learn how to communicate effectively, and accept different opinions.

According to some critics, peer-correction is not useful in the L2 classroom (Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Zhang, 1995). Saito and Fujita (2004) state that teachers are worried about the quality of peer review as students have limited knowledge, experience and language ability. Therefore, the application of peer-correction can eliminate the use of targeted form among students (Jacobs, 1987). Another major criticism of peer-feedback is that most of the learners favor feedback by the teachers in spite of having positive attitudes toward the usage of peer-correction in the classroom (Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006; Zhang, 1995).

Other studies emphasized that peer-feedback has the potential of enhancing learners' understanding of learning from their partners and viewing them as 'legitimate sources of knowledge' (Gehring et al., 2005, p.321). This view changes the traditional idea that the teacher is the only authority giving knowledge to the learners and assessing their work; therefore, introducing a collaborative learning context in the classroom (Paulus, 1999).

The research on error correction has also referred to other strategies besides teacher feedback. Chandler (2003) suggests that, if teachers expect error correction to be effective, they should make students do something with the error correction, and apply teacher feedback in the revisions. Ferris (2002) believes that self and peer-editing strategies are essential components in a writing program because proofreading another's writing is easier than proofing one's own; moreover, it is both motivating and engaging. Accordingly, the role of peer-correction and self correction in helping L2 writers improve the accuracy of their writing over time is of concern to researchers and teachers. It is not clear whether peer- and self-corrections are beneficial for learners in different proficiency levels or not. To this end, the following research questions were put forward to examine the results from a practical point of view.

2.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions guiding the study are as follows:

- 1) Does self-correction affect the accuracy development of low-intermediate EFL learners?
- 2) Does self-correction affect the accuracy development of high-intermediate EFL learners?
- 3) Does peer-correction affect the accuracy development of low-intermediate EFL learners?
- 4) Does peer-correction affect the accuracy development of high-intermediate EFL learners?

Based upon the research questions above, the researcher postulated the following null hypotheses:

- 1) Self-correction does not affect the accuracy development of low-intermediate EFL learners.
- 2) Self-correction does not affect the accuracy development of high-intermediate EFL learners.
- 3) Peer-correction does not affect the accuracy development of low-intermediate EFL learners.
- 4) Peer-correction does not affect the accuracy development of high-intermediate EFL learners.

Method

Participants

This study was conducted with 80 female learners. By means of Iran Language Institute (ILI) Placement Test, 4 intact classes, that is 2 low-intermediate and 2 high-intermediate, were selected. Each class included 30 participants among whom 20 homogeneous subjects were selected using Preliminary English Test (PET) (i.e., writing section) for the study. In each level, the researchers applied self-correction in one class and peer-correction in the other one. All the participants were within the age range of 15-19 and had the experience of learning English for at least for 2 years.

Instruments

The following instruments were utilized to pave the way for data collection procedures:

3.2.1 A highly valid and reliable proficiency test, $r = .90$, institutionalized by Iran language institute was utilized. It included questions on grammar, vocabulary followed by an interview. It served the purpose of homogenizing the participants in terms of language proficiency at the outset of the study.

3.2.2 According to the official website of Cambridge ESOL, PET is an exam for people who can use everyday written and spoken English at an intermediate level. It covers all four language skills, that is, reading, writing, listening and speaking. The researchers applied the writing section of the test to ensure the participants' writing homogeneity.

3.2.3 Having established homogeneity among the groups in terms of their language proficiency, the researchers selected some topics covered in the students' books for which the learners were required to write compositions.

Procedure

Having been homogenized by means of Iran Language Institute (ILI) Placement Test, the participants in all four groups, 2 low-intermediate and 2 high-intermediate intact classes, were given the writing section of PET to make sure that their initial writing proficiency was the same. A high inter-rater reliability, that is, .82, was established through double rating the written data in each level by another research assistant regarding writing ability. Then, 20 participants out of 30 in each class were selected. There were two variables in this study. The dependent variable was the writing accuracy which was measured through a writing post-test. The independent variable was the method of correction: Self-correction and Peer-correction. During the study, in each proficiency level, one of the selected intact classes was randomly assigned to peer-correction method and the other one to self-correction method. The first topic about which the learners wrote a composition was used as pre-test as well as post-test topic to see if there was a statistically significant difference between their pre-test and post-test performance. During the experiment phase, after writing each composition, in groups A and B, Self-correction groups, the teacher underlined the focused errors (i.e., adjectives and adjective clauses in low-intermediate levels (e.g., *how are the qualities of a goof friend?*) and 3 conditional types in high-intermediate levels (e.g., *what would you do if you had a lot of money*)) and the learners themselves had to correct the errors underlined by the teacher individually. In groups C and D, Peer-correction groups, the learners corrected each other's focused errors, provided comments on grammatical points and gave back the papers to their peers to observe their errors. All the learners wrote 7 compositions during 7 sessions. This procedure was followed for 7 weeks and the 7th composition was regarded as a post-test.

Data Analysis

By means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software, in order to analyze the obtained data, the researchers used Paired-samples t-tests to compare students' progress from the pre-test to post-test across proficiency.

Results

In order to analyze the obtained data, the researchers used a series of paired samples t-tests. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the impact of self-correction on low-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Self-correction on Low-intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-correction (Pre-test)	84.87	20	4.821	.927
Self-correction	94.39	20	3.718	.715

(Post-test)

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Paired Samples Test for the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Self -correction (Pre-test) Self -correction (Post-test)	-9.51	3.32	.639	-14.87	19	.00	-10.83	-8.20

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of self-correction on low-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy. There was a statistically significant increase from pre-test ($M=84.87$, $SD=4.82$) to post-test [$M=94.39$, $SD=3.71$, $t(19)=-14.87$, $p=.00$]. The eta squared statistic (.89) indicated a large effect size.

The descriptive statistics for the impact of self-correction on high-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Self-correction on High-intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-correction (Pre-test)	84.87	20	4.82	.927
Self-correction (Post-test)	93.43	20	3.94	.759

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test (see Table 4).

Table 4.
Paired Samples Test for the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test

Paired Differences								
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper

Self-correction (Pre-test)								
Self-correction (Post-test)	-8.55	3.67	.70710	-12.1	19	.00	-10.01	-7.10

In order to probe the effect of self-correction on high-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy, the researchers conducted a paired-samples t-test on their mean scores of the pre- and post-test of writing. There was a statistically significant increase from pre-test ($M=84.87$, $SD=4.82$) to post-test [$M=93.43$, $SD=3.94$, $t(19)=-12.1$, $p=.00$]. The eta squared statistic (.84) indicated a large effect size. Table 5 shows descriptive statistics for the impact of peer-correction on low-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy.

Table 5.
Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Peer-correction on Low-intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Peer-correction (Pre-test)	82.27	20	7.64	1.47
Peer-correction (Post-test)	82.15	20	6.53	1.25

According to the mean scores, there was not a significant difference between pre-test and post-test (see Table 6).

Table 6.
Paired Samples Test for the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					Lower	Upper
Peer-correction (Pre-test)									
Peer-correction (Post-test)	.124	1.85	.35786	.347	19	.732		-.61151	.8596

A paired-samples t-test was run to evaluate the impact of peer-correction on low-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy (Table 6). There was not a statistically significant increase from pre-test ($M=82.27$, $SD=7.64$) to post-test [$M=82.15$, $SD=6.53$, $t(26)=.347$, $p=.73$].

Table 7 shows descriptive statistics for the impact of peer-correction on high-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy.

Table 7.
Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Peer-correction on High-intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Peer-correction (Pre-test)	82.27	20	7.64	1.47

	81.83	20	6.40	1.23
Peer-correction (Post-test)				

As it is shown in Table 7, there was not a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 8.
Paired Samples Test for the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Peer-correction (Pre-test)								
Peer-correction (Post-test)	.448	2.05	.39581	1.134	19	.267	-.36470	1.262

To evaluate the impact of peer-correction on high-intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy, the results of their pre-test and post-test were compared through Paired-Sample t-test. As illustrated in Table 8, there was not a statistically significant increase from pre-test ($M=82.27$, $SD=7.64$) to post-test [$M=81.83$, $SD=6.40$, $t(19)=1.134$, $p=.26$].

Discussion

Providing effective written feedback is one of the most important tasks for English writing teachers (Hyland, 1998; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). While teacher feedback has been indicated to be desirable for the development of student writing (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2004; Goldstein, 2004; Zhang, 1995), debate continues over whether written feedback should be provided or not (Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Guénette, 2007; Truscott, 1996). Given the existing controversy on the effect of feedback type in an EFL setting, the present study sought to investigate the effect of self-correction and peer-correction or feedback on accuracy improvement of EFL learners across two proficiency levels (i.e., low-intermediate and high-intermediate). It was found from the results of the study that self-correction had great impact on learners' accuracy development across proficiency.

This finding can well answer the first and second research questions and indicates that teachers' decision on using methods of providing written corrective feedback should depend on the acting time and the educational focus on the type of grammatical features. The findings are in line with Kubota's (2001), Yang's (2010) and Ancker's (2000) studies which indicated that through self-correction, students can easily correct their errors and try to reduce dependence on the teacher, so that they move toward autonomy. An important point to be discussed here is that self-correction reduces or even omits learners' fear of making mistakes, facilitates the process of learning by enhancing language awareness and developing learner autonomy in learning context.

Moreover, regarding the third and forth research questions, the findings support Nelson and Murphy (1992), Zhang (1995), Saito and Fujita (2004), and Jacobs (1987) indicating that due to the students' limited knowledge, experience and language ability, peer-feedback can reduce the use of target language among students. However, the results did not support White and Caminero's (1995) and Ferris's (1995) findings which showed that peer-correction provides more chances to share ideas and give useful comments. Moreover, it has the capability of increasing confidence, enhancing critical thinking and motivation.

Accordingly, in line with what Schmidt (1994) suggests, learners have to notice the feedback and be given ample opportunities to apply the corrections. In order to help learners refine their output in these areas, self-correction on selective grammatical point can help learners close the gap between their current and desired state of interlanguage. This study, therefore, emphasizes the promotion of

self-initiated focus on form, and learner autonomy. Provision of error correction may attract the attention of the L2 student and aid him not only to discover his errors in his output, but also the feature of the target language (Corpuz, 2011).

The results of the present study are beneficial to English language teachers, especially writing instructors, who are concerned about improving EFL learners' writing accuracy. By providing insights on the benefits and disadvantages of self-correction and peer-correction and their applicability in the classroom, the findings will guide the teachers to take into account students' opinions about which technique of correction they are comfortable with according to their proficiency level. Furthermore, learners should be intensively trained on how to carry peer-feedback in the process of writing including receiving and giving feedback. Future teachers can examine the effect of peer-correction on students' performance after training learners.

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THE EFFECT OF GENRE-BASED APPROACH ON ENHANCING WRITING SKILL OF IRANIAN LAW STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research is an endeavor to examine the impact of genre-based approach on students' writing performance as well as students' attitudes towards the implementation of genre based approach in writing learning. Research findings reveal that most of the students gained the control over the key features of the required recount genre in terms of social purposes, language features and schematic structure. The necessity and usefulness of the application of teaching-learning cycle into learning the recount genre was predominantly recognized among students.

Keywords: genre-based approach, teaching writing, EFL

Introduction

Writing skill is believed to be difficult for EFL students in the language learning (Richards, 1990). According to Richard and Renandya (2002), the difficulties include those in (a) generating and organizing ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary and (b) putting such ideas into an intelligible text. As for Iranian EFL students, besides these difficulties, they also have to face many other obstacles when learning to write compositions in English. The first difficulty rests in the fact that English in Iranian universities nowadays is treated primarily as a compulsory subject for studying and for exam-driven purposes rather than as a tool for communication. Students have been asked to do the multiple choice tests on their final exams, which include several sections on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing. In the writing section, students are asked to "rewrite" some sentences in another way but keep exactly the same meaning as the given ones or translate a whole paragraph in Persian or vice versa. They are also asked to repair word order in jumbled-word sentences or fill in the blanks with the suitable verbs or verbal phrases. As passing exams is vital for students' lives, most of the time in class, a large number of teachers may be in more favor of teaching such writing skills to help their students pass the exams.

Secondly, the "so-called" teaching writing approach of composition deployed by teachers at present may expose some difficulties for students in the performance of the compositional writing skills. In terms of teaching English compositions, most of the teachers just focus on providing their student writers with vocabulary relating to the required topic and some guiding questions in order to help them shape their ideas into the completed paragraphs. Teaching writing in this way only benefits them to an extent that it can assist them in producing the error-free texts following the models of correct language. However, it does not contribute to help students realize and master such features as purposes, audiences, context and linguistic conventions of text which are the important features of any text-types.

In other words, writing classes in universities nowadays are still predominantly language-based writing classes that focus on sentence writing for sentence building tests, rather than focusing on creating compositions to serve the purpose of plurality of real readers outside the classroom context.

This research is an endeavor to seek for ways that can both enhance students' writing skills and build up their positive perceptions towards learning this skill. The genre-based approach chosen in this research is to solve students' difficulties in learning to write English compositions.

Research Questions

The ultimate purpose of this study is to find out the answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent can students' academic recount essays actually be improved with respect to social purposes, schematic structure and language features after their exposure to genre-based approach?

2. What are students' attitudes towards the use of the genre-based approach in learning to write?

Literature review

What is genre?

"Genre" refers not only to types of literary texts but also to the predictable and recurring patterns of everyday, academic and literary texts occurring within a particular culture (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001). In the western countries, genre, either spoken or written, is often identified/grouped according to its primary social purposes. According to Swale (1990), the genres which share the same purposes belong to the same text-types. Derewianka (1990), identified further six main genres according to their primary social purposes: (a) narratives: tell a story, usually to entertain; (b) recount: to tell what happened; (c) information reports: provide factual information; (d) instruction: tell the listeners or readers what to do; (e) explanation: explain why or how something happens and (f) expository texts: present or argue a viewpoint. These social purposes of the text-genres in turn decide the linguistic inputs of the text (i.e. their linguistic conventions, often in form of schematic structure and linguistic features). Specifically, schematic structure refers to internal structure or text organization of the text-type in forms of introduction, body and conclusion, while language features consist of linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, connectors, etc. that the writers have to use in order to translate information/ideas into a readable text.

Genre-based approach

A genre-based approach placed great emphasis on the relationship between text-genres and their contexts (Hyon, 1996). In doing so, it aimed to help students become effective participants in their academic and professional environment as well as in their broader communities (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001). Following are some characteristics of the genre-based approach.

First, the genre-based approach emphasizes the importance of exploring the social and cultural context of language use on a piece of writing. The context decides the purpose of a text, an overall structure of a text in terms of language features and text features often in the form of linguistic conventions (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001; Hyon, 1996). This approach argues that students can only produce a composition to be successfully accepted by a particular English-language discourse community once they take the context of a text into account into their own writing papers.

Second, this approach highlights the magnitude of the readers and the linguistic conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership (Muncie, 2002). According to this approach, any student who wants to be successful in communicating in a particular English-language discourse community needs to be able to produce texts which fulfill the expectations of their readers in regards to grammar, organization, and content.

Third, it underscores that writing is a social activity. This notion originated from the social cultural theory initiated by Vygotsky (1978). According to this theory, knowledge is best constructed when learners collaborate together, support one another to encourage new ways to form, construct and reflect on new knowledge. In this case, social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing new knowledge. In the writing classes, students are encouraged to participate in the activities of meaning exchange and negotiation with peers and the teacher. Learning writing in this way, as it is believed, can remove the feeling of isolation which bothers many learners when writing and, at the same time, help student writers have positive reinforcements about the knowledge of linguistics, content and ideas in the composing of texts.

Fourth, a genre-based approach to writing instruction looks beyond subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers. This approach is concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing. Its central belief is that "we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purpose" (Hyland, 2002, p. 18). In this approach, student writers are requested to take the overall social purposes of a text into account when composing a text.

Fifth, this approach emphasizes the important role of writer-reader interaction on a piece of writing (Reid, 1995). Firstly, student writer in this approach is requested to specify or think about the intended and/or potential readers when writing in order to be able to select or anticipate appropriate content, language and levels of formality. He or she should always ask himself or herself some questions such as *who will be my intended readers?*, *who might be interested in reading my text?*, *what are their beliefs about a good piece of writing?*, *what are their levels of English proficiency?* And *what are their educational and cultural backgrounds?*, etc. Similarly, readers when approaching the text should also ask

themselves some questions such as *for what purposes does this writer write this piece of writing?*, *what is the writer's viewpoint when writing the text?*, *what kinds of language features and organization does he/she use in the text?*, and etc. Also, there always exists an interaction between a writer and his/her readers in the form of written communication despite the absence of readers.

Sixth, the teacher's role in this approach is viewed as authoritative rather than authoritarian (Rothery, 1996). As an expert in the classroom, the teacher provides students with systematic guidance and careful support through various activities so that students ultimately gain the control of written genres. At the same time, he/she also recognizes the importance of students' contributions to the teaching-learning process.

Last but not least, the genre-based approach emphasizes the explicit teaching of the linguistic conventions of the genre for second language novice student writers (Christie, 1990). It is argued that students cannot produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with respect to language features and schematic structure. Therefore, making known these conventions to student writers, especially at the first stage of the instructional modules of particular text-types, is a very important task of genre-based teachers. In the classroom, teachers following genre orientation often employ the teaching-learning cycle that comprises the three phases, namely, modeling of a "sample expert" text, and joint-negotiation of text with teacher, and independent construction of text by individual student (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

Methodology

Participants

This study was carried out on tertiary level students studying for a B.S. in law in Payam-e Noor University, Tehran. Forty five students were invited to take part in an experimental writing class in which the researcher used the genre pedagogy's teaching-learning cycle in order to teach the student participants to write on the biographical recount genre. This extracurricular writing activity was conducted outside their regular class hours in order to offer the student participants a lot of opportunities to practice more in the writing skills. Meanwhile, the four skills are still regarded as the key elements in the mainstream English course books in the regular-class hours at school.

Data collection and analysis

Research data was collated through student essays and questionnaire for students.

Student essays

The essays collected were the ones written on the following topic: "Write about a famous person". The analysis of these essays was based on the three evaluative criteria of the recount genres developed and explained by Droga and Humphrey (2003). More specifically, the students' text analysis focused on:

- Students' control over the social purposes of the required recount genre: to give accounts of the most important events in the life of a specific character in history (for biographical recount genre).
- Students' control over the schematic structure of the recount genre. These include: the orientation phase, the sequence of events in chronological order phase and the re-orientation phase.
- Students' control over the language features of the recount genre. These include: focus on the main specific human participants, process types (i.e. material process, relational process and mental process), circumstantial adverbs of time, and the past tenses of verbs.

Questionnaire for students

A Persian version of questionnaire consisting of two parts, part A and part B, which was designed to elicit students' attitudes towards the genre pedagogy's teaching-learning cycle and the recount genre, was administered to forty five first-year students right after they had finished the instructional module of the recount genre. This questionnaire was composed of close-ended questions that were designed based on five agreement extensions, namely, strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree, as proposed in Likert's work, which was published in the late 1920s.

This questionnaire sought to gather information about students' attitudes towards (a) the three phases of teaching-learning cycle and (b) the recount genre. It consisted of 33 items that were

distributed in two parts in the form of close-ended questions (A, B). Part A with 26 items aimed at the three key phases of teaching-learning cycle and part B with seven items aimed at the recount genre.

Data analysis and discussions

Analysis of students' biographical recount essays

Table 1. Students' control over the key features of the biographical recount essays

Schematic structure					Language features			
Essays Circumstantial	Social purposes adverbs of time	Orientation	Sequences of events	Reorientation	Main participants	Process types	Past Tens of verbs	
No.	45	45	42	38	45	45	45	45
%	100	100	93.33	84.44	100	100	100	100

Table 1 indicates that more than 80% of the students were successful in gaining control over the key features of the biographical recount essays.

With respect to the schematic structure, most student participants demonstrated all typical phases of a biographical recount essay, namely, an *orientation*, a *sequence of events* and a *reorientation*.

Specifically, in the orientation, they identified a famous person as the *main participant* and then provided the reasons for his fame in their orientation. Thus, they succeeded in revealing the social purpose of their essays: *To give an account of a famous specific character in the history*. In the same vein, in the sequences of event phases, they demonstrated their good understanding and good execution of typical features of a biographical recount genre by unfolding the major phases in the famous person's life in a temporal order, deploying proper circumstantial adverbs of time and proper verb tenses, and finally rounded off their essays by summarizing the famous person's contributions to the society.

Moreover, they were also successful in deploying proper linguistic resources of the biographical recount genre by focusing on *one main participant*, using a variety of process types such as material process (a process of doing), mental process (a process of sensing), or relational process (a process of being) across the *schematic structure of their essays*, using *proper past tenses of verbs and circumstantial adverbs of time*. Interestingly, they also discerned how to use the other adverb elements such as *cause, place, result, purpose* and *concession* to make their whole essays hang together.

In a nutshell, it was evident from their essays that most of the students gained control over the features of the biographical recount genre.

Analysis of students' attitudes towards the teaching-learning cycle and the recount genre

Students' attitudes towards the teaching-learning cycle

This section displays the three themes which are the modeling of the recount genre, joint-construction of the recount genre and independent construction of the recount genre respectively.

- *Phase 1: modeling of the recount genre*

This phase is subdivided into two sub phases: context exploration and text exploration

** Context exploration*

Table 2 Students' attitudes towards the activities in the context exploration of the recount genre

Student choice	SA	A	U	D	S	M
The activities in the context exploration	5	4	3	2	D 1	3.0

1. Realizing the social purposes of the recount genre.	20 44.4	20 44.4	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3
2. Knowing the writer of the recount genre.	17 37.8	23 51.1	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3
3. Knowing the intended readers of the recount genre.	17 37.8	23 51.1	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3
4. Exploring the possible contexts of situation of the recount genre.	9 20.0	25 55.6	9 20.0	2 4.4	0 0.0	3.9
5. Realizing that the contextual factors can affect the production of the recount genre.	12 26.7	15 33.3	15 33.3	2 4.4	1 2.2	3.8
6. Activating their background knowledge.	15 33.3	25 55.6	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.2
7. Expressing their personal opinions or attitudes towards the recount genre.	12 26.7	15 33.3	15 33.3	2 4.4	1 2.2	3.8
8. Necessity and usefulness for them in the latter phases of learning writing.	27 60.0	14 31.1	4 8.9	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.5

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, U= Uncertain, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of student participants (91.1%) reckoned that the activities in the context exploration was necessary and useful for them in the latter phases of learning writing ($M=4.5$). Concretely, 27 students accounting for 60% agreed that these activities really helped them in learning writing, in addition to 14 students (31.1%) expressing their strong agreement towards this statement. As a result, most of the students expressed their positive opinions from approval to strong approval (M ranged from 3.8 to 4.3) to the 7 remaining items (from item 1 to item 7) with respect to realizing the purposes of the recount genre, knowing the reasons why a writer writes the recount genre, identifying the audiences of the recount genre, knowing the situations where the recount genre can be applied, helping explore the contextual factors affecting the production of the recount genre, helping activate their background knowledge and expressing their personal opinions towards the recount genre. Specifically, around 88.8% of the respondents affirmed that the activities in the context exploration could help them realize the social purposes, the writer and the intended readers of the recount genre. In the same vein, nearly the same number, 88% of the students, noted that these activities helped them realize in what situation this genre could be applied and roughly 90% of the respondents showed that these activities could activate their prior knowledge towards the recount genre. Although the criteria in terms of exploring the possible contexts of situation of the recount genre and expressing their personal opinions towards the recount genre were not warmly received with favorable opinions (i.e. the hesitation of the respondents dropped from high proportion 33.3% to low proportion 20%), 77.6% of them also expressed that these activities were really helpful for them.

Finally, roughly 60% of the respondents, albeit still predominant, reckoned that these activities could help them realize that the contextual factors could affect the production of the recount genre and that these activities were the good chances for them to express their likes and dislikes towards the recount topics which they were learning.

In short, the students' attitudes towards the activities in the first sub phase of the modeling of the recount genre were generally positive. Although there were some students showing their uncertainty and disagreement towards some options in the items in this sub phase, they were just a few. Generally, all the activities in this sub phase actually facilitated and prepared them in the following phases of the teaching-learning cycle.

* Text exploration

Table 3 Students' attitudes towards the activities in the text exploration of the recount genre

Student choice	SA	A	U	D	S	M
The activities in the text exploration	5	4	3	2	D 1	3.0
1. Realizing how the information is structured in the sample recount genre to reach the purposes, audiences, content	21 46.7	19 42.2	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.4

and text organization						
2. Picking up the salient language features of the recount genre thanks to the teacher's explicit analysis of these features.	27 60.0	13 28.9	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.5
3. Picking up the salient schematic structure of the recount genre thanks to the teacher's explicit analysis of these features.	27 60.0	13 28.9	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.5
4. Realizing that each recount genre has different writing conventional rules.	30 66.7	10 22.2	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.6
5. Realizing that these conventional rules of writing differ from culture to culture.	22 48.9	10 22.2	9 20.0	4 0.9	0 0.0	4.2
6. Realizing that conforming to the conventional rules of a particular recount genre is very important when writing.	30 66.7	10 22.2	5 11.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.6
7. Necessity and usefulness for them in the latter phases of learning writing.	25 55.6	15 33.3	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.4

It is evident from Table 3 that the activities in the text exploration of the recount genre could facilitate students in learning writing in particular and in the latter phases of their learning writing in general. Indeed, 88.9% of them expressed their approval towards these activities with 55.6% higher percentage of strong agreement and lower percentage 33.3% of agreement. In turn, their strong belief entailed their agreement to the 6 remaining items (from item 1 to item 6). In addition, it was also noted that only 5 students expressed their uncertainty in the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9/45 students expressed their hesitation in item 5 along with 4/45 students who expressed their disagreement. This indicated that almost all respondents expressed their positive opinions towards the activities in the text exploration.

Specifically, 88.9% of these students expressed that, with the sample text offered and analyzed by the researcher, they could realize how the information was structured to obtain social purposes, language features and schematic structure of the required text. 27/45 students (60%) strongly agreed and 13/45 students (28.9%) agreed that they were able to pick up the salient language features and schematic structure suitable for the required recount genre thanks to the researcher's analysis of the features in the sample recounts. Interestingly, 88.9% of the respondents, which was albeit 88.9% of the respondents in the item 7, reported that, in their viewpoints, conforming to the linguistic conventions of a particular recount genre was very important for them to learn writing (88.9%). Finally, it was found in item 5 that 32/45 students (71.1%) agreed that the conventional rules of writing differed from cultures to cultures.

To sum up, the text exploration sub phase was really useful and necessary for students in learning writing. This was confirmed in their positive responses towards the aspects of the social purposes, language features, schematic structure and etc. of the required recount genre. This was in coincidence with the researcher's expectations. As identified in the conceptual framework of the teaching-learning cycle, the first phase – modeling – aims at providing the novice students with the "tools" to construct the text in terms of social purposes, language features and schematic structure of a particular text-type because in this phase students themselves are still unfamiliar with these conventional rules. It turned out that after being taught with this first phase of the cycle, almost all students (88.9%) expressed their positive feelings towards it. Similarly to the context exploration, it was found in this sub phase that some of the students still expressed their doubtfulness and even their disagreement towards this sub phase. Nevertheless, the negative reactions from the respondents were very small. On the whole, they acknowledged that this sub phase facilitated them in learning writing.

- *Phase 2: The joint-construction of the recount genre*

Table 4 Students' attitudes towards the activities in the joint-construction of the recount genre

Student choice	SA	A	U	D	S	M
The activities in the joint-construction	5	4	3	2	D 1	3.0
1. Applying the theories of the recount genre into practice.	21 46.7	18 40.0	4 8.9	2 4.	0 0.0	4.3

				4		
2. Realizing that the preparatory phases are very important and necessary for constructing an effective recount genre	32 71.1	13 28.9	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.7
3. Knowing "what to write" in order to achieve the social purposes, language features and schematic structure of a particular recount genre thanks to the teacher's demonstration of the way of writing	31 68.9	10 20.0	1 2.2	3 6.7	0 0.0	4.5
4. Knowing "how to write" in order to achieve the social purposes, language features and schematic structure of a particular recount genre thanks to the teacher's demonstration of the way of writing.	31 68.9	10 20.0	1 2.2	3 6.7	0 0.0	4.4
5. Necessity and usefulness for them in the latter phase of learning writing.	23 51.1	17 37.8	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.4

Table 4 shows that roughly 90% of the student respondents thought that the activities in the joint construction phase were necessary and useful for them in learning writing ($M=4.4$). This was confirmed by the fact that nearly all of the respondents expressed strong agreement (M ranged from 4.3 to 4.7, items 1-4 in Table 4). In particular, 86.7% of them expressed that they knew how to apply the theories of the recount genre in terms of orientation, sequences of events in chronological order and reorientation into practice. The figure 8.9% of uncertainty and 2% of disagreement in this statement did not indicate the big differences in terms of negative attitudes in this item. More interestingly, the preparatory phases such as researching information from many sources (e.g. from internet, textbooks, newspapers, teachers and peers) got the most favorable opinions (71.1% strongly agree and 28.9% agree). Finally, roughly 90% of the student respondents agreed that they knew "what and how to write" in each phase to achieve the social purposes, language features and schematic structure of a required recount genre in the independent construction phase of the recount genre thanks to their teacher's demonstration of the way of writing.

Briefly speaking, this phase was generally really helpful for students in learning writing. It served as a transitional sub phase of the first phase in transforming the theories they picked up into practice. This phase was successfully implemented thanks to the collaborative writing processes between teacher and students with teacher acting as a scribe. Although this phase also received unfavorable responses from the respondents like "modeling" phase, these negative reactions were just a few. On the whole, all of these activities were considered to be very necessary before the student writers were asked to write independently.

- *Phase 3: The independent construction of the recount genre*

Table 5 Students' attitudes towards the activities in the independent construction

Student choice The activities in the Independent construction	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	S D 1	M 3.0
1. Writing many drafts can help improve their own essays.	31 68.9	10 20.0	1 2.2	3 6.7	0 0.0	4.5
2. The constructive feedbacks of their friends towards their first drafts better their second drafts.	21 46.7	18 40.0	4 8.9	1 2.2	0 0.0	4.2
3. Their feedbacks towards their friends' drafts can help them review the knowledge of the recount genre and realize their mistakes (if possible) in their own recount essays.	25 55.6	12 26.7	6 13.3	1 2.2	1 2.2	5.1
4. Teacher's feedbacks can help them realize whether their recount essays fulfilled the contents of the required recount genre or not.	30 66.7	15 33.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.7
5. Their final recount essays are much better improved after being given feedbacks and corrections by their	18 40.0	21 46.7	15 13.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3

friends and teacher.						
6. These teaching writing techniques are necessary and useful for learning to write any text-types.	18 40.0	22 48.9	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3

It is clear from Table 5 that the teaching writing techniques applied in the phase “independent construction of the recount” were really helpful for students (roughly 90%). From Table 5, it was seen that most of the students responded positively to the issues of writing many drafts, peer feedback and teacher’s feedback (M ranged from 4.2 to 5.1). In terms of writing many drafts, roughly 90% of the respondents expressed that it did really help them improve their writing skills. As for their friends’ feedback, 21 out of 18 students in the scale agreement extension strongly agreed that this activity could help them improve their second drafts (86.7%). That meant that in giving constructive feedbacks of their friends towards their first drafts, their friends could help them locate as well as point out to them the mistakes or errors in terms of vocabulary, structure, register, and style committed in their first drafts and at the same time suggested the ways of helping them revise their first drafts to become better. Also, they agreed that their feedbacks towards their friends’ drafts could help them review the knowledge of the recount and spotted their mistakes and errors in their own papers (82.3%). More importantly, teacher’s feedbacks received the most favorable opinions (100%) in which 66.7% expressed their total agreement along with 33.3% of agreement. As such, they were of the opinion that their final written products were better improved after being offered the constructive feedbacks and corrections from their friends and teacher (86.7%). Like phases 1 and 2 above, besides the positive responses offered by students, the researcher still received a relatively small percentage of other respondents who both expressed their uncertainty and their rejection towards the usefulness of these teaching writing strategies used in the cycle which needed paying more attention to.

In brief, the last phase of the teaching-learning cycle did contribute to the learning of writing of students in this study. This was expressed in the high proportion of percentage of agreements towards the teaching writing techniques used by the researcher. Certainly, the positive responses of students were not by chance. The statistical figures actually indicated these positive attitudes.

Students’ attitudes towards the recount genre

Table 6 Students’ attitudes towards the recount genre

Student choice	SA	A	U	D	S	M
The recount genre	5	4	3	2	D 1	3.0
1. Suitability for their learning English at university	17 37.8	17 37.8	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.4
2. Suitability for their learning English in the near future.	12 26.7	22 48.9	11 24.4	1 2.2	0 0.0	4
3. Suitability and interest for them personally	12 26.7	18 40.0	13 28.9	2 4.4	0 0.0	3.7
4. Suitability for their current English level	20 44.4	20 44.4	5 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	4.3
5. Suitability for their age	21 46.7	17 37.8	5 11.1	2 4.4	0 0.0	4.3
6. The biographical recount genre stimulates them to learn to write.	5 11.1	10 22.2	24 53.3	5 11.1	1 2.2	3.3

From Table 6, it was seen that all respondents agreed that the recount genre chosen for this study was suitable for their learning English at university (17 students agreed and 28 students strongly agreed). However, the following criteria regarding items 2-5 were not received with completely favorable opinions from the respondents although the positive responses in these items were found to be outnumbered than the negative responses. First of all, in terms of suitability for their learning English in the near future, there were 34 students expressing their positive feelings towards it (i.e. 12 students

strongly agreed and 22 students agreed) while 11 of them expressed their uncertainty and the other one student rejected this criteria. Secondly, in the next item (suitability and interest for them personally), while 30 out of 45 respondents responded positively towards it (i.e. 12 strongly agreed and 18 agreed), 13 of them expressed their hesitation and the other two students expressed their disagreement towards it. Thirdly, despite the fact that there were 40 respondents agreeing about suitability for their current English level, 5 of them also expressed their doubtfulness towards it. With respect to suitability for their age, 38 out of 45 respondents expressed their approval while 5 expressed their doubtfulness and 2 expressed their disagreement towards it. These pointed out that there were fluctuations in the attitudes of the respondents ranging from strong agreement, agreement, and uncertainty to disagreement towards the suitability and interest of the recount genre.

Lastly, in reference to item 6 (i.e. whether they thought the biographical recount genre could stimulate them to learn writing or not), it was seen that there were only 15 students expressing their positive feelings towards the biographical recount genre (i.e. 5/45 expressing their strong agreement and 10 expressing their agreement) while the number of respondents which responded uncertainly and negatively to this genre was very big (i.e. 24/45 respondents expressing their uncertainty plus 6/45 students expressing their disagreement towards this genre: 5 rejection and 1 complete rejection). This indicated that the biographical recount genre chosen for teaching writing in this study did not meet the great expectations from most of the student participants.

All in all, students' attitudes towards the recount genre enjoyed both positive and negative reactions from the respondents, among which positive attitudes outnumbered negative attitudes. Apart/except from the criterion (suitability for their learning English at university), other remaining criteria (from item 2 to item 6) were not met with the great expectations from the researcher, especially in terms of stimulating them to learn to write the biographical recount and suitability for their learning English in the future.

Conclusion

Research findings demonstrate that a genre-based approach based on the three phases of the teaching learning cycle has created a great impact on these student participants. Indeed, most of the student participants gained control over the key features of the required recount genre, and at the same time, expressed their positive feelings towards this cycle as well as the recount genre applied in this study.

Although there were still some of the student participants who expressed their disapproval towards some activities carried out in each phase of the teaching-learning cycle and the recount genre, it was found that these negative reactions from the small number of participants did not considerably affect the results of the research.

In order to implement successfully this teaching-learning cycle of the genre-based program into their own actual classroom, teachers of English should introduce many well-written sample reading texts which contain the features of the specific text-types into their own classroom. As identified at the outset of this study, one of the difficulties faced by EFL students when they develop writing skills was that they lacked the knowledge of the text-type in terms of language features and text features; therefore, they did not know how to turn their ideas into their intelligible text. A sample "expert" and "selective" recount genre helped students realize its purposes, its language features and its schematic structure and they could use this knowledge to produce their own recount writing effectively.

Moreover, teachers should resort to the flexibility of the genre-based approach. In other words, teachers should not be too rigid in applying the three phases into their classroom. For more capable students who understand very clearly the modeling phase and want to further practice their writing skills, teachers can ignore their role as scribes. Instead, he or she should revise and correct their texts which approximate to the structure of the sample text. However, for those students who have not yet mastered the structure of the sample reading text, the role of the teacher as a scribe in the joint negotiation phase is still considered necessary.

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THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF COMPETITIVE LEARNING AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the comparative effective of competitive learning and cooperative learning as two types learning modalities on vocabulary retention of 60 EFL students from VIP language school in Tehran, Iran. The participants were sorted out of a larger population of 90 intermediate students based on their scores on a piloted Preliminary English Test (PET) and a vocabulary test. As a result of the two mentioned tests, first 60 participants were selected and then were randomly divided into two experimental groups: competitive and cooperative learning. The two experimental groups received different treatments, competitive and cooperative activities. In one class, vocabularies were taught through doing some competitive learning activities by the learners. Competitive learning activities were created by the learners themselves by having a competitive environment. And in the other, the teacher provided the model of cooperative learning activities for the students. Cooperative ones were created by students as well in a friendly environment so as to reach a shared goal. At the end of the treatment period, which was going to take 15 sessions, 5 of which were allocated to solely vocabulary teaching, the researcher administered a vocabulary retention posttest.

Key Words: Competitive Learning, Cooperative Learning, Vocabulary Learning

1. Introduction

The issue of selecting the teaching method, approach, and strategy that serves each context best has always been a major challenge in EFL/ESL history. Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that considering different methods throughout history, foreign language learning and teaching has been the center of discussions and an important practical concern. Schmitt (2000, p. 15) states that "language teaching methodology has swung like a pendulum between language instruction as language analysis and language use. Likewise, vocabulary has had differing fortunes in the previous approaches". One major reason for the 'swing of the vocabulary pendulum' might have been its importance in language learning and teaching. According to Nunan (2001) vocabularies are the "fundamentally important aspect of language development" (p. 103) and Brown (2001) regards vocabularies as "basic building blocks of language...and [vocabularies] are among the first priorities" (p. 377). Likewise, Harely (as cited in Wang, 2009) recognizes vocabulary as the unique way of improvement in language acquisition.

One of the main purposes of vocabulary learning is enhancing students' capability to practice the words and be able to retain them for some time. In this sense, vocabulary learning does not mean solely memorizing pack of words. As Barnett (2007) maintained, vocabulary is seen "as tool for communication, as a mental process, as the readers' active participation in the creation of meaning, and as a manipulation of strategies to retain the words" (p. 71).

In accomplishing the above mentioned purpose of vocabulary learning, one cannot ignore the role of modality of learning. One established dichotomy, in this regard, is competitive and cooperative learning. Cooperative learning exists when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000). Each student can then achieve his/her learning goal if and only if the other group members achieve theirs (Deutsch, 1962, as cited in Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000).

Cooperative learning is compared with competitive or individualistic learning. Competition is defined as the presence of a negative goal or reward interdependence (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000).

Since the 1920s, there has been a great deal of research on the relative effects of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts on achievement and productivity (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, & Nelson, 1981) but there was not any research considering the vocabulary retention of an L2. Therefore, in order to fill the gap in the literature, this study will explore the comparative influence of practicing competitive and cooperative learning in the class to see how they can affect the vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners. In other words, the aim of the study is to find out the effect of two learning types (cooperative vs. competitive) and on the vocabulary retention of the learners. Thus, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H0: There is no significant difference between the effects of competitive learning and cooperative learning on the vocabulary retention of EFL learners.

1.1. Cooperative Learning

The origin of cooperative learning, as Cooper (1979) put it, goes back to the first century. And John Dewey (1966) who put the emphasis on education as a means of teaching citizens the ways to live cooperatively so as to deserve a democratic society they long for had a considerable effect on the advent of cooperative learning in educational settings. A structured view of cooperative learning, however, came to existence in 1970s, and the Communicative Language Teaching paved the way for its employment in language teaching classrooms. Well-known scholars like Johnson and Johnson, Slavin, and Sharan spearheaded the development of cooperative learning. They have contributed their insights to improve and enrich cooperative learning and its modules in several ways though mostly in precollegiate settings. Today, cooperative learning is experimented in different parts of the world.

Learners are more cooperative beings and like to work together with other pupils so as to learn from each other, not only from teacher. According to Lin (1997), in the cooperative goal structure, the learners are invited to assist one another in obtaining a goal. In other words, learners share the same responsibility in the learning process and they are homogeneously same-goal-oriented. Cooperative learning happens when students work with each other to accomplish shared learning goals (Johnson et al., 2000).

Johnson and Johnson (1988) emphasize that five basic elements are necessary for effective use of method including: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small-group skills (social skills training), group processing.

1.2. Competitive Learning

Learning is mainly associated with the classroom and is often competitive, but competitive learning is often motivated by a competition and is basically an extra-curricular activity which develops creativity and problem solving skills (Tabesh, 2007).

Novak (1998) stated that Piaget's model of learning is interactive such as reading, listening, and exploring, this theory has practical applications for students who confront an onslaught of information outside the classroom, where they have the chance to conduct their own research and synthesis, therefore competitive learning could assist educators in discovering students' abilities and creativity.

Competitive learning is a type of learning which is motivated by participation in a competition. Gordon (2003) indicated that Competitive learning could be between individuals (such as International Mathematical Olympiad) or between groups (such as ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest).

Therefore, nobody can ignore the role of the modality of learning. An established dichotomy in this regard of course is competitive and cooperative learning (Walters, 2000). Competitive learning (win-

lose orientation) is used for the purpose of evaluating the position of people in various tasks (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, & Nelson, 1981). Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus (2006) hold that the desired constructive form of competitiveness happens when the winner tries to lend a hand to the loser. Contrarily, in destructive competitiveness, the winner takes it all. They further state that, "Competition induces and is induced by use of the tactics of coercion, threat, or deception" (p. 31). Furthermore, Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000) hold that competitive learning prioritizes competition among the members of the same group and not necessarily between different groups.

1. 3. Vocabulary Retention

Vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in future possibilities and people's lives (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Following the performance of English second/foreign language readers' encounter with strange vocabulary; researchers have commented on the prominent role of vocabulary as an indicator of general language skill (Nation, 2001).

Indeed, ESL/EFL readers frequently indicated lack of sufficient word knowledge as one of the major obstacles to content comprehension so vocabulary load is a very crucial cue of text complexity. Some skills in English language such as reading comprehension is dependent on vocabulary knowledge. Likewise, Haynes and Baker (1993) concluded that the most important disadvantage for L2 readers is not the lack of reading comprehension practice, but the inadequate comprehension of English vocabulary. To a large extent, what these studies demonstrate is that the threshold for reading comprehension is vocabulary retention. Lexical issues will, hence, prevent successful comprehension. Laufer (1998) and Qian's (1999, 2002, 2004) have revealed so, by research findings on the association among vocabulary breadth/size and reading comprehension; which resulted in a fairly high relationship among them. So, in 1996, Meara proposed VLT the nearest thing we have to a standard test in vocabulary knowledge.

A recent study on vocabulary size declared the prominent role of the breadth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Over two decades, researchers have found that breadth test of vocabulary knowledge can very well predict success in reading, writing, general proficiency, and academic achievement (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Nation & Meara, 2002). Likewise, Nation's vocabulary levels test has been verified to be a useful and credible analytical tool in examining L2 learners' vocabulary size (Qian, 1999; Read, 2000; Nation, 2001; Schmitt & Clapham, 2001; Koda, 2005) and has been widely used by some researchers to estimate EFL/ESL learners' vocabulary size (Zahar, Cobb, & Spada, 2001; Webb, 2005; Qian, 2008).

The association among vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is dynamic and difficult. The upsurge of the role of vocabulary in foreign language acquisition went hand in hand with a growing interest in vocabulary testing in second language acquisition research. Meanwhile, researchers have been able to ascertain that the breadth/size of one's vocabulary appears to be a determining factor for second language learning (Meara, 1996). Obtaining a sufficiently large vocabulary familiarity seems to correlate strongly with other linguistic competences in the target language.

Therefore, much recent work on vocabulary testing has focused on estimating how many words the learners know in their L2 (Laufer, 2003). To accomplish this goal, vocabulary breadth/size tests have been developed. These are based on the belief that learners require a particular rates of vocabulary knowledge are able to play a prominent role in the target language, independently (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001; Pearson, Hiebert, & Kamil, 2007).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

To fulfill the objectives of the study, 60 male intermediate EFL learners with the age of 18-35 studying at Tehran's VIP English Language Institute participated in this study. The participants were selected through piloted Preliminary English Test (PET) and a vocabulary test from 90 learners in the same language center. The participants' scores who fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected and divided into two experimental groups. At the end of the instruction, the piloted vocabulary retention post-test parallel to the vocabulary pre-test was administered to the participants of both groups after an interval of two weeks. Finally, an independent sample t-test was administered on the collected data in the posttest of two groups.

This research was conducted in one term of 16 sessions during which students underwent two types of practicing learning modality, competitive learning in one class and cooperative learning in another class. As it was clear, it was impossible to have 30 students in one class and another 30 in another class. Therefore, each of those 30 participants, undergoing each of the types of learning modality, was divided into five classes of six people in order to make it 30 in each of the experimental groups.

Participant selection procedure was conducted at the beginning of the term and having passed the PET and a vocabulary test, 60 learners were chosen so as to carry out the research.

2.2. Instrumentation

To accomplish the objectives of the research, a PET and a vocabulary test were administered. Furthermore, certain materials were also used in the teaching procedure which was described in this section.

2.2.1 Preliminary English Test (PET)

As noted earlier, the PET was used for homogenization process prior to the treatment. The test was adopted from PET practice tests by Jenny Quintana, Oxford University Press. The test consisted of two papers: paper 1 for reading and writing and paper 2 for listening. Each part of the test (reading, writing, listening) consisted of 25% of the total score which was 75. The speaking part of the test was not possible to carry out due to two reasons. One reason was that because it required a qualified examiner from Cambridge ESOL exams. The other reason was due to the purpose of the study in which speaking did not have any role.

2.2.2. Vocabulary Retention Test (as pretest)

It is a 55-item vocabulary recognition test which was designed and piloted by the researcher based on the materials of the treatment. However, after knowing about reliability and content validity of the test, 25 of the items remained. It was used at the onset of the study to test participants' degree of familiarity with the target vocabularies. This test consisted of multiple choice, matching, and fill-in-the-blank items.

2.2.3. Vocabulary Retention Posttest

The posttest was called vocabulary retention test because it was carried out after a two-week interval after the termination of the treatment. It was the same test which was carried out at the beginning of the study. However, the order and sequence of the questions as well as options had been changed so as to eliminate the effect of memory interference in the result of the study.

2.2.4. Materials

The following materials were used in the process of the treatment for all the 60 participants in all the 16 sessions of the term.

2.2.4.1. America English File 3

The main textbook used in this research is American English File 3 by Clive Oxenden and Christina Latham-Koenig. This textbook is used in VIP English Institute for intermediate learners and it consists of 7 units which are to be taught in three terms. The first term, they should cover 3 units and the second and the third term 2 units must be covered. The main purpose of the book is to integrate reading, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing.

2.3. Procedure

In order to conduct the study, the researcher first conducted the PET among 90 intermediate EFL learners for choosing 60 learners so as to administer the treatment. The students whose scores on the test fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected. Having taken the PET, they had to answer a vocabulary test designed by the teacher. The vocabulary test designed by the teacher contained 55 questions, 25 of which were remained having been analyzed according to content validity and reliability.

The to-be-taught vocabulary, firstly, had to be classified and clarified. In other words, out of 16 sessions of each term of the class, 5 of it were devoted to vocabulary teaching. For example, American English File 3, the main book of this study, had some particular part allocated to vocabulary at the back of the book. The book has some reading passages the content of which has some highlighted new words. These were the main parts of the book whose vocabulary were to be practiced according to two modality of learning, competitive and cooperative.

In the cooperative classes, depending on the number of the students, they were grouped in groups of three or four which was done randomly. The members of each group changed from one session to

another in order to create a sense of balance in line with cooperation. In other words, the sense of cooperation was not between fixed numbers of participants. Rather, the component part of each group was changed from one session to another session. They were already justified that each correct or wrong answer was of paramount importance for all the rest of the members of the same group.

The teacher taught the vocabulary for the class via written and oral context and students were asked to practice them in groups. Having presented the vocabulary to the students, the teacher had to ask each group to practice saying meaning and examples of each word to one another. In other words, having known the meaning of the words, students were asked to use them while they were speaking. For example, they were going to be given some flashcards on which the taught words existed. Then, a topic which was relevant to the meaning of the vocabularies were put on the board for the students to talk about and simultaneously used the words on the flash card they were having in their hands. While they were using the words in their speaking, they were to keep their eye contact with each other, with their classmates not with their teacher.

In cooperative setting, when one of them tried to use the taught vocabulary in their speaking, all the members of the group felt their responsibility to find the probable mistakes or deficiencies to correct them as the feeling of oneness among individual members of the group were created by the teacher and every single individuals was justified about it. Students also had to learn to give feedback to their team mates while he was speaking, for example, nodding the head, wearing smiles, maintaining eye contact.

In the other class, competitive one, the same participant selection procedure were conducted again. In this class, the students received competitive learning modality. All the learners in this setting were exposed to the same amount of instruction and the same materials.

In the competitive setting, the teacher again divided the learners into three to four groups in each class. Students knew that despite being informed by the teacher that they were in groups, they practiced in the class based on their individual efforts and outcomes. In these classes, every single individual wanted to show himself for his own sake. When one of the students was trying to make an example about the taught words, everybody wanted to find the mistakes and voices it loudly to the class and the teacher. Hence, it created such a competition in learning that everybody did his best to overcome the others and showed himself lot different than the others.

At the end of the treatment, both groups underwent the posttest of vocabulary retention test. The posttest was the same as pretest created by the teacher with some changes such as the changes among options as well as the order of questions. Then, the students' scores were compared to see which treatment benefitted the students and their vocabulary retention.

2.4. Data Analysis

According to the nature and the purpose of the study, the design was experimental comparison-group as participants were randomly selected and assigned into two experimental groups. The major variables which the researchers manipulated in this study (independent variables) were competitive learning and cooperative learning. Vocabulary retention was the dependent variable and language proficiency level of the participants, vocabulary knowledge, and gender were the control variables.

3. Result

The results of administering the piloted PET among 90 intermediate students were used for homogenizing the participants. For this purpose, the descriptive statistics of the results were obtained and the reliability of different sections (reported in the instruments section) were estimated. Table 1, 2, and 3 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of PET, reliability of the PET and vocabulary test respectively.

Table1: total scores on PET

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PET Scores	90	43.11	11.87

Table 2: Estimated Reliability of the PET Pilot Study

Number of Participants	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
90	25	.88

Following the selection of the participants according to the PET results, the 60 students sat for the vocabulary pre-test. Hence, the 60 students' scores fluctuated from 0-4.

After that, the participants were randomly assigned to the two experimental groups and practiced two types of learning modality, namely competitive learning and cooperative learning. At the end of the treatment, they took the vocabulary posttest so as to see how many of the words had been retained. The vocabulary posttest was the same as vocabulary pretest at the onset of the study. Thus, first according to the table 3, the descriptive statistics of the posttest were obtained for the target analysis.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Vocabulary posttest

Group	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		
		Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Cooperative Learning	30	22.47	1.153	6.229	0.039	0.422	0.063
Competitive Learning	30	19.33	1.197	6.632	0.082	0.422	0.178

As shown in the table 3, cooperative learning group obtained a higher mean than competitive learning group on the vocabulary posttest. Nevertheless, an independent samples *t*-test needed to be administered statistically to test the null hypothesis. As demonstrated in the table 3, the Skewness ratio for both groups (0.063 and 0.178) fell within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 which indicated that both sets of scores were normally distributed. Therefore, running a *t*-test was legitimate for this purpose. The following table reveals the results of the *t*-test.

Table 4: Independent Sample *t*-test for Comparing the Vocabulary Retention Posttest of Two Experimental Groups

Leven's Test for Equality of Variances							
	<i>f</i>	Sig	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (two tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal Variances Assumed	0.543	0.461	2.035	55	0.043	3.287	1.729
Equal Variances not Assumed			2.035	52.687	0.043	3.287	1.729

As it is clear from the table 4, the results of the Leven's test ($f=.543$, $p=.461 > .05$) revealed that the variances between the two groups were not significantly different and thus, homogeneity of variances was assumed. Hence, the results of the *t*-test with equal variances assumed are reported here. The results ($t=2.035$, $df=55$, $p=.043 < .05$) show that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two experimental groups at the posttest.

Therefore, there was a significant difference, according to the cooperative learning and competitive learning with the mean scores of 22.47, 19.33 respectively, between the two independent variables (cooperative learning and competitive learning) on EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

In addition, in order to estimate the generalizeability of the findings, the effect size had to be computed by Cohen's *d* and *r* using the *t*-value and *df*. Cohen's *d* was .527 with *r* value of .28 as well as with eta square of .063. Thus, the findings of this study could be taken moderate for the intention of generalization.

4. Discussion

According to the data analysis, the null hypothesis of the research was rejected and the data moderately suggested that out of the two treatments given to the two experimental groups, use of cooperative learning had a significantly more effective impact on the vocabulary retention of the intermediate students.

Every single individual student in this study practiced two different practices of learning. However, the types were different, in one of the experimental group, students were given cooperative learning

and in the other it was competitive learning. However, the former one, cooperative learning, revealed much higher impact on the vocabulary retention most probably due to the feeling of cooperation it triggered among the individuals (Zhao, 2010). Nevertheless, in the case of competitive learning, students had lost the main intention of the study due to too much excessive amount of peer pressure they made for themselves. In the competitive learning classes, students had made a wall around themselves in the process of learning and the sense of the unity in cooperative learning classes was hidden here.

Moreover, it might have also been the case that in cooperative learning classes, all the students were involved or engaged to reach the same intention. Therefore, most of the time of the class was in the hand of students themselves. According to Weimer (2002), in a learner-centered context, the learners are more motivated, more involved or engaged, more creative, and more responsible for their learning, and as a result more learning takes place.

On the contrary, in the competitive learning group, the participants had to undergo individual and interaction free learning to win the ball rather than being involved in interactive and communicative learning task. Therefore, providing students with competitive learning tasks or modality will create more agitation and pressure and will do more harm than good.

At last, the results of this study, although it is limited in scope, it suggests that using cooperative learning modality in learning vocabularies and recalling them is useful for intermediate learners. As a result, attempts should be made to teach learners to be independent of using dictionaries or the teacher to present the meaning of the unknown vocabularies.

5. Conclusion

Vocabulary has a highly significant role in communication, teaching, and learning in a foreign language. The results of this research suggests that teaching and practicing vocabulary while providing students with cooperative learning modality had a significantly better retention than competitive learning modality.

Therefore, it can be concluded that findings of this study may have implications for foreign language teachers in raising their awareness regarding the importance of the competitive learning and when the focus is vocabulary retention. Moreover, syllabus designers and materials developers are encouraged through the findings of this study to design more innovative cooperative learning activities and incorporate them into the text books.

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THE EFFECT OF GENRE-BASED CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION OF ESP ON ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN LAW STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Despite the important role of the genre-based instruction as a novice approach to teaching at tertiary level, little research has been done on its application in ESP learners' reading comprehension. Furthermore, the actual implementation of this approach and its outcomes on enhancing learners' reading comprehension has not yet been fully explored. This study aimed to investigate the effects of genre-based instruction on ESP learners' reading comprehension. The participants of the study included 40 students (just females) at Payame Noor University of Tehran, majoring in law. Participants were randomly assigned into 2 groups of control and experimental. The instructor taught the experimental group (genre-group) based on the genre and the control group (non-genre-group) based on the traditional method of teaching ESP, prevailing in Iranian universities. To meet the aim of the study, the instructor administered one 50-item proficiency test of English and two 54-item standard tests of English reading comprehension to the participants. The results of the reading comprehension test, analyzed through a t-test and independent samples test suggested teaching based on genre had a significant role in enhancing ESP learners' reading comprehension ability. In addition, the descriptive and inferential statistics showed learners improved significantly in reading comprehension compared with that of non-genre-group.

Key words: genre, genre analysis, genre-based instruction, ESP, reading comprehension

1. Introduction

The term genre was first introduced in the area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and has been defined and discussed from different viewpoints. According to Hyland (2007), "genre refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 149). Chandler (1997) states the term genre is generally used in rhetoric, literary theory, media theory, and more recently linguistics, to refer a distinctive type of text. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), "a genre can be defined as: a type of discourse that occurs in a particular setting, that has distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure, and that has particular and distinctive communicative functions" (p. 224). Since the publication of Swales (1990), "Genre Analysis" an increasing attention has been given to the concept of genre and its application in language teaching and learning. This has led to two prominent movements in the teaching and learning of languages, namely, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). According to Hyon (2001), previous studies carried out in the ESP domain have generally reported positive effects of genre-based teaching for non-native English speakers; however, some have reported limitations. Johns (1997), for instance, puts forward the advantages of using what she calls a "socioliterate approach" to teaching reading and writing in developmental university composition of language minority students.

In the area of genre and second language reading instruction, according to Carrell (1985), schema research, as well has demonstrated positive outcomes of teaching genre structure on reading recall and/or comprehension. Furthermore, Hyon(2001), found that students who were interviewed immediately after an EAP genre-based reading course reported paying greater attention to rhetorical features in texts than before the course, as well as improved reading confidence and speed.

Flowerdew (as cited in Chen, 2008), states there are two major approaches to genre theory: a text-based approach and a situation-oriented approach. In the case of text-based approach there is a focus

on analyzing and describing textual patterns of different genres. In a situation-oriented approach of genre theory, according to Chen (2008), the focus is on the dynamic and evolving nature of genre and seeks a description of the situational contexts in which writing takes place. In another genre categorization by Derewianka (1990), there are six main genres concerning their primary social purposes: (a) Narratives which tell a story and usually aim to entertain; (b) Recounts which tell what happened; (c) Information Reports which provide factual information; (d) Instructions which tell the listeners or readers what to do; (e) Explanations which explain why or how something happens, and (f) Expository texts which present or argue a viewpoint. Also various texts, according to Comedorich (2009), are classified into different genres based on the following characteristics: (a) The purpose of communication or social function which refers to the reasons why we speak or write or create the text, (b) The organization structure of the text or generic structure which implies the text organization or text arrangement, and (c) Language features or lexical grammar which are such things as the grammar, vocabulary, and connectors that we use.

According to Torok and Waugh (2006), "Freedman and Medway (1994), two well-known American scholars in the New Rhetoric school, give their view that context determines the shape of genre: situation, motive, substance, and form play a part in defining the genre, but the whole is greater than and different from the sum of these parts" (p. 520). As a new approach in language teaching, there are still some vague issues in genre-based language teaching concerning learners' reading skill.

2.1 Research Question

The ultimate purpose of this study is to find out the answer to the following question:

Does genre-based classroom instruction have any significant effect on enhancing reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian law students?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Genre-based Instruction (GBI)

Although there has been considerable research on Genre-Based Instruction (GBI) since 1985, little has dealt with the effects of GBI on learners' reading comprehension. When encountering a new academic genre, a student is faced with the task of learning how to read the texts produced within it. Most researches on GBI have been carried out in writing skill and the description of the textual forms and linguistic features of specific genres. However, the current study intends to show it is useful to help learners become aware of the textual regularities of a genre, instructors need to go beyond just analyzing the textual features of the text for learners and they have to assess their learners' comprehension of the texts. GBI has been also referred to as teaching language based on results of genre analysis. According to Swales (as cited in Osman, 2004), "genre analysis is the study of how language is used within a particular setting and according to Bhatia (as cited in Osman, 2004), it is concerned with the form of language use in relation to mean" (p. 2).

3. Method

3.1 Participants

This study was carried out on tertiary level students studying for a B.S. in law in Payam-e Noor University, Tehran. The research population included all the junior and senior students studying for a B.S. degree in law at the time of the study. The participants were selected among 59 female junior and senior students. Through using a proficiency test, Nelson English Language Test (1976), 40 homogeneous students were chosen in terms of their reading comprehension ability. These 40 students were randomly assigned to a control group of 20, and an experimental group of 20.

3.2 Instrumentation

The two utilized instruments in this study are explained as follows:

A. Proficiency Test

To minimize the individual differences among the participants and to ensure the homogeneity of students Nelson English Language Test (NELT, 1976) was administrated. The proficiency test was administered to choose the more homogeneous students out of the population and to put them randomly into experimental and control groups.

B. Pre-test and Post-test

The instructors administered two standard tests of English reading comprehension adopted from International Legal English Certificate Test (ILEC, 2005 and 2007), developed by Cambridge University. One of them was used as a pre-test and the other as a post-test. Only the reading section of these tests was used because the aim was to test the participants in terms of their reading comprehension ability. Both pre-test and post-test included 3 reading comprehension passages followed by 18 multiple-choice items and 4 cloze-tests with 36 multiple-choice items.

3.3 Procedure

To determine the reliability and validity of the instruments developed for the study, a pilot study aimed to clarify the procedures implemented for the study was conducted. Thirty learners, having the same level of proficiency, were selected randomly from the target population of the study and were recruited to go through the same procedures of data collection for the present study. Clear understanding of the purposes of the study among the participants was observed and the amount of the allotted time for each test proved to be sufficient. The study was conducted in Payam-e Noor University, Tehran branch. The participants formed two reading classes that were held in two 120-minute sessions a week during one month. The instructor taught the control group through the traditional method which is prevalent in this university just like other universities in Iran, and the instructor taught the experimental group through genre-based instruction. A strong effort was made to treat both the experimental group and the control group the same, except for the difference in teaching method. All the data were collected within 2 months. Although two different methods of instruction were practiced, both groups were taught the same book, namely, English for the students of law 2, published by SAMT publications and written by Reza Nazary (2006).

As already mentioned, the aim of the study was to examine how genre-based instruction improves ESP learners' reading comprehension. Therefore, genre-specific strategies were taught to the students. The two teaching procedures utilized are explained below:

Traditional Method

The traditional method taught by the instructor is primarily based on an analytic approach, which begins with words' definitions and translations then analyzes the words into different parts of speech to teach them. The ordinary process of teaching a lesson in such classes is that the instructor usually starts the lesson by explaining the meaning of the new words in Persian. Then, s/he asks a student to read some parts of the reading and helps them to translate those parts into Persian. After finishing the reading, the instructor explains the grammatical structures of the reading. Finally, students have to do the exercises after each reading section and read their answers to the class accompanied by translating every sentence into Persian. After that, the instructor corrects students if they are wrong. Sometimes, the students do the exercises as homework for the next session.

Genre-based Method

Two common types of texts, which are used more in academic settings, are expository and narrative texts. According to Weaver and Kintsch (as cited in Haria, 2010), narrative texts are written to entertain, but expository texts are written to communicate new information or knowledge. In other words, expository genres are designed to inform, report, and describe. They have a variety of structures and textual elements. They also make use of charts, maps, graphs, diagrams, photos, reading guides, etc. As the plethora of texts in ESP, especially in basic sciences such as biology law in the category of expository genre, so the five common text structures or organizational structures of expository genre was explicitly explained to the learners. First of all, the instructor explained the expository genre to learners and introduced them its five patterns. Second, the instructors explained each of these patterns to learners in terms of their description, cue words, and graphic organizer. The explanations presented to the learners are outlined in the following table:

Table 1 . Five text structures or organizational structures of expository genre

Pattern	Description	Cue Words (signal words)

Description	The instructor describes a topic by listing characteristics, features, attributes, and examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for example - characteristics - for instance - such as - is like - including - to illustrate
Sequence	The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological sequence, either explicit or implied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first - second - third - later - next - before - then - finally - after - when - since - now - previously
Comparison	Information is presented by detailing how two or more events, concepts, theories, or things are alike and/or different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - however - nevertheless - on the other hand - but - similarly - although - also - in contrast - different - alike - same as - either/or - in the same way - just like - just as - likewise - in comparison - where as - yet
Cause and Effect	The author presents ideas, events in time, or facts as causes and the resulting effect(s) or facts that happen as a result of an event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if /then - reasons why - as a result - therefore - because - consequently - since - for - so that - hence - due to - thus - this led to
Problem and Solution	The author presents a problem and one or more solutions to the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dilemma is - if/then - because

		- so that - question/answer - puzzle is solved
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Extracted from: www.u-46.org/dbs/roadmap/files/comprehension/3expostext.pdf

Following these explanations, one sample of each of these genres was given to the learners to work on in pairs or small groups. Learners' tasks were to identify each genre and analyze it in terms of its cue words and draw its graphic organizer.

In addition, a KWL comprehension technique which is used for enhancing reading comprehension of SLLS was taught and explained to learners. This technique aims to enable teachers to access the prior knowledge of students and to help students develop their own purposes for reading expository text. In acronym KWL, "K" stands for helping students recall what they "Know" about the subject, "W" Stands for helping students determine what they "Want" to learn, and "L" stands for helping students identify what they "Learn" as they read.

3.4 Design

In the present study which has an experimental method, both groups of control and experimental took two standardized reading comprehension tests, one as a pre-test and the other as a post-test. The control group received the instruction through a traditional method and the experimental group received a genre-based instruction. The conducted treatments in this study are summarized in table 2.

Table 2 . Summary of the two treatments

Group 1 (Control)	Pre-test	-GBI	Post-test
Group 2 (Experimental)	Pre-test	+GBI	Post-test

1) - GBI stands for teaching based on no Genre-Based Instruction or Traditional Method.

2) + GBI stands for teaching based on Genre-Based Instruction

3.5 Data Analysis

Following the administration of the pre-test and post-test, in order to test the research hypothesis and answer the research question, two independent sample tests for the pre-test and post-test were run to investigate the relationships between genre-based instruction as an independent variable and enhancing ESP learners' reading comprehension as a dependent variable.

In order to make sure that the participants were at the same level in terms of general language proficiency, Nelson English Language Test (NELT, 1976) was administrated to all the participants (n=59). The proficiency test consisted of fifty items each was given one point and no negative scores was considered for wrong answers. In order to check the reliability of the tests, these instruments were administered in a pilot study with 30 pre-intermediate EFL learners who were almost similar in characteristics with the main participants of this study. The piloting results in Table 3 indicate that the reliability of the Nelson Test was estimated to be .91 using KR-21. Also the reliability of the Pretest and Posttest of Reading tests were estimated as .86 and .87 respectively using Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 3 . Reliability Statistics of the Nelson Test, Pretest and Posttest of Reading

Source	No. of Participants	No. of Items	Reliability Index	Reliability Method
Nelson Test	30	50	.91	KR-21
Reading Pretest	30	54	.86	Cronbach's Alpha
Reading Posttest	30	54	.87	Cronbach's Alpha

Four assumptions of interval data, independence of subjects, normality and homogeneity of variances should be met before one decides to run parametric tests (Field, 2009). The first assumption was met because the present data were measured on an interval scale. Bachman (2005, p. 236) believes that the assumption of independence of subjects is met when "the performance of any given individual is independent of the performance of other individuals." The third assumption concerns the normality of the data which is tested through of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Table 4

displays the results of normality test. The table shows that the p value was .51 and .35 for the target and control groups respectively on the pretest of reading. The results also indicated that the p value was .95 and .88 on the posttest of reading for the target and control groups respectively. Since the p value for all sets of scores are greater than the selected significant level, i.e.05, their distribution normality was proved. Therefore, parametric Paired Samples Test and Independent Samples Test were used to test the null hypotheses of this study.

Table 4. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for the Pretest and Posttest of Reading in the Target and Control Groups

Test	Group	N	Mean	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig.
Reading Pretest	Target	20	33.75	.815	.519
	Control	20	32.90	.930	.353
Reading Posttest	Target	20	38.15	.512	.956
	Control	20	33.80	.585	.884

The last assumption – homogeneity of variances – will be discussed when reporting the results of the independent t -tests.

Nelson Homogeneity Test Results

Nelson Test was administered to 59 participants to select pre-intermediate learners. Table 5 represents the descriptive statistics of the participant's scores on Nelson Test. The table indicates that the mean, median and mode of the Nelson scores were 33.39, 34, and 32 respectively.

Table 5 .Descriptive Statistics for Nelson Homogenizing Test

N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
59	25	20	45	33.39	5.93

The Z value of .39 at the significance level of .99 >.05 showed that Nelson scores were normally distributed. Based on the results of Nelson test, those 40 students whose scores fell within one standard deviation of 5.93 above and below the sample mean of 33.39 (scores between 27 and 39) were selected as homogeneous pre-intermediate participants for this study.

Testing the Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of the present study predicted that genre-based classroom instruction does not have any significant effect on reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian law students. Independent Samples Test was employed to test this null hypothesis. The related descriptive statistics of the participants' scores in the two groups on the pretest of reading are set forth in Table 6 As is obvious in the table, the participants in target group with the mean of 33.75 and standard deviation of 3.69 did not perform drastically different from the participants in control group with the mean of 32.90 and standard deviation of 5.05.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Two Group's Scores on the Pretest of Reading

Group	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Mode	Median	SD
Target	20	14.0	26	40	33.75	36	35.00	3.69
Control	20	17.0	24	42	32.90	33	33.00	5.05

The related descriptive statistics of the participants' scores in the two groups on the posttest of reading was computed as represented in Table 7. As it is clear in the table, the participants in the target group ($M = 38.15$, $SD = 5.24$) performed considerably better than those in the control group ($M = 33.80$, $SD = 4.58$).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Two Group's Scores on the Posttest of Reading

Group	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Mode	Median	SD
Target	20	18	28	46	38.15	39	39.00	5.24
Control	20	18	25	43	33.80	34	34.00	4.58

Paired Samples Test (see Table 8) indicated that there was a statistically significant increase in reading scores from pretest ($M = 33.75$, $SD = 3.69$) to posttest ($M = 38.15$, $SD = 5.24$) in target group $t = 3.21$, $p = .005$. The mean increase in reading scores was 4.40 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.53 to 7.26.

Table 8. Paired Samples Test to Compare Reading Means on the Pretest and Posttest: Target Group

Mean Difference	SD	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Lower	Upper			
4.40	6.11	1.537	7.263	3.217	19	.005

The results of matched T-test in Table 9 shows that there was not a statistically significant increase in reading scores from pretest ($M = 32.90$, $SD = 5.05$) to posttest ($M = 33.80$, $SD = 4.58$) in the control group $t = 1.79$, $p = .08$, $p > .05$. The mean increase in reading scores was .90 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -.15 to 1.95.

Table 9. Paired Samples Test to Compare Reading Means on the Pretest and Posttest: Control Group

Mean Difference	SD	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Lower	Upper			
.900	2.24	-.151	1.951	1.792	19	.089

Table 10 displays the results of Independent Sample Test to compare two target and control groups' reading scores on the pretest of reading. The table shows that the hypothesis of equal variances was supported because Levene's Test produced an insignificant statistic ($p = .36 > .05$).

Table 10. Independent Samples Test to Compare Two Groups' Scores on the Pretest of Reading

Levene's Test for Variances			T-test for Means			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Equal variance assumed	.850	.362	.607	38	.548	.850

T-test results (Table 10) showed that there was no significant difference in reading scores between the two target and control groups on the pretest of reading ($t_{38} = .60$, $p = .54$, $p > .05$). It can be concluded that the two groups had almost similar reading ability before receiving the treatment.

Further, the researcher conducted another analysis of Independent Samples Test to compare two groups' reading scores on the posttest of reading, and the related results are provided in Table 11. According to the table, the significant level of .39 in Levene's Test, which was lower than .05, revealed that the assumption of equal of variances was met ($p > .05$).

Independent Samples Test (see Table 11) detected a statistically significant difference in reading scores between the two groups on the posttest of reading ($t_{38} = 2.79$, $p = .008$, $p < .05$). T-test supported the claim that genre-based classroom instruction affects reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian law students. Our two groups have scored differently on the final test of reading comprehension. The difference (4.35) was statistically significant.

Table 11. Independent Samples Test to Compare Two Groups' Scores on the Posttest of Reading

Levene's Test for Variances				T-test for Means		
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Equal variance assumed	.736	.396		2.793	38	.008
						Mean Diff.

4. Discussion

The present study attempted to investigate the effects of genre-based instruction on ESP learners' reading comprehension. The finding of the present study supports some previous studies carried out in ESP domain and reported positive effects of genre-based teaching for non-native English speakers (Hyon, 2001; Henry & Roseberry, 1998). John (as cited in Hyon, 2001), for instance, puts forward the advantages of using what she calls a "socioliterate approach" to teaching reading and writing in developmental university composition of language minority students. She notes that one writing task using this approach, a letter to the university president, was particularly successful.

Furthermore, Hyon (2001) found that students interviewed right after an EAP genre-based reading course reported paying more attention to rhetorical features in texts than before the course, as well as improved reading confidence and speed, this in turn, supports the finding of this study to some extent.

Contrary to the findings of the present study, some other studies in the literature report different results regarding the explicit teaching of genre features. For instance, according to Hyland (as cited in Ribeiro, 2008), "genre pedagogy, is also criticized for being static and decontextualized based on the claim that the teacher is not able to reproduce in class the culture and contexts by which texts are shaped" (p. 6).

Furthermore, according to Cope and Kalantzis (as cited in Ribeiro, 2008), "genre-based instruction teaches "language facts" analogous to the old authoritarian classrooms where students' achievements depend on how successfully the rules can be applied" (p. 5).

Based on the findings of this study genre-based classroom instruction has significant effect on enhancing reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian law students

The effectiveness of genre-based instruction of reading comprehension and the success of teaching reading comprehension through a genre-based approach may depend on many conditions including the learners' contexts, levels of proficiency, genre sensitivity, and many other individual and social differences.

The findings of this study also sensitize ESP instructors to the properties of the expository genres used in ESP reading comprehension classes majoring in law. Researchers in favor of the genre-based instruction approach encourage teachers to learn more about the genre so that they can teach this knowledge to their students in order to enhance their students' awareness of different genres.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the question of the effects of genre-based instruction on Iranian ESP learners' reading comprehension.

With respect to the research question, the effects of genre-based instruction on ESP learners' reading comprehension was checked and the analysis of the related data resulted in significant findings and indicated there was a positive relationship between teaching based on genre and enhancing learners' reading comprehension.

Based on the results of the scores of the control and experimental groups in pre-test reading comprehension, it was revealed that there is no significant difference in the learners' reading comprehension. After the treatment both groups were taught based on two different methods of teaching, the results of descriptive statistics showed the experimental group performed better in post-test reading comprehension.

Therefore, it can be concluded that teaching ESP learners based on the principles of genre-based instruction has a significant effect on enhancing learners' reading comprehension.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TASK BASED LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND COGNITION HYPOTHESIS

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ABSTRACT

Task Based Language Performance Assessment (TBLPA) is complex enough to reconsider the most rudimentary issues of what we want to assess and how we want to go through the process of assessment. One of the fundamental basis of TBLPA is the predictions it can make in line with the performance of the students in real life situation outside the class. One way to increase the efficacy of TBLPA is to increase the learner attention during the task of assessment. Cognition hypothesis indicates that second language learners engaged in complex tasks pay attention to more complex linguistic structures. Hence, learning increases (Robinson, 2001). The purpose of this study was to investigate whether complex tasks, outlined by cognition hypothesis, improved the performance of the learners in real life situation according to task based language assessment.

Key Words: Task-based language performance assessment, Tasks, Cognition hypothesis

1.Introduction

Task-based language assessment (TBLA) is a special issue in language testing. The central notion in TBLA is some meaningful and real life situation based activities that require learners to be engaged in communicative situations which is the fundamental point in the administration of particular tests. McNamara (1996) added language performance assessment to the concept of tasks in testing domains. Long and Norris (2000) indicated that task-based differs from other forms of performance assessment by putting that " [T]ask-based language assessment takes the task itself as the fundamental unit of analysis motivating item selection, test instrument construction, and the rating of task performance. Task-based assessment does not simply utilize the real-world task as a means for eliciting particular components of the language system, which are then measured or evaluated; instead, the construct of interest is performance of the task itself" (p. 60).

Brindley (1994) stated that task-based assessment can be applied for some specific purposes in the context of foreign and second language education. In other words, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are proposed in conjunction with task-based assessment according to which language teachers and researchers tend to motivate the learners to accomplish particular tasks or task types with the language as a tool they have been learning.

Performance assessment means any assessment stages that involve real world situations or a simulation of a real-life activity with raters to evaluate the performance (Bachman, 2002; Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Yoshioka, 1998; Norris, Hudson, & Bonk, 2002; Weigle, 2002). Therefore, performance assessment is different from traditional tests in that students' communicative ability and their general ability to survive outside the classroom context and beyond the formal testing situation is of significant importance. Open tasks are used by test takers to provide them with opportunity so as to use the language outside the classroom context (Chalhoub-Deville, 2001). Moreover, using open

tasks provide the students with the chance to use their own background knowledge and experiences. However, using tasks for assessment does not simply mean replicating real-life activities and then asking test-takers to perform. There are several key issues to take into account when designing and scoring task-based assessment.

Students must be trained to increase the efficacy of tasks and performance in TBLPA. Ortega (2007) stated that one way to do this is to increase learner focus and attention during performance based assessment. He further argues that language learning is fostered when learners concurrently attend to meaning and form and values the existence of tasks in meaningful learning. The Cognition Hypothesis indicates that being involved in complex tasks will facilitate L2 learning by enhancing interaction, focus on form, and attention to more complex linguistic structures (Robinson, 2001a, 2001b, 2005).

Robinson (2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2005) introduced three sources of cognitive demands in a task. First one is task complexity which relates to the design of a task. Second one is task conditions which refers to the interactional factors in line with participation. Third one is task difficulty which is in line with affective filters such as motivation, anxiety, stress, and etc.

Kim (2009) identified two dimensions in task complexity, namely resources-directing and resource-dispersing:

Table 1. Robinson's Task Complexity Dimensions

Cognitive factors	Example
Resource-directing + / - few elements	More pictures to narrate vs. Fewer pictures to narrate
+ / - no reasoning demands	Pictures presented in order of narration vs. Not in order of narration
+ / - here & now	Pictures present during narration vs. Not present during narration
Resource-depleting + / - planning	Narration with planning time vs. Narration without planning time
+ / - single task	Narrate a picture vs. Narrate a picture and write a story
+ / - prior knowledge	Familiar with story plot vs. Not familiar with story plot

Many previous studies in line with cognition hypothesis concentrated on the impact of task complexity on the production of second language. Gilabert (2007) stated that most of these studies have come up with the conclusion that complex tasks increase second language production due to enhancing attention and focus on form. Learning something in EFL/ESL context in a real life situation and in a meaningful way will be beneficial to learning, and improving this exercise is taken one of the crucial point. One way to do this is to increase learners' attention to performance based tasks in testing. This may be done by administering some complex tasks with performance-based and real life trend.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

To fulfill the objectives of the study, 48 male intermediate EFL learners with the age of 16-32 studying at Tehran's Marefat English Language Institute participated in this study. The participants were selected through piloted Preliminary English Test (PET) from 65 learners in the same language center. The participants' scores who fell one standard deviation above and below the mean would be selected and divided into six experimental groups and each group contains eight participants.

This research was conducted in one term of 16 sessions during which students accomplished three tasks of speaking with three different topics of speaking. The topics ranged from the easiest one to the most difficult one. As it was clear, it was impossible to have 48 students in one class. Therefore, each of those 48 participants were divided into six classes of eight people.

2.2 Instrumentation

To accomplish the objectives of the research, a PET was administered so as to homogenize the participants in this study. Furthermore, certain materials were also used in the teaching procedure which was described in this section.

2.2.1 Preliminary English Test (PET)

As noted earlier, the PET was used for homogenization process prior to the treatment. The test was adopted from PET practice tests by Jenny Quintana, Oxford University Press. The test consisted of two papers: paper 1 for reading and writing and paper 2 for listening. Each part of the test (reading, writing, listening) consisted of 25% of the total score which was 75. The speaking part of the test was not possible to carry out due to two reasons. One reason was that because it required a qualified examiner from Cambridge ESOL exams. The other reason was due to the purpose of the study in which speaking did not have any role.

2.2.2. Materials

The following materials were used in the process of the treatment for all the 48 participants in all the 16 sessions of the term.

2.2.2.1. America English File 3

The main textbook used in this research is American English File 3 by Clive Oxenden and Christina Latham-Koenig. This textbook is used in VIP English Institute for intermediate learners and it consists of 7 units which are to be taught in three terms. The first term, they should cover 3 units and the second and the third term 2 units must be covered. The main purpose of the book is to integrate reading, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing.

2.3 Procedure

Firstly, piloted test, PET, was administered among 65 intermediate students and those whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected. After computing the 65 samples score, the researcher chose 48 students and put them in 6 classes of 8 students.

Participants were engaged in three speaking tasks with three different topics and three increasing rate of difficulty. The speaking tasks were monologic rather than dialogic. Monologic tasks were selected due to two reasons: First, according to Robinson's (2001a, 2001b, 2003b) cognition hypothesis, cognitively difficult tasks require language learners to produce more accurate and more complex language. He further argues that since dialogic or interactive tasks require more cooperation and interaction such as clarification request, these tasks will reduce complexity of sentences or utterances. Therefore, monologic tasks were basically chosen due to their complex nature.

As it was mentioned before, narrative tasks were chosen due to its complex and monologic nature. Every single student was responsible to get ready for discussing about these topics: a) what did you do for your last vacation? b) What is your favorite food and how do you cook it? c) What is the effect of technology on second language learning?

All the students were responsible for getting ready regarding the topics and they all came to class with different ideas. Every student talked about his ideas in line with those specific topics and simultaneously everybody was to record his voice while talking. Having recorded their voices, they got back to the class next session with elicited mistakes or errors from their recorded voices. Every student read aloud his mistake to his classmates and then started to talk about the same topic again but with conscious attention in order not to commit the same mistakes or errors and tried to use the correct form of the mistakes or errors they had made the other session.

The second time they wanted to talk about the same topic and after working on their mistakes or errors, the teacher alarmed them of not making the same mistakes once more. In this second time, the teacher would monitor and evaluate the students according to their performance in front of the class. In other words, in the second time of the discussion, every student were called upon to discuss the

topic (with the conscious attention to the already made mistakes) and come to the front of the class to perform something. For example, discussing the second topic (b), students were to bring some items to the class and start to cook something while describing the cuisine or instruction of it. Therefore, in the first time of speaking, they only talked about their own favorite food and how they could make one. The second time of speaking about the same topic, they were responsible to bring the ingredients of their favorite food to the class and perform the way of cooking it while describing in English what they were doing.

They all were assessed according to their performance and whether they were repeating the same mistakes or errors they had made the first time or not.

2.4. Data Analysis

All the participants' utterances were recorded and transcribed. Therefore, the teacher himself could analyze each of the mistakes and call them to their attention. Pearson Correlation was performed to address the research hypothesis; there is no relationship between TBLPA and Cognition Hypothesis.

Accuracy of language production was analyzed by the percentage of error-free clauses. Errors were defined at a sentence level rather than a discourse or pragmatic level. For this reason, it was not counted as an error when different verb tenses were used within a single task performance. To calculate the percentage of error-free clauses per T-unit, the number of error-free clauses was divided by the total number of T-units and multiplied by 100. Several researchers, such as Foster and Skehan (1996) and Mehnert (1998), have used the same accuracy measure for the analysis of oral task performance.

3. Results

The results of administering the piloted PET among 65 intermediate students were used for homogenizing the participants. For this purpose, the descriptive statistics of the results were obtained and the reliability of different sections (reported in the instruments section) were estimated. Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of PET.

Table1: total scores on PET

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PET Scores	65	42.34	11.37

Table 2 shows accuracy of oral production in the three topics while it was being discussed by the students. As it was mentioned before, the topics were arranged from the easiest to the most difficult one. In other words, Topic A was the easiest topic and Topic C was the most difficult one.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the accuracy of oral production

Variables	N	M	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness
Topic A	48	57.34	30.19	58.85	15.00	92.00	-0.23
Topic B	48	51.73	23.67	55.00	22.43	87.00	0.13
Topic C	48	45.37	17.51	39.97	12.30	81.77	0.63

To test for statistical significance of the observed differences in line with accuracy of the three topics in difficulty rate, the accuracy scores of language production were submitted to one-way repeated-measures ANOVA. Mauchly's test of Sphericity revealed that Sphericity could be assumed for this set of data and one-way repeated-measures ANOVA found the F value of 5.50 to be significant ($p=0.004$). This indicates that at least one of the mean accuracy scores for the three tasks is different from at least one another mean accuracy score. As for the strength of association, a partial eta-square was found to be 0.38. This means that approximately 38% of the variability in the accuracy score was associated with variability due to engagement in different tasks. This value of 0.38 indicates a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Table 3 presents a summary of the results of accuracy obtained by one-way ANOVA with repeated-measures.

Source	df	ss	MS	F
Test	3	382	1273.66	5.50
Subject	9	3055.96	339.54	
Test X subjects	27	6258.25	231.79	
Total	39	9697.09		

A post hoc comparison with Bonferoni, however, detected no significant differences among any of the mean accuracy scores of the three tasks. The the 95 % confidence intervals within the same modality greatly overlap; therefore, the difference may lie between different task modalities rather than the levels of cognitive task difficulty. In order to test for this assumption, two-way repeated-measures ANOVA was performed with modality (i.e., speaking) and difficulty (i.e., simple or difficult) as the two factors, using SPSS. The results revealed a significant main effect for modality ($F=9.06$, $p=0.015$). As for the effect size, Cohen's d was calculated and was 0.74. This is considered to indicate a somewhat large effect size by Cohen (1988). Therefore, although the post hoc comparison with Bonferoni did not detect any significant differences between the four tasks in accuracy, two-way repeated-measures ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the mean accuracy scores of the written and oral language production.

A significant correlation was found between The TBLPA and the speaking task performance inaccuracy ($r=0.49$, $p=0.02$). A coefficient of determination for the TBLPA and the speaking task performance for accuracy was 0.24: They share approximately 24% of variance. This value of the coefficient of determination or r^2 is considered to indicate a large effect size according to Cohen (1988).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

To summarize the results, the difficult speaking task elicited significantly more complex language production than did the simple speaking task, whereas accuracy remained at the similar level across all three tasks. These findings give full support to Hypothesis 2 (i.e., a difficult speaking task will fail to elicit complex and accurate language production). The results revealed that not the difficult speaking task elicited more complex language performance than did the simple tasks without deteriorating its accuracy. This may suggest that language learners are more likely to benefit from the idea of the cognition hypothesis when the task modality is performance and speaking rather than only speaking. This seems to suggest that as Skehan (1998) argues, individuals' attentional capacity is indeed limited and it becomes more difficult to pay simultaneous attention to complexity and accuracy when the processing load is heavier as in speaking tasks.

Yet, this support for the limited attentional capacity model does not minimize the significance of Robinson's cognition hypothesis in task-based language research. Even though our attentional capacity seems to be limited, the results of the present study show that language learners are capable of paying a greater amount of attention to their language complexity without sacrificing their language accuracy when tasks are designed to pose higher cognitive, functional, and linguistic demands for their successful completion. The present study by no means lends full support to Robinson's cognition hypothesis, however. Although the participants of the present study were capable of producing more complex sentences in engaging in the difficult speaking and performing task without reducing the level of accuracy, their accuracy did not improve as the cognition hypothesis predicted. This seems to indicate that the cognition hypothesis may be more relevant to language complexity than accuracy: Language complexity may be more manipulable by inherent task characteristics or cognitive task difficulty than accuracy is.

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DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS IN CROSS CULTURAL PRAGMATICS

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ABSTRACT

The data-gathering factors are one of the scopes of pragmatics which have gotten far reaching thought up to date. The foundation of crucial instruments in pragmatics examination can be set in a two-polar continuum. To one side, there are the perception/insight schedules and at the other side other methods are situated. Every one level then has its own specific instruments. Concerning the perception/insight frameworks, instruments, for instance, rating, different choice, and gathering endeavors can be utilized. In progress schedules, instruments, for instance, talk completing, close imagine, open imagine, and view of dependable talk are put (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Also, strategies can be requested as demonstrated by an observational continuum. In the roused end, systems, for instance, rating, diverse choice, meeting assignments, talk completing, imagination, and open imagine are put. In the observational end, impression of genuine talk is used. This study is profitable for teachers who are excited about controlling systematic studies and may not be well known which instrument they should utilize in particular conditions.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Speech Act, Data Collection, Methodology

1. Introduction

One of the ranges of pragmatics which has been of extensive level headed discussion is the instrument used to inspire and accumulate information (Hinkel, 1997). There are distinctive sorts of information, accepting each of which obliges vast scale research. The pioneer ponders on discourse act utilized different instrument not at all like commonsense examination instruments used in present studies. Table 1 shows preparatory studies on discourse act focused around different instruments:

Table 1. Pioneer Studies on Speech Act Based on Various Instruments

Study	Speech act	Proficiency	Instrument
Walters (1980)	Requests	intermediate/ advanced	paired comparison
Carrell & Konneker (1981)	Requests	intermediate/ advanced	card sorting
Tanaka & Kawade (1982)	Requests	Advanced	card sorting, multiple choice
Olshtain & Blum-Kulka (1985)	requests, apologies	not reported	3 point scale
Carrell (1979)	indirect answers	intermediate/ advanced	multiple choice
Carrell (1981)	Requests	low-int./int. high.int./adv.	multiple choice
Kasper (1984)	responding acts	intermediate/ advanced	open role play

Walters (1980) concentrated on the affableness marvel in solicitation techniques focused around card matched correlation. The members were to choose the relative graciousness of 'quiets down' and

'please be tranquil' independent of the connection. Carrell and Konneker (1981) explored non-local speakers' view of neighborliness in appeal methodologies. They displayed eight solicitation techniques composed on cards and the members were asked to sort the procedures as per obligingness. Among the methodologies, local speakers alluded to five and NNS specified seven appeal methods as being amiable. Tanaka and Kawade (1982) repeated the study directed via Carrell and Konneker (1981) in which they examined consideration techniques focused around social setting. They arranged a survey and asked the understudies to pick the amenability system that best speaks to the circumstances.

In an alternate study, Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) inspected neighborliness in appeal and expression of remorse discourse demonstrations of NNS of Hebrew. They utilized a poll of four solicitation and four expression of remorse circumstances and these circumstances were joined by six distinctive appeal and conciliatory sentiment methods. Members were asked to choose which methodology is suitable for the circumstances portrayed. Carrell (1979) utilized a poll with twenty-seven short dialogs and an ensuing three different decision answers to explore non-local appreciation of backhanded answers. In the study done via Carrell (1981), the instrument was a different decision poll focused around forty tape-recorded appeals and the members were asked to separate in the middle of positive and negative solicitations. The assemblage of exploration which was portrayed prior, for the most part attempted to inspect recognition and cognizance. Be that as it may, Kasper (1984) utilized the information focused around conversational execution to explore people's down to business appreciation.

The worry of most methodological exchanges is to what degree the instrument is fit to rough legitimate execution (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). In the same vein, Manes and Wolfson (1981) contended that the most legitimate data originates from sociolinguistic examination which underlines ethnographic perception. Nonetheless, Manes and Wolfson's utopia was not increased in value via analysts and numerous reactions were archived on the utilization of ethnographic perception (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Aston, 1995). Since perception did not fulfill the analysts, an alternate instrument alluded to as talk finishing test (DCT) was utilized to examine down to business information. As it is referred to in Kasper and Dahl (1991), "Talk Completion Tasks have been an abundantly utilized and a tremendously ambushed elicitation design in culturally diverse and interlanguage pragmatics." Discourse fruition undertakings (or tests) are a few prompts focused around different circumstances in which people are obliged to compose their responses in every scene. Levenston and Blum (1978) were the first scientists who created DCTs to study lexical rearrangements, and Blum-Kulka (1982) adjusted it to examine discourse act. After these spearheading studies, a group of examination went hand in hand with the recently created DCT instrument for the acknowledgment of distinctive discourse acts (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper, 1989; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987).

Nonetheless, the primes of DCTs don't keep going for quite a while. A few reactions were leveled at DCTs as well. Among the reactions of DCTs, failure to assemble legitimate data and conflict with the condition-of-the-workmanship writing were more pleasant. As an endeavor to enhance the nature of DCTs, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) led a study on appeal discourse act focused around a changed DCT in which the enhanced situational prompts were given to local and non-local speakers of English. The adjustment included improving the situational prompts and more expounded demands in local and non-local gatherings.

Hinkel (1997) attempted to approve various decision and DCT instruments through a study done on Chinese speakers. In an alternate comparative study, Golato (2003) contemplated the distinctions among compliment reaction sorts as for two instruments. Golato utilized discussion diagnostic procedure and a talk consummation undertaking to evoke information. In the wake of dissecting the information, Golato made sense of that "these information accumulation techniques don't generally yield information that talk similarly well to given exploration questions" (p. 90). He further contended that regularly happening talk is helpful to uncover the association of dialect however DCTs are useful to show related knowledge with dialect. Johnston, Kasper, and Ross (1998) examined the impact of distinctive sorts of replies, for example, positive, negative, and missing on local and non-local source decisions of protests, solicitations, and statements of regret. They pushed that there is a relationship between the kind of reply and the decision of methods. Their study was principally directed to accept diverse information elicitation systems commonly happening and generation instruments.

Rose (1992) with stress on more culturally diverse studies on discourse act, researched two types of DCTs focused around the consideration and avoidance of listener reaction. Rose figured out that "in spite of the fact that reactions on the non-listener reaction DCT had a tendency to be marginally more and utilized somewhat more strong moves and downgraders, consideration of listener reaction did not have a huge impact on appeals evoked" (p. 49).

Pretend is an alternate instrument utilized as a part of down to earth studies. Walters (1980) researched youngsters interlanguage discourse act focused around pretend. He watched youngsters while they were playing and communicating with manikins. He resulted in these present circumstances acknowledgment that punctuation and even minded information are not identified with one another; at the end of the day, kids had the capacity utilize the dialect with suitable pleasantness yet they were not ready to create linguistically sound sentences. Scarcella (1979) utilized recorded open pretends to examine formative examples of consideration. Kasper (1981) directed a study on 48 dyads of German learners of English and recorded their pretends did on different discourse acts, for example, demands, proposals, offers, welcomes, and grumblings.

The discoveries of Kasper study demonstrate that the discourse demonstration example of members were identified with not L1 or L2. This implies that the members' interlanguage were methodical and autonomous in performing discourse act. Nonetheless, the study is constrained to two societies. More studies are expected to examine the interlanguage pragmatics. Tanaka (1988) was an alternate creator who utilized pretend in mulling over discourse act. Tanaka dissected the solicitation discourse demonstration of Japanese learners while they were communicating with companions or instructors. The associations were recorded. The discoveries uncovered that nonnative understudies utilized more straightforward techniques to perform demands. Trosborg's (1987) study manages Danish statement of regret discourse act with diverse capability levels while they were collaborating with local speakers of English. Trosborg specified that amenability fluctuates as for members' capability level.

A few studies have utilized perceptions to gather information on specific discourse acts. Wolfson's (1989a) study which last around 2 years and analyzed compliment and compliment reactions managed "ethnographic information gathered through perception and recording of characteristically happening discourse in ordinary associations in a wide mixture of circumstances" (Wolfson, p. 227). In an alternate study focused around perception, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) found that nonnative speakers offered fewer recommendations as for local speakers.

Hinkel calls attention to that talk culmination tests (DCTs) have been generally utilized as a method for contrasting local speakers and non-local speakers' socio-realistic practices. She resulted in these present circumstances acknowledgment that "DCTs may not be the best elicitation instrument for LI and L2 information relating to uncertain and situationally obliged pragmalinguistic acts" (p. 1). Hinkel further accentuated that:

The perfect information for discourse act examination would comprise of a substantial number of deliberately recorded perceptions of specific discourse acts by illustrative subjects and control gathering subjects in comparative characteristic circumstances when the subjects are unconscious of the perception. (p. 2)

Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) resulted in these present circumstances acknowledgment that the data got through discussion investigation based studies is strikingly not the same as the same information accumulated through DCTs. They contended that when needed to finish the DCTs, "local speakers overwhelmingly expressed that they would acknowledge compliments with "Danke" which distinct difference a glaring difference to their genuine interactional conduct, where no 'thank you' could be found whatsoever" (p. 63). Rose (1992) considered the development of DCTs in which two manifestations of a DCT were explored. One structure was assembled through listener reaction and the other did not. The information accumulated by the two structures were indistinguishable and the utilization of listener reaction did not have huge impact on the evoked appeals.

Billmyer and Varghese (2000) attempted to discover the impact of orderly adjustment to the DCT for evoking solicitations delivered by local and non-local speakers of English. The discoveries of their study uncovered the vitality of outside adjustment of generation discourse act.

Numerous different specialists attempted to research discourse acts focused around a blend of distinctive instruments some of which were specified in the recent past. Case in point, numerous studies utilized joined generation and metapragmatic evaluation information (Einstein & Bodman, 1986; Fraser, Rintell, & Walters, 1980; Garcia, 1989; House, 1988; Olshtain, 1983; Olshtain & Cohen,

1983; Rintell, 1981; Takahashi & Dufon, 1989) while some utilized diverse sorts of creation information in their methodology.

Bardovi-Harlig (1999) censured that the way of interlanguage is disregarded in studies on interlanguage pragmatics. The primary thought process behind his examination on interlanguage in interlanguage pragmatics was the study led by Kasper and Schmidt (1996) which expressed that the fundamental center of interlanguage pragmatics is culturally diverse pragmatics. What Bardovi-Harlig attempted to stress was the way people secure pragmatics and said that there is an incredible requirement for longitudinal research on acquisitional parts of interlanguage pragmatics. His discontent of similar nature of logical studies and his enthusiasm toward the thought of acquisitional pragmatics lay in the thought that "numerous articles from 1979 to 1996 except for the unequivocally acquisitional studies with cross-sectional and longitudinal plans distinguish non-local speakers as 'non-local speakers' instead of learners, and they are portrayed just by their first dialect" (p. 680). Perhaps one of the concerns of Bardovi-Harlig is that researchers ought to give careful consideration to the methodology of picking up capability in pragmatics not simply turning to similar studies. His worry is in accordance with the way of second dialect procurement examines in which the procedure of securing is of key essentialness.

Demeter (2007) expressed that philosophy and instrument utilized as a part of social event sober minded learning of people are of key vitality which can impact the result of the study. He further uncovers that the greater part of the studies led on pragmatics utilization "talk fruition tests, meetings, polls, corpus semantics, or common associations" (p. 83). Underscoring the utilization of pretends in down to business studies, he thought about two sets of results acquired through pretend and a talk finishing test and resulted in these present circumstances understanding that "in spite of the fact that DCTs are more suitable for mulling over the principle sorts of procedures in discourse act creation, pretends appear a finer decision when the association between the speaker and listener is additionally critical for the study" (p. 88).

Grotjahn and Kasper (1991) examined different techniques utilized as a part of second dialect securing in which discourse act hypothesis is additionally considered. Bonikowska (1988) brought another point of view into the field of logical study in that in this study the speaker's choice not to perform a discourse demonstration is mulled over. Bonikowska resulted in these present circumstances acknowledgment that it is the commonsense decision that matters as well as withdrawing decision is critical as well.

In outline, a portion of the methodological issues in regards to assembling results are said underneath (Martinez-Flor, 2005; Martinez-Flor, 2006; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Soler, 2004):

- **Hinkel (1997):**
- DCTs may not be the best elicitation instrument for investigating pragmatic knowledge.
- **Bardovi-Harlig (1999):**
- Lack of longitudinal research on pragmatics.
- A need for more studies on acquisitional aspects of pragmatics.
- Current studies on pragmatics have ignored the nature of interlanguage.
- DCTs are not a good device to gauge interlanguage pragmatics of learners at all levels.
- **Golato (2003):**
- Manifold advantages of DCTs.
- The results obtained from DCTs are very different from naturalistically collected data.
- In interactions, individuals use strategies different from what is obtained through DCTs.
- **Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006):**
- Conversation-analysis-based materials provide learners with socio-pragmatically appropriate verbal behavior.
- The information obtained from DCTs is strikingly different from the same information gathered by conversation-analysis-based studies.
- **Demeter (2007):**
- DCTs are appropriate for studying various strategies in speech acts and role-plays are good instruments to find out the nature of interactions between learner and speaker.
- Responses provided through DCTs are much longer than the ones provided by role-plays.

Therefore, it can be concluded that every social context may impose some limitations on the choice of words and sentences which is different across cultures. Another factor which renders the research on pragmatics cumbersome is the instrument itself. As it is mentioned by Kasper and Dahl (1991), the purpose of the study influences the choice of instruments. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991): In pragmatics, we are dealing with a double layer of variability: (a) variability that reflects the social properties of the speech event, and the strategic, actional, and linguistic choices by which interlocutors attempt to reach their communicative goals; and (b) the variability induced by different instruments of data collection. (p. 215)

2. Politeness Strategies

One of the hidden standards of pragmatics is good manners. Verschueren (1999, p. 45) said that "amenability has turned into a spread term in pragmatics for whatever decisions are made in dialect use in connection to the need to safeguard individuals' face all in all, i.e. their open mental self view." Then, an alternate demonstration can be added to Austin's three sorts of act and that is face-undermining act or FTA.

Verschueren (1999, p. 45) characterized constructive face as "an individual's have to be dealt with as an equivalent or insider" and antagonistic face as "an individual's have to have opportunity of activity."

Neighborliness methodologies have been the worry of numerous studies in pragmatics. Ide (1989) mulled over the comprehensiveness of respectfulness techniques and the examination of decision of systems as indicated by social traditions or interactional technique. Kasper (1990) analyzed good manners speculations and proposed four subjects considering graciousness hypotheses, specifically, key clash shirking and social indexing, the phonetic authorization of affableness, social and mental variables, the effect of talk on amiability. Meier (1995) guaranteed that the idea of graciousness is not clear enough and attempted to focus the extent of obligingness in cooperations.

Respectfulness wonder has dependably been one of the concerns of discourse act studies. Graciousness methods are of foremost criticalness with regards to diverse discourse acts. Pfister (2010) gave two contentions to backing the adage of neighborliness. From one perspective, enlivened by Brown and Levinson (1978) and Fraser and Nolen's hypothesis, Pfister accepted that issues of respectful conduct can be clarified through the saying of pleasantness. Then again, Pfister (p. 1266) specified that "the saying of respectfulness is a piece of sane discussion among conceivably forceful gatherings." Therefore, Pfister contended that another proverb ought to be included request to have a reasonable correspondence and called that the adage of good manners. Consideration is of various quality in that it incorporates some key fixings, for example, people's energy connections, standards of the general public, and social foundation, to name a couple. The present writing audit presents three hypotheses of affableness which are exhibited beneath:

- Lakoff's tenets of courteousness (1973)
- Brown and Levinson's hypothesis of amenability (1978)
- Leech's amenability standard (1983)

Lakoff (1973) advances two fundamental standards of realistic be clear and be courteous and contends that these two components are opposing to one another in that being clear and instructive does not match with cordial situations. It implies that in most casual circumstances helpful standards are disregarded through utilizing figures of speech or unexpected sentences and courteousness takes the spot of clarity. Leech (1980, 1980) likewise examined the past speculations of human discussion and proffered that courteousness rule (PP) ought to be a piece of agreeable standards. The creator kept up his thought as minimizing negative courteousness and augmenting positive politeness.

Conclusion

In this audit article, it was attempted to have a review of different instruments in the domain of pragmatics. As it was examined, each one instrument has its own particular points of interest and also its imperfections. To have an agreeable picture of ebb and flow methodological issues and to give learner specialists a general picture of what is going ahead in information elicitation and information

get-together period of sober minded studies, which is one of the principle concerns in down to business research, this audit article is of incredible help. The majority of the specialists who are going to direct studies on pragmatics and discourse act verbs are not acquainted with diverse instruments in the field and they may have troubles picking a suitable instrument which best speak to their motivation. The matter of legitimacy is under question if the instrument neglects to speak to what the analyst attempted to examine. In this sense, we propose that the specialist use diverse instruments and analyze the results. In spite of the fact that this pattern is time intensive furthermore illogical, if led painstakingly, it can furnish scientists with consoling information since the usage of different instruments will unquestionably diminish the legitimacy issues.

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DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCT VALIDATION OF THE PRONUNCIATION BARRIERS QUESTIONNAIRE (PBQ) IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is constructing and validating a scale to measure the significance of pronunciation Barriers from English language learners' perspectives. This study tries to measure the significance of native like pronunciation within four main domains as Psychological, Sociolinguistics, Semantical and Personal aspects associated with learner's pronunciation ability. To achieve this purpose, the researchers of the present study used one hundred forty EFL learners, who were studying English as Foreign Language for three or four years, in some of the institutes and universities in Mashhad, Iran. The internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability showed an accepted target value of .70. The results of the PBQ as assessed by the CFI/NNFI, RMSEA and chi-x2, reached acceptable fits. The results of the study indicated that the PBQ scale scores were positively correlated with psychological, social, semantic, and personal barriers. The PBQ is useful to researchers in assessing learners' affective constructs research in Iran.

Keywords: pronunciation barriers, scale construction, validation, psychological, social, semantics and personal barriers

1. Introduction and review literature

One of the main purposes of this study is to improve learner's pronunciation achievement, by removing some barriers in learning pronunciation. Gordani and Khajavi,(2012) assumed that sounds have a crucial role in communication and conversations, and foreign language teachers must devote to teaching pronunciation in their classes. Learning native like pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of success in learning English. And learners pronunciation barriers may lead to breakdown and misrepresented in their communication and misunderstanding in conversation. The analysis in this study is based on the four categories: the first one is psychological barriers. In this dimension, according to Gilbert, (2012) students sometimes have psychological barriers to "sounding foreign" in their conversation with others and this makes them resist in an unconscious manner. These psychological barriers consist of cognitive, affective, and metacognitive areas and because of the wide range of categories in this area our main focus is on psychological barriers. The second category of the study is social barriers that have effect on the participant's identity. The researchers of

the current study surveyed three dimensions of this area such as social behaviour, gender, and age. Fraser and Perth, (1999) believed that learners in foreign and second language need help in overcoming both psychological and social barriers that caused the situation to be very hard for them to practice effectively. Also, the nature and degree of accent in the speech are affected by the learners' age at which language acquisition began (Ioup, 2008). The next category is *semantic barriers*. Researchers have different ideas about this area. Some scholars such as Carruthers (2006) believed that Semantic barriers result from differences in languages, education, and culture and claimed that "if you're from the United States and you're speaking to a Scot from Glasgow, you may have a hard time simply understanding his pronunciation. And your accent may be incomprehensible to him" (Carruthers, 2006).

The last category in this study refers to *personal barriers* and it includes three dimensions as attitude, motivation and aptitude. Gilbert, (2012) believed that learning native like pronunciation in another language requires one who studies to adopt her or himself to a new person. And many students tend to feel intimidated by adapting to sound of new language; this is because the new sounds in learning another language and different rhythm cause them to sound foreign which is not consciously recognized by learners. Some researchers as Stevick (1978) and Pennington and Richards (1986) pointed out the vulnerability of learners who, while desire to achieve native like pronunciation in the target language in order to avoid the stigma attached to having a foreign accent, may be reluctant to lose their accent for fear of a transfer property themselves from their first language peers. (Stevick, 1978; as cited in Baradaran and Davvari, 2010). The teacher needs to be aware of affective factors that impede or enhance learners improvement in foreign languages so that they can work with students to help them understand how their pronunciation is related not only to their native language, but also to their own motivation and identity as well as their view of the target culture (Stevick, 1978; cited in Baradaran and Davvari, 2010).

Pronunciation barriers Questionnaire is planned as a tool for education researchers to use for identifying barrier dimensions in the process of learning foreign language pronunciation.

1.2. Purpose of study

The present study aims at developing learner's ability in identifying weak dimensions in learning foreign pronunciation and attempt to remove some barriers through learning pronunciation. Also, this study investigates the Construct Validation of this newly-developed instrument. Almost all of the studies carried out on the EFL learners' pronunciation require an examination of the barriers which may impede their pronunciation perfection, and the lack of tool was extremely remarkable in the studies done. Therefore, the researchers of the current study aimed at developing and assessing the construct validity of "Pronunciation Barriers Questionnaire".

1.3. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated to meet the objectives of the present study:

Ho 1: The Pronunciation Barriers Questionnaire will not show good internal consistency.

Ho 2: The instrument will not show good fit indices as measured by the Confirmatory factor analysis.

2. Method

2.1. Participant

This study included 314 intermediate EFL learners, who are studying English at different Universities and, Language Institutes of Mashhad, Iran. Participants were asked to cooperate in the study and fill in the questionnaire and give it back to the researcher within a week. The learners were both male and female. They had studied English for 3 to 6 years. Collection of data started in February 2013 and lasted for a month.

2.2. Instrument

A newly developed questionnaire was utilized as a tool for data collection. The pronunciation barriers questionnaire consists of four main categories and each one consist of several sub-categories. The first category which is psychological barriers includes three branches: cognitive, affective and metacognitive barriers. This section totally includes 44 items. The second section of the questionnaire is social barriers and it includes three dimensions, i.e. social behaviour, gender and age. This part totally includes 6 items. The third part, i.e. Semantic barriers included the categories such as wrong

interpretation, same pronunciation but multiple meaning and wrong interpretation. This part totally includes 4 items. The last part of the questionnaire deals with personal barriers which consists of three branches: attitude, motivation and aptitude. That includes 6 items. Totally, PBQ consists of 60 items. The entire questionnaire is in a five-point Likert scales and the respondents are supposed to answer the questionnaire based on the following options:

1 Strongly Disagree (SD) / 2 Disagree (D) / 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree (NA/ND) 4 Agree (A) / 5 strongly agree

2.3. Procedure

The Pronunciation Barriers Questionnaire was given to 214 EFL learners in different fields of study. Most of them study in English Teaching and English Translation in Tabaran institute of Mashhad, Iran. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire consisting of 60 items under four dimensions of Psychological, Social, Semantic, and Personal, within a week. At the time of distributing the questionnaires to the learners the researcher explained the details and asked them to participate honestly.

2.4. Statistical analysis

The statistical analyses described in this study were conducted with SPSS 16.00 and LISREL 8.80. There are a variety of ways to validate an instrument, i.e. to assess its Construct validity. The first step is usually a test of internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability estimate which has a general accepted target value of .70 (Garson, 2005, Lewicki & Hill, 2006; cited in Ghaemi, 2012). Pronunciation barriers questionnaire (PBQ) scale was validated through (CFA) model as well.

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted using LISREL 8.80. Furthermore, in line with the work of Batinic, Wolff and Haupt (2007), the goodness of fit statistics was obtained emphasizing the Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), Non-normed fit index (NNFI) and incremental fit index (IFI). The χ^2 test was also used to test the fitness of the model. RMSEA values less than .05 indicate good fit and values as high as .08 represent acceptable errors of approximation (Hu and Bentler, 1998). The CFI/NNFI and IFI differ along a 0 to 1 continuum in which values greater than .90 and .95 are considered to show an acceptable and outstanding fit of the data (Bentler, 1990). However, an index of .90 and above is considered as acceptable fit (Harrington, 2009).

3. Results

3.1. Internal Consistency

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient estimate for the instrument and subscales was acceptable and reached the target reliability of at least .70 (Garson, 2005, Lewicki & Hill, 2006).

Table 1. The coefficient Cronbach's alpha(s) for PBQ

Factors	Psychological Barrier	Social Barrier	Semantic Barrier	Personal Barrier
α	.74	.76	.71	.78

Total α for PBQ = .91

α = Cronbach's coefficient alpha

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The CFA model estimated the ability of the eleven factors to clarify the relationship among the 60 items. This model with 60 items positing four EFL learners' pronunciation barriers factors provided a good fit to the data (CFI=.94, NNFI=.93, IFI=.92, RMSEA=.07 and $\chi^2=972.09$, df=569, p=0.0). The solution was entirely proper and the factor structure was well definite with all factor loading being positive and significant and were larger than .30 (See table 2). The correlations among the four factors were small to moderate (r s=.31 to .58), indicating that the factors were clearly distinguishable from one another (see table 3). In sum, there was support for the eleven factor model in Iranian sample based on the finding of; (a) a reasonable model fit (i.e. CFI, NNFI, IFI=.93), (b) good factor loading for the model (.43 and above for each item loading on the respective factor), and (c) reasonably low correlation among the eleven factors (<.7).

Table 2. Summary of the Item - factor loading

Items	Psychol ogical barrier	Items	Social barriers	Items	Semanti c barriers	Items	Personal Barriers
Psycho.1	.56	Social.1	.67	Semantic.1	.65	Personal.1	.87
Psycho.2	.77	Social.2	.87	Semantic.2	.88	Personal.2	.44
Psycho.3	.78	Social.3	.76	Semantic.3	.55	Personal.3	.49
Psycho.4	.65	Social.4	.43	Semantix.4	.75	Personal.4	.69
Psycho.5	.87	Social.5	.88			Personal.5	.73
Psycho.6	.90	Social.6	.82			Personal.6	.81
Psycho.7	.91						
Psycho.8	.88						
Psycho.9	.81						
Psycho.10	.85						
Psycho.11	.76						
Psycho.12	.77						
Psycho.13	.82						
Psycho.14	.88						
Psycho.15	.89						
Psycho.16	.81						
Psycho.17	.82						
Psycho.18	.67						
Psycho.19	.86						
Psycho.20	.69						
Psycho.21	.77						
Psycho.22	.76						
Psycho.23	.88						

Table 3. Summary of the Item - factor loading (continued)

Items	Psychological barrier
Psycho.24	.56
Psycho.25	.77
Psycho.26	.78
Psycho.27	.77
Psycho.28	.65
Psycho.29	.69
Psycho.30	.89
Psycho.31	.61
Psycho.32	.72
Psycho.33	.75
Psycho.34	.79
Psycho.35	.79
Psycho.36	.89
Psycho.37	.69
Psycho.38	.66
Psycho.39	.90
Psycho.40	.89
Psycho.41	.69
Psycho.42	.87
Psycho.43	.91
Psycho.44	.82

Table 4. Sub-factor correlation of the four factors of PBQ

	Psychological Barriers	Social Barriers	Semantic Barriers	Personal Barriers
Psychological Barriers	1			
Social Barriers	.32	1		
Semantic Barriers	.49	.58	1	
Personal Barriers	.61	.31	.56	1

4. Discussion

As seen in table 1 the internal consistency analysis of the PBQ utilizing Cronbach's coefficient alpha reached acceptable alpha(s) which rejected the first hypothesis. This is consistent to the finding of (Covin, 2000) who reported that the questionnaire has an acceptable Cronbach's alpha(s). The results of the CFA as assessed by the CFI/NNFI, RMSEA and chi-x2, reached acceptable fits. Table 2 showed that the factor structures were defined and table 3 showed that the factors were clearly distinguishable from one another; this also rejected the second hypothesis.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the construct validity of PBQ in the context of Iran. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that PBQ has undoubtedly strong psychometric characteristics and good constructs validity that makes them conclude that it is useful for enhancement of Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation by identifying barriers which are hinder for having intelligible pronunciation. According to Lado(1957) the obstacles or difficulties that have to be overcome in the teaching pronunciation should be identified (as cited in Carruthers, 2006). So it's up to the teachers to be aware of these barriers in pronunciation and implementing special and varieties of techniques to prevail them. As Robinson (2003) stated the teaching of pronunciation must be integrated in students' training, that teaching must be country specific and material also focus on specific not general (as cited in Gordani and Khajavi,2012). Therefore, the findings of the study can help all the researchers in the field to use PBQ for their future studies to identify and alleviate pronunciation difficulties and barriers of their learners and try to improve their pronunciation to a great extent.

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UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION TOWARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING E-LEARNING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the development of educational opportunities via the internet gives students the chance of education from different places and different learning situation. In Iran, universities are trying to facilitate their educational system with smart technology and to motivate students and teachers with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) using computers and other technologies to take part in electronic classes. The purpose of this study is to consider teachers' and students' perception and teaching satisfaction of teachers who use the technology and also students' expectation and participants in English e-learning. Two groups of English teaching students and their teachers are chosen randomly from University of Guilan in different terms. Teachers and students are given two different kinds of questionnaires. They are supposed to fill in a five-point Likert scale from (1=miserable to 5=excellent). The result shows the teachers and students satisfaction and the educational system defects; on the basis of the results, we suggest some solutions to solve or reform the defects in these two universities.

Keywords: e-learning, information and communication technology, english e-learning

3. Introduction

The term e-learning first used in mid-1990s, with development of World Wide Web and interest in asynchronous discussion groups. Online learning is totally diverse from traditional form of distance learning. Its historical focus on content delivery and autonomous learnings are of major importance. We define e-learning as instruction submitted on a digital device like computer that intends to support learning.

E-learning is divided into two main parts, synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous e-learning is instructor-oriented while asynchronous e-learning is based on self-study of individuals.

As another definition, e-learning is job-transferable knowledge and skills related to organizational performance or leads individuals to their learning ends. Ring and Mathieux (2002) suggested that online learning should have high authenticity, high interactivity and high collaboration. Carliner (1999) defines e-learning as a kind of education that makes help of computer for presenting lessons. Khan (1997) defines online instruction as an innovative approach for transferring instruction to a distance audience using web as the medium.

For learners online learning has no time zone, and place and distance are not a problem. In asynchronous online learning, students have access to online materials anytime, while synchronous online learning is suited for real time instruction between students and instructors. It is also cost

saving, because costs of presenting courses are distributed by many more students. If students are taught online without obligation to attend classes, then it can provide courses nationally or even universally from a single place. That could increasingly bring more students to one course.

E-learning uses a mixture of text and audio as well as still and motion visuals to present lessons. Environment influences e-learning in many cases. One of the challenges for institutions that launched online courses is facilitating support services for learners at a distance, because online learners learn at different times, and their service needs don't verify to accustom working hours.

E-learning in Iran started in 2001 with the courses in University of Tehran. University of Tehran offered nine courses in bachelor and master levels. Nowadays many Universities in Iran such as Amir Kabir, Shiraz, and Shahid Beheshti offer e-learning courses; even some religious-based universities use courses on internet.

Among the first pioneers in e-learning, University of Iran Science and Technology started online courses in 2004. It offered computer engineering, industrial engineering, chemical and chemistry engineering and architectural engineering.

University of Guilan has recently provided online courses in master level of English teaching, Persian literature, mathematics, computer engineering, etc.

Course objects include text, audio files, video files, animation and graphics that are accessible to all students at any time. Students should attend online classes wherever and whenever they have access to the internet. Students are required to follow weekly schedule, otherwise they will receive warning and fail the course. Actually because of low bandwidth in Iran audio and video classes are somehow impossible and it is not compulsory.

E-learning system has some benefits, like flexibility in time and place, students can access to learning materials at any time and any place, using multimedia learning material that motivates students to learn, providing many job opportunities for those that are expert in the field of IT, computer programming, etc. providing chances for cultural exchange among different ethnic groups in a country, and lowering stresses of families that don't send their children to other cities for education, so they have opportunity of learning in their own city via the internet.

Among the bottom lines of e-learning we can name unfamiliarity of teachers with this system. Actually teachers that are used to traditional ways of teaching find it difficult to adapt to new way of teaching using technology environment. Lack of human resources and instructors is another bottleneck. It is believed that this courses lack face-to-face class that are needed for some majors like computer, electrical and chemical engineering. Also online courses isolate students, since there is no live interaction.

4. Review of literature

Deploying advanced higher education institutes and colleges with modern e-learning equipment is one of today's essential needs in developing countries like Iran. Based on the results, the main components for e-learning in higher education in Iran were: Students, faculty members, Educational communications, supporting factors and LMS. The findings provide important insight about students' perceptions of e-learning and raise practical considerations for its implementation. One of the studies is a primary effort at providing insightful analyses to the policy makers of developing countries such as Iran's higher agricultural education institutes (Yaghoubi, J., & Malekmohammadi, I. 2008).

A research represented appropriate presentation of materials, providing meaningful learning, and providing opportunities for reflection, rate of understanding the complexity through the links between the concepts, the role of graphs in mental visualization, suitable layout Links, having academic aspect, effectiveness of the lesson feedback, suitable evaluation ways for the multimedia environment (Sasani, M. et al. 2012).

One of the important challenges of most developing countries is lack of high speed internet access, due to lots of factors like limited intermittent electricity, use of expensive low bandwidth satellite technology and inadequately trained personnel.

Fortunately ICT infrastructure started developing by high speed cables in many countries. Some countries like those located on East and Southern Africa have also invested in undersea cables to tap the global Internet super highway.

The history of e-learning in Iran at present time did not go further than 7 years, yet from a realistic viewpoint we shall say that e-based learning in Iran has had a 6 year experience and even younger.

Both the private sector and government organizations delivered e-learning in Iran. University of Amirkabir is one of the examples of plenty virtual universities.

Some factors can hinder the success of e-Learning projects in Iran like lack of individuals and organizations with successful e-Learning project implementation expertise both in the Academic and in private sector organizations, technology focus-Iranians by nature, open-source technology-Iranian academics, many small e-Learning projects are running on open source technology, and one-time funding-almost of all e-Learning projects in Iran (Omidnia, S., Masrom, M., & Selamat, H. 2010).

4.1 Aims

This study aims at analyzing the EFL teachers and students' perception and satisfaction of e-learning in the University of Guilan. Identifying the defects and suggesting some solutions in order to improve the e-learning educational system.

2.2 Research Questions: This article seeks to answer the following questions:

3. Does EFL professors' perceptions and attitudes toward e-learning improved through time?
4. Are EFL students satisfied with e-learning system?

2.3 Research Hypothesis

This study is formed based on these hypotheses:

2. The EFL professors' perceptions toward e-learning are not positive and may decrease through time.
2. EFL students' satisfaction depends on the facilities and quality of instruction that is provided by their professors and Universities.

3. Methods

3.1 participants: This study was conducted in the University of Guilan among twenty-six EFL students and six teachers. The students were chosen from the same terms in order to compare the expectation and satisfaction in equal situation.

3.2 Materials: Two types of questionnaires were used in this study. Both questionnaires were divided in three sections. The first section of each questionnaire was about students' /teachers' background. The second section consists of 21 statements. The participants were supposed to answer the questions in two rows of five-point Likert scale. The first row asked them about their expectations and the second row asked them about their satisfactions of the same specific point. The last part of the questionnaires includes some open-ended questions which aimed to compensate for the fact that there were no interviews conducted with the participants were utilized.

3.3 Procedure:

One form of the questionnaires was given to twenty-six EFL students of University of Guilan. The other questionnaire is given to their EFL teachers. All questionnaires were sent via the university's virtual site and participants were asked to send the filled questionnaire to a specific email address.

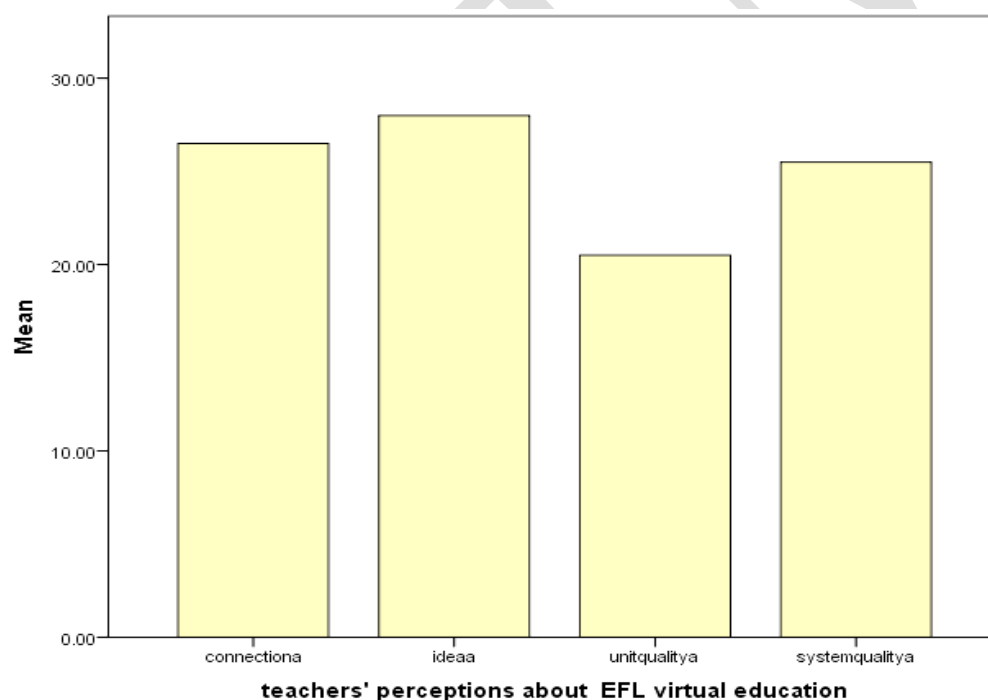
4. Data Analysis

A descriptive statistics was used for quantitative variables with The SPSS statistical software. The table below presents the relation and connection of teachers with their students in two rows of a(perception) and b(satisfaction). This is the same for the idea of teachers about virtual system and the quality of presenting units via internet (i.e. putting video and audio files) and the quality of system itself whether software and hardware. The number of related questions about each subject is represented and the score given to each item is added up.

Table1. Teachers' perceptions and satisfactions about virtual learning in Guilan University

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
connectiona	4	17.00	76.00	19.0000	8.00000
connectionb	4	11.00	46.00	11.0000	4.00000
ideaa	2	.00	56.00	28.0000	.00000
ideab	2	2.00	26.00	13.0000	1.00000
unitqualitya	2	15.00	41.00	20.0000	10.00000
unitqualityb	2	10.00	26.00	13.0000	7.07107
systemqualitya	13	17.00	229.00	17.0000	7.00000
systemqualityb	13	13.00	140.00	10.0000	4.00000
Valid N (listwise)	2				

The bar charts below show the comparison between teachers' perception(a) and their satisfaction(b) about TEFL virtual learning and teaching. The chart presents information about the connection or relation between teachers and student, the quality of virtual site, internet or the system, teachers' idea about virtual learning. The teachers' perception shows higher amount in contrast with their satisfaction.

**Figure1. Teachers' perception about TEFL e-learning**

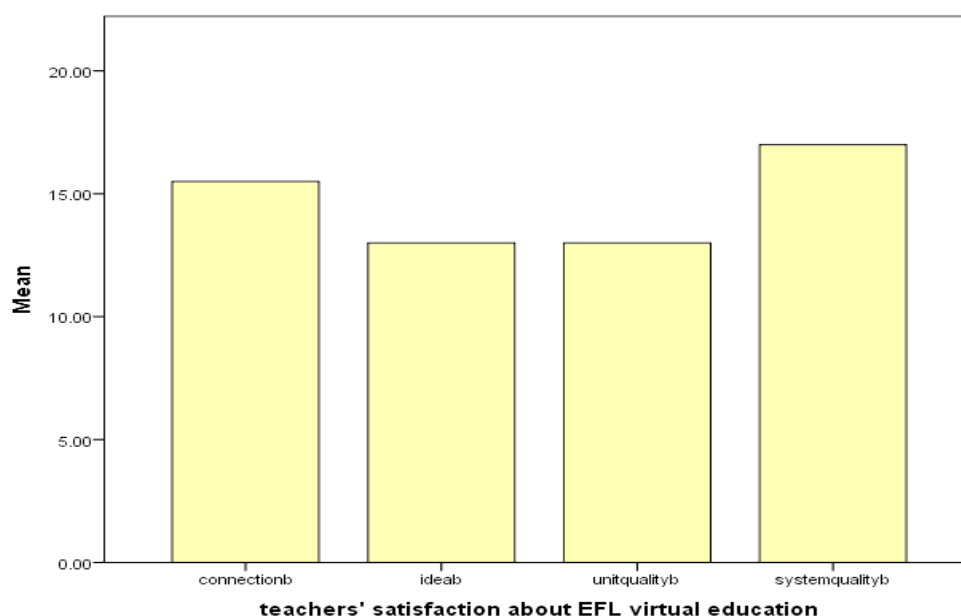


Figure2. Teachers' satisfaction about TEFL e-learning

Teachers' idea about the virtual site and the quality of the lessons are the lowest items in the chart above as they have difficulty with uploading the audio and video files or they are not interested enough to work hard to prepare them. Sometimes it's annoying for them to record their voice or sit and teach in front of the camera. Also because of having a low-speed internet, providing audio or video in the online classes is impossible.

The table below indicates the students' perception and satisfaction about the same items. Moreover, the teachers' idea about the virtual site in previous table changes to the idea of students about teachers' duty about teaching in a different system and via the internet. The number of questions related to each item is represented and the scores given to each item is added up.

Table2.Students' perception and satisfaction about virtual learning

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
connectiona	2	5.00	113.0000	3.00000	12.000
connectionb	2	6.00	64.0000	4.00000	18.000
teacherdutyb	2	1.00	118.0000	.00000	.000
teacherdutyb	2	6.00	71.0000	4.00000	18.000
unitqualitya	3	8.00	116.0000	4.00000	19.000
unitqualityb	3	17.00	62.0000	9.00000	91.000
systemqualitya	14	21.00	117.0000	6.00000	37.000
systemqualityb	14	25.00	67.0000	7.00000	58.000
Valid N (listwise)	2				

The following charts indicate that students enter virtual learning system with high expectations. Unfortunately, their satisfaction decreases dramatically after a while. They mostly complain on the internet speed and lack of proper teaching.

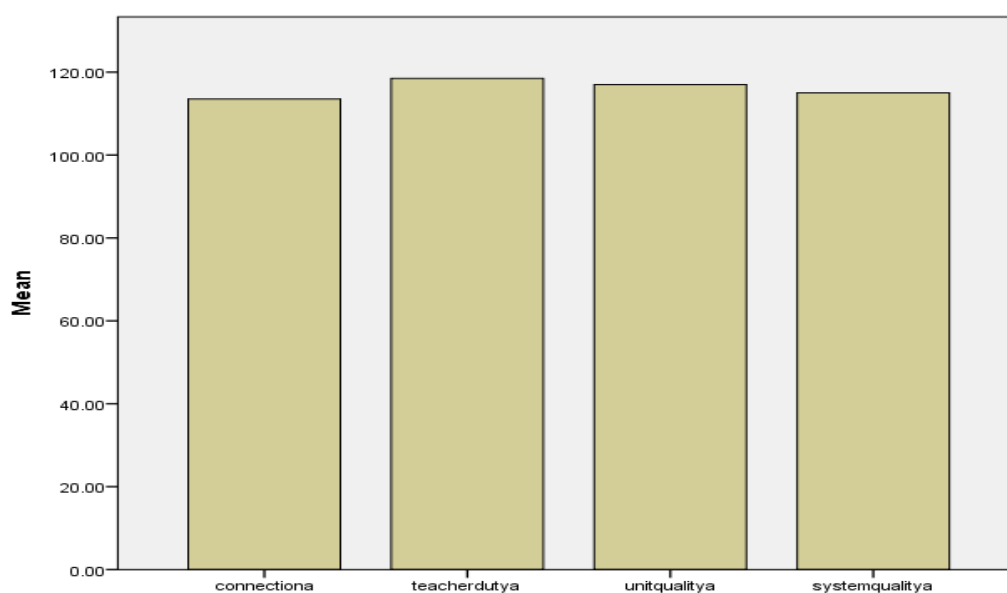


Figure3 .Students' perception about TEFL virtual learning

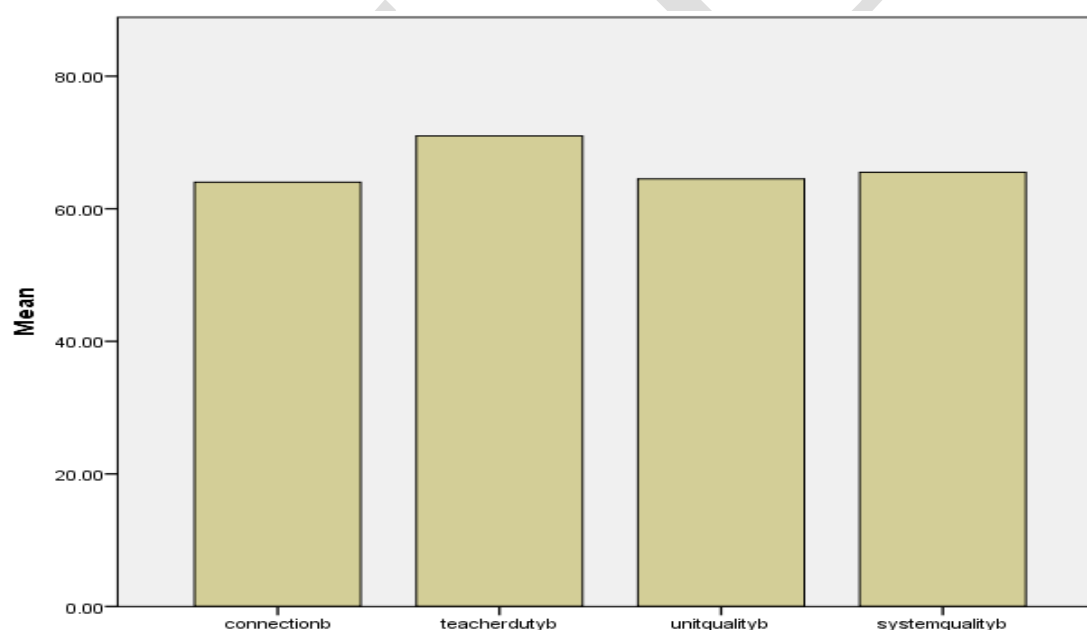


Figure4. Students' satisfaction about TEFL virtual learning

Conclusion

The result of the study reveals that most teachers declared their point of view about virtual teaching as it is a valuable and significant mode of instruction that can offer instruction beyond borders and facilitate the learning process. However, in Iran the infrastructures are not ready to pave the way for the planning, implementation and evaluation of e-learning. Without sound and appropriate foundations, it is difficult to meet success. Soon, there are a lot of people graduated in this way, people who are illiterate or semi-illiterate in the society with high expectations and this

would be a disaster to let them to increase in number with the existing inappropriate virtual learning condition. In addition, they suggest that first, the technology implementation is to be planned and experts' advice is to be sought. Any successful program is to be modelled based on other successful curricula implemented in developed countries. Teachers must be trained properly in order to deal with different teaching methods in e-learning and also Lack of enough knowledge about e-learning among teachers, and Not considering it as a normal kind of learning system-> leads to their unwillingness. The instruments have to be developed either software or hardware. As a result most of them did not offer this system to other people because although E-learning provides easy access to learning opportunities and saves the cost and time on the part of the students, and it can expand the type and number of the courses that can be offered, with the recent condition in Iran it's not appropriate to participate in virtual learning.

Some students believe that this system is a very appropriate way to educate for married students and those who work and have children. It's easy to access teachers and classes via the internet and do not pay any money for food and dormitory fees. However, they believe that teachers have no interest and knowledge to work with it. There are no audio and video files most of the time and teachers teach just through typing. The quality of the system and the internet speed is not satisfactory and even the virtual site is complicated and confusing. Peoples view about virtual learning is not positive. Moreover, they don't have much information about this system. They mostly think that students are the only ones who are responsible for studying the lessons and teachers do not have any important role.

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IRANIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CORRECTION OF ORAL ERRORS

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ABSTRACT

The correction of EFL learners' oral errors in speaking English is a challenging matter among teachers and researchers. In this regard most of the teachers use students' preferences in correction of oral errors in classroom. This study investigated the ideas and attitudes of 25 EFL students in grade three at secondary school level in Fouman, Iran. This study answered to the trinary questions about 1) general attitudes of EFL students toward oral error correction, 2) students' attitudes toward correction of different types of oral errors, and 3) their preferences about different methods of oral error correction. And at the end of this research that was based on the questionnaire, EFL students had propensity for correction of errors by the teachers, and also most of them disagreed with peer-correction. In the case of correction of different types of errors they wanted the teachers to correct them all, especially grammar and pronunciation errors. Conducting studies like this may help the better teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Key words: Error, EFL student's attitude, Error correction methods, Iranian Secondary School EFL Students' Attitudes toward Correction of Oral Errors

1. Introduction

As we know that the main and important role of language is creating interaction and communication among human beings. Sometimes this interaction blocks or hinders because of errors. Making errors is inevitable part of learning. As many language educators and researchers (e.g., Edge, 1989; Hendrickson, 1987 as cited in Katayama 2007) maintain, making errors is a necessary and natural process of language learning. In this moment the correction of errors and giving effective feedback to the learners will be valuable, and also will be a motivation for learners. For this reason in this study the preferences of EFL students toward the correction of oral errors discussed.

Because today the goal of teaching is changed from language-centered to learner-centered, it is important to accompanying learners in learning processes. By considering this point that different learner with different preferences and different styles of learning, needs to provide particular methods of teaching and learning as well. One of the important parts of these methods should involve the types of treatment for the learners' errors. Some teachers tend to correct all the errors while some tend to be tolerant and still some others do not correct at all (Riazi and Riasti, 2007; Noora, 2006). According to the relevant literature on teachers' and students' preferences and attitudes towards error correction, many studies show that while teachers and students share such common views as the importance of error correction and the types of errors that require correcting, there exist considerable differences as to the techniques of error correction (Lee, 2005; Wang, 2010).

Most of the books and articles that is written about the errors focused on the types of errors and the ways of correcting and analyzing them, while few, if not all, of them considered the preferences of learners toward the treatment of errors. It is important to consider and implement the EFL learners' preferences toward the methods of teaching and also toward the types and techniques of error correction during the class time. Although correction of students' oral errors was a difficult task to the teachers most of the time, they can decrease the amount of this difficulty by using the students' perception on correction of oral errors.

1.1. Review of literature

In reviewing the errors and error correction, it can be conclude that errors and their correction have close relationship with teaching and learning processes, in other words they are bound with

each other. Errors are inseparable part of learning, for this reason EFL teachers focus on the cause of errors in learning a language. Chastain (1988) suggested that, errors may occur in three types of cases. First, some errors occur because learners are not aware of the rules. Second, some errors creep into student's language because they do not attach any great importance to linguistic accuracy. Third, some errors result from temporary overload on the student's cognitive processes due to fatigue, embracement, illness, and so on. Correction in the first case will be beneficial, if the teacher can make the error and way of correcting it, clear to the students. Correction in the second case will be counterproductive, unless the teacher can convince the students to change their attitude toward accuracy. Correction in the third case cannot prevent future errors because they do not result from inadequate knowledge.

Truscott (1999) believed that, in order to provide effective correction for a student's error, the teacher must first determine exactly what that error is. Most teachers now share the assumption that effective instruction requires a communicative focus in the classroom. But reconciling this assumption with the use of correction creates difficulties for the teacher. He further mentioned that correction, by its nature, interrupts classroom activities, disturbing the ongoing communication process. It diverts the teacher's attention from the essential tasks involved in managing a communicative activity. It moves students' attention away from the task of communicating. It can discourage them from freely expressing themselves, or from using the kinds of forms that might lead to correction.

Karra (2006) in her article mentioned the major concepts introduced by S. P. Corder (1967) "The significance of learners' errors", the following points are some of these concepts: a) it is the learner who determines what the input is. The teacher can present a linguistic form, but this is not necessarily the input, but simply what is available to be learned. b) Keeping the above point in mind, learners' needs should be considered when teachers/linguists plan their syllabuses. Before Corder's work syllabuses were based on theories and not so much on learners' needs. c) Mager (1962 as cited in Karra, (2006) pointed out that the learners' built-in syllabus is more efficient than the teacher's syllabus. Corder (1967) added that if such a built-in syllabus exists, then learners' errors would confirm its existence and would be systematic. d) Corder introduced the distinction between systematic and non-systematic errors. Unsystematic errors occur in one's native language; Corder (ibid) called these "mistakes" and stated that they are not significant to the process of language learning. He kept the term "errors" for the systematic ones, which occur in a second language. e) Errors are significant to teachers, researchers and learners. f) Many errors are due to that the learner uses structure from his native language. Corder claimed that possession of one's native language is facilitative. Errors in this case are not inhibitory, but rather evidence of one's learning strategies (Karra2006).

As Shaffer (2008) mentioned, one of the questions facing every ESL/EFL teacher is how to correct oral errors and how much to correct. Researcher opinions vary widely on this: from no correction to extensive correction, from immediate to delayed correction, and from implicit to explicit correction. Language learners also have their own opinions on how and whether they wish to have their oral errors corrected by their teacher in the classroom setting. These opinions may be at odds with those of the experts, leaving the classroom instructor with more questions about error correction than answers.

In his article, Moss (2000) supported this position and claimed that, when deciding how to respond to students' oral errors there are a number of questions we need to ask ourselves. First of all, 'Should learners' errors be corrected?' In this regard, there are wide differences of opinion, but perhaps one of the most forceful reasons for carrying out correction is that many learners expect their errors to be corrected and can feel disappointed or resentful if they are ignored. The second reason is that, there is the danger that by leaving errors untreated, the defective language might serve as an input model and be acquired by other students in the class. Thirdly, the provision of corrective feedback can speed up the process of language learning by providing information about rules and the limits of language use, which would otherwise take students a long time to deduce on their own. In spite of the potential benefit of feedback and correction, however, it will only be effective if students are amenable to the idea and are willing to take on board teachers' comments. Hence, in order to ensure that EFL learners are receptive to error treatment, it is necessary to find out their preferences and attitudes towards correction and feedback, as well as how sensitive or resilient they are.

1.2. Research questions

In order to evaluate the Iranian EFL students' attitudes toward oral error correction at the secondary school level, at first step the following three pervasive questions are addressed in a questionnaire that has been employed.

1. What are the Iranian EFL students' attitudes toward the oral error correction?
2. What are the students' preferences about correction of different types of errors (e.g. vocabulary errors)?
3. What are their attitudes toward the different methods of oral error correction (e.g. self-correction)?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The data was collected from 25 EFL students in Tohid state school in Fouman, Iran. The participants were at pre-intermediate level and studying English in grade 3 in secondary school. The participants were selected through administrating a placement test in early days of school from among 115 EFL students studying English in grade 3 in secondary school. With regarding to the gender all of the participants were male.

2.2. Instruments

In this study a questionnaire is used to illustrate the students' preferences about correction of oral errors during the class time. In order to have a standard questionnaire for this study and due to the time limitations in developing a questionnaire by the researchers, the one used in this research is adapted and then modified from the questionnaire used in Japan (Katayama 2007).

The questionnaire consists of four main parts. In the first part the students were asked to write their personal information. In the second part there are three questions that were asked students' general attitudes toward correction of oral errors in classroom. The responses of this question have four choices, choice 1 representing *completely disagree* and choice 4 representing *completely agree*. The third part contains three questions that were asked the students to present their preferences about the correction of different types of errors, including: vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation errors. In this regard the four- optional questions were coded from *never* to *always* for 1 and 4 respectively, with respect to the frequency of correction.

The last section of the questionnaire includes statements that were represented the students to give their particular ideas about different methods of oral error correction. Before the students representing their attitudes toward questions and statements and in order to help them in better understanding, a summary explanation of different types of errors were given them. In this section, as well as other two, the statements have four options that rated from *no good* to *very good* for numbers 1 and 4 respectively.

2.3. Design

Since this study is based on the students' attitudes and ideas about oral error correction, a questionnaire is used to describe and clarify their preferences. Based on the answer to the research questions, frequency distribution were calculated to analyze the likert-scale response for (1) the attitudes toward classroom oral error correction, (2) general preferences about correction of different types of errors (e.g. vocabulary and grammar), and (3) general preferences about correction of oral errors by using different methods.

2.4. Procedure

This study was began by selecting a sample group of 25 male students which were at pre-intermediate level and studying English in grade 3 at the secondary school in Fouman, Iran. The students were selected according to the result of placement test that was administrated in the early days of school, it was concluded that all of the selected students are at pre-intermediate level. After selecting the students the questionnaire was given to them and asked them to answer it in a quiet classroom.

Although the questionnaire itself had sufficient explanation about the materials in it, however, some more information about the types of oral errors and methods of error correction were given to the students. The time devoted to completing the questionnaire by participants was enough. After the

students completed the questionnaire, they were collected, analyzed and prepared for producing results.

3. Result

The results obtained from the analyzing of this research illustrate that most of the participants' attitudes toward correction of oral errors are positive, in other words they think that correction of oral errors should accompanied while teaching.

The first question of first part (part A) deals with whether or not the errors should be corrected while speaking English. The question was written in the questionnaire in the form of, "*I want teachers correct me while making errors in conversation*".

Table.1 Part A, Question No.1

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	2	8	8	8
2	2	8	8	16
3	4	16	16	32
4	17	68	68	100
Total	25	100	100	

Based on the result of the table (Table 1) which is contain the first question of part A, 8 percent of the students selected choice 1, 8 percent selected 2, 16 percent selected 3, and 68 percent selected 4. So it can be concluded that most of the participants have propensity to the correction of oral errors by teacher and 68 percent of the students completely agree with this statement.

The second question of part A deals with the correction of all errors by teachers. The statement is in this form "*teachers should correct all the errors of students in speaking English*".

Table.2 Part A, Question No.2

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	5	20	20	20
2	5	20	20	40
3	5	20	20	60
4	10	40	40	100
Total	25	100	100	

By analyzing the results of the table 2 it was recognized that 40 percent of students completely agree with the correction of all errors, but some of the students (20 percent) disagreed with this kind of correction.

The last question of part A is about the correction of errors that are making block in speaking English, in the form of this statement "*teachers should correct only the errors that hinder communication*".

Table.3 Part A, Question No.3

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	13	52	52	52
2	8	32	32	84
3	2	8	8	92
4	2	8	8	100
Total	25	100	100	

Based on the results of table 3, which is the last question of the part A, 52 percent of students selected 1, 31 percent selected 2, 8 percent selected 3, 8 percent selected 4. Therefore, it is clear that 52 percent of students completely disagree with the correction of only errors that hinder communication.

The second section of questionnaire concerned with different types of errors which were asked the students to give their perception about the correction of them. The first type is *vocabulary*, and first question of this type (part B) is planned in this way: “*how often do the errors in vocabulary should be corrected*”?

Table.4 Part B, Question No.4

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	2	8	8	8
2	5	20	20	28
3	5	20	20	48
4	13	52	52	100
Total	25	100	100	

According to the table (Table 4), 8 percent of students chose 1, 28 percent chose 2, 44 percent chose 3, and 20 percent chose 4. It is obvious that most of the students (52 percent) wanted teacher to correct their vocabulary errors most of the time.

The second type is *grammar*. In this regard this question was asked the students. “*How often do the grammatical errors should be corrected*”?

Table.5 Part B, Question No.2

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	1	4	4	4
2	2	8	8	12
3	6	24	24	36
4	16	64	64	100
Total	25	100	100	

In the case of correction of grammatical errors, according to the table 5, 64 percent of students wanted teachers always correct the grammatical errors in speaking English.

The last type is pronunciation. Here as two above mentioned types, this question was asked the students to realize the students’ attitudes toward the correction of pronunciation errors. “*How often do the pronunciation errors should be corrected*”?

Table.6 Part B, Question No.3

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	2	8	8	8
2	1	4	4	12
3	7	28	28	40
4	15	60	60	100
Total	25	100	100	

According to table 6 which shows the results of third question of part B, 8 percent of students chose 1, 4 percent chose 2, 28 percent chose 3, and 60 percent chose 4. So it is clear that 60 percent of students wanted teachers to correct pronunciation errors most of the time. It can be concluded that the students have positive attitudes toward correction of these three types of errors.

The last section of questionnaire (part C) related to the different methods of oral error correction. In this study the aim was to contain those methods which were very important and influential. The first statement is in the form of “*teachers let the students correct vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation errors by themselves (self-correction)*”.

Table.7 Part C, Question No.1

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	1	4	4	4
2	3	12	12	16
3	6	24	24	40
4	15	60	60	100
Total	25	100	100	

Based on the table 7, 4 percent of students selected 1, 12 percent selected 2, 24 percent selected 3, and 60 percent selected 4. Therefore, 60 percent of students believe that the correction of errors by themselves (self-correction) is very good and most of them prefer self-correction.

The second question of part C is in the form of *"teachers permit the students correct different types of errors by their classmates (peer-correction)"*.

Table.8 Part C, Question No.2

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	13	52	52	52
2	5	20	20	72
3	4	16	16	88
4	3	12	12	100
Total	25	100	100	

According to the table 8, 52 percent of students chose 1, 20 percent chose 2, 16 percent chose 3, and 12 percent chose 4. Based on the findings of this table, it is clear that 52 percent students believe that peer-correction is not good and most of them don't prefer it as a useful method of oral error correction.

The last question of part C, and also this study, is about the teacher-correction in the form of *"teachers correct the students' errors immediately"*.

Table.9 Part C, Question No.3

Chosen items	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	4	16	16	16
2	3	12	12	28
3	7	28	28	56
4	11	44	44	100
Total	25	100	100	

According to the findings of this table (Table 9), 16 percent of students chose 1, 12 percent chose 2, 28 percent chose 3, and 44 percent chose 4. Therefore, based on table 9, 44 percent of students believe that the correction of oral errors – including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation errors- by teachers is very good and, unlike peer-correction, they have positive attitudes toward teacher-correction.

4. Conclusion

By collecting and analyzing the results of this study, some important and influential points acquired. In the first part (part A) of this research most of the participated students in this study agreed with the correction of oral errors by teachers, and they want teachers correct not only the communication hindrance errors, but also all of the errors that they making while speaking English In the classroom. Based on the second research questions (part B), students' attitudes toward the correction of different types of errors, especially grammatical and pronunciation errors were positive and they found these two parts more important than others. And, the results of last research questions (part C) deal with the correction of oral errors by using different methods. In this regard

the majority of students preferred the correction of oral errors by themselves (self-correction) and by their teachers. Also, most of the students disagreed with the correction of errors by their classmates (peer-correction).

Finally, by considering the results of this study and other similar studies and important of all by using EFL students' attitudes toward error correction, teachers can improve the teaching and learning processes in learning environment.

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THE REASONING TOWARDS USING DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IN EFL (ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE) EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

Dynamic assessment, as a leading strategy in today's teaching universe, has changed into one of the most influential trends in efl educational systems worldwide. Lots of scholars have conducted study projects to find out about the importance of using this strategy in teaching efl students. There have not been enough investigations done in iran to show the advantages of using this strategy in the educational and higher educational systems in iran. The present study is going to investigate about the importance of dynamic assessment (da) versus static assessment and present some reasoning why it should be taken seriously by our educational system. The study is a library study using the historical information about the issue and our goal is to emphasize on the need to establish a new trend to include this strategy in all efl teaching settings within our country.

Keywords: static assessment, dynamic assessment, strategy, teaching, efl students, reasoning

1- Introduction

The term *dynamic assessment* (DA), in a broad conceptualization sense, refers to an assessment, by an active teaching process, of a learner's perception, learning, thinking, and problem solving. This process is aimed at modifying an individual's cognitive functioning and observing subsequent changes in learning and problem-solving patterns within the testing situation. The goals thought of the DA are to: (a) assess the capacity of the learner to grasp the principle underlying an initial problem and to solve it, (b) assess the nature and amount of investment (teaching) that is required to teach a learner a given rule or principle, and (c) identify the specific deficient cognitive functions (i.e., systematic exploratory behavior) and non-intellective factors (i.e., need for mastery) that are responsible for failure in performance and how modifiable they are as a result of the teaching process. On the contrary, the term *static test* (ST) generally refers to a standardized testing procedure in which an examiner presents items to an examinee without any attempt to intervene to change, guide, or improve the learner's performance. On the whole, a static test usually has graduated levels of difficulty, with the tester merely recording and scoring the responses.

DA development has been motivated regarding the inadequacy of standardized tests to be administered in educational settings. The inadequacy of standardized tests can be summarized in the following points:

- (1) Static tests do not provide crucial information about learning processes, deficient cognitive functions that are responsible for learning difficulties and mediational strategies that facilitate learning.
- (2) The manifested low performance level of many learners, as revealed in ST, very frequently falls short of revealing their learning potential, especially of those identified as coming from disadvantaged social backgrounds, or as having some sort of learning difficulty. Many students fail in static tests because of lack of opportunities for learning experiences, cultural differences, specific learning difficulties, or traumatic life experiences.

(3) In many static tests learners are described mostly in relation to their relative position of their peer group, but they do not provide clear descriptions of the processes involved in learning and recommendations for prescriptive teaching and remedial learning strategies.

(4) Static tests do not relate to non-intellective factors that can influence individuals' cognitive performance, sometimes more than the "pure" cognitive factors.

In comparison with ST, DA is designed to provide accurate information about: (a) an individual's current learning ability and learning processes; (b) specific cognitive factors (i.e., impulsivity, planning behavior) responsible for problem-solving ability and academic success or failure; (c) efficient teaching strategies for the learner being studied; and (d) motivational, emotional, and personality factors that affect cognitive processes.

2- The Nature of Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic Assessment (DA) offers a conceptual framework for teaching and assessment according to which the goals of understanding individuals' abilities and promoting their development are not only complementary but are in fact dialectically integrated. More specifically, DA follows Vygotsky's proposal of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by offering learners external forms of mediation in order to help them perform beyond their current level of independent functioning. Lev Vygotsky's concept of a *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) is defined as the difference between a child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1981). In a DA context, the examiner mediates the rules and strategies for solving specific problems on an individual basis, and assesses the level of internalization (i.e., deep understanding) of these rules and strategies as well as their transfer value to other problems of increased level of complexity, novelty, and abstraction.

DA is meant to be a complement to standardized testing, not a substitute for it. It is presented as a broad approach, not as a particular test. Different criteria of change are used in DA: pre-to post-teaching gains, amount and type of teaching required, and the degree of transfer of learning. The choice to use change criteria to predict future cognitive performance (as well as predicted outcome of intervention programs) is based on the belief that measures of change are more closely related to teaching processes than they are to conventional measures of intelligence.

Clinical experience has shown that it is most useful to use DA when standardized tests result in low scores; when standardized tests hover around margins of adequacy in cognitive functioning; when there are serious discrepancies between a child's test scores and academic performance; when a child comes from a low socioeconomic or culturally or linguistically different background; or when a child shows some emotional disturbance, personality disorder, or learning disability.

3- Dynamic vs. Static Assessment

One important distinction in assessment is between static and dynamic assessment. In static assessment, the evaluator administers an assessment and the individual's performance on that assessment is determined by comparison to norms or set criteria. A static assessment assesses the skills and knowledge the individual has gained from his or her prior experiences. It does not assess the individual's ability to acquire skills and knowledge since that would have happened before the assessment was completed. Current commercially available assessment materials are static assessments. They generally are either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests.

Norm-referenced tests compare the test-taker's performance to the performance of individuals in the normative sample. A criterion referenced test, however, compares the test-taker's ability to a number of criteria assumed to have been acquired by the test taker at that age (e.g., linguistic forms, vocabulary, spelling skills, etc.). Norm-referenced tests are usually not valid for culturally and linguistically diverse children because the norming sample is not representative of the individual's background. Comparatively, criterion-referenced tests are very susceptible to the bias of the test developers since the test developers are the ones determining what skills and knowledge should be present by what age.

Dynamic assessment, in contrast to static assessment, looks at an individual's ability to acquire skills or knowledge during the evaluation. Clinical judgment is required to accurately administer a dynamic assessment because the evaluator is responsible for comparing the individual's performance on the assessment tasks with the performance of typically developing children from the same speech

community. In dynamic assessment, a skill is tested, then taught and then retested. With this procedure, you are giving the individual the chance to learn the skill or knowledge being tested. There are no currently available commercially published dynamic language assessments. However, research has demonstrated the usefulness of several dynamic assessment procedures, including fast mapping and non-word repetition tests, with less of the bias and validity issues that are common to static assessment (Dollaghan & Campbell, 1998).

4- Studies regarding DA

Since the early 1960s, a range of approaches to DA has been developed in different contexts such as Germany, Denmark, and the US. As noted by Haywood and Lidz (2007), the hallmark of the studies that fall under the umbrella of DA is active intervention provided by examiners during the test procedure and assessment of the examinees' response to intervention.

Antón (2003) found the utility of DA procedure to test language proficiency of advanced L2 learners. The DA procedure included mediation to observe what learners were able to do with the language while being exposed to dialogic teacher-learner interactions. The participants of the study involved five undergraduate learners majoring in Spanish at an urban US university. The results of the study also showed that the inclusion of a mediation-driven DA procedure in the placement test increased the test's ability to differentiate learner's writing and speaking skills and provided the learners with more accurate recommendations concerning their particular academic needs.

Ableeva (2008) reported on a study focusing primarily on the effects of DA on developing L2 French learners' listening comprehension in university-level in which participants achieved a better comprehension with mediator guidance. This revealed that learners' abilities were more developed than one would have expected in an unmediated condition. Lantolf and Poehner (2011) examined the implementation of DA in a combined fourth and fifth grade Spanish classroom. In this study, the classroom teacher used standardized mediation prompts to dynamically assess noun/adjective agreement in Spanish. They incorporated dynamic assessment into daily lessons without changing instructional objectives or curricular goals by teaching within the ZPD of learners to promote the development of grammatical structures in question in Spanish and found positive results in promoting the group's ZPD.

Shrestha and Coffin (2012) probed the value of tutor mediation in the context of academic writing development among undergraduate business studies learners in open and distance learning. The authors concluded that DA can help to identify and respond to the areas that learners needed the most support (in this study, managing information flow). However, the authors recognized that the study was limited to a particular sociocultural context in higher education (Open University) and their findings could not be generalized to other contexts.

Sadeghi and Khanahmadi (2011) investigated about the role of mediated learning experience in L2 grammar of Iranian EFL learners. Sixty EFL learners (30 male and 30 female) in two institutes in Iran were the participants of the study. The results showed that the type of assessment -based instruction or mediation (DA based versus NDA-based) made significant difference in the learning of grammar by Iranian EFL learners.

Pishgadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood (2011) examined the effectiveness of using a computerized dynamic reading comprehension test (CDRT) on Iranian EFL learners with a moderate level of proficiency. Findings showed that providing mediation in the form of hints increased significantly the learners' scores and consequently their reading comprehension. DA seemed to be a bigger help to weaker learners than stronger ones.

Naeini and Duvali (2012) studied improvements in English Language Training (ELT) university learners' reading comprehension performance by applying the mediations of a dynamic assessment approach to instruction and assessment. The descriptive and analytic analyses of the results revealed dramatic and measurable progress in participants' reading comprehension performance.

DA can be traced back to Vygotsky (1981, 1986) that stresses the social environment as a facilitator of the learning process (Karpov & Haywood 1998; Kozulin & Garb 2002). DA has gained momentum in research (e.g., Leung 2007; Poehner and van Compernelle 2011; Rea-Dickins 2006; Tzuriel 2011) and has also been applied to classroom-based assessment (Ableeva 2008; Ableeva & Lantolf 2011; Sternberg & Grigorenko 2002). In DA, teaching and testing are intertwined into a joint activity which targets the activation of the learners' cognitive and meta-cognitive processes (Ableeva & Lantolf 2011; Tzuriel 2011). Research (e.g., Gass 1997; Lidz 2002; Swain 2001) has shown that learners become co-

constructors of meaning in collective joint activities where knowledge and meaning can be negotiated and mediated. This negotiation is context-bound.

Mediation, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), contingency and scaffolding are cornerstones in DA. Vygotsky's theory of learning stresses mediation in that it can instruct learners in how to use their cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, for instance, in a problem-solving activity. Gibbons (2003), defines the ZPD as "the cognitive gap between what learners can do unaided and what they can do in collaboration with a more competent other". To this end, learners can only perform successfully in the presence of another participant, such as a teacher. Contingency consists of the "assistance required by the learner on the basis of moment-to-moment understanding" (Gibbons 2003) i.e., teachers modulate the kind of support based on the learners' reaction of and attitudes towards this support. Scaffolding, however, mediates the learners in acquiring new strategies to be able to finish the task independently (Kozulin & Garb 2002). An awareness of such strategies can be conducive to success in language learning and assessment. In this regard, Vandergrift et al. (2006) note that awareness of the listening strategies "can have positive influence on language learners' listening development", and by extension to accessing the test items easily. Such awareness is a cornerstone in assessing language learning dynamically. Adhering to DA both in teaching and testing depends on the teaching experience, experience with language, motivation and views of language and language learning.

The duality between dynamic and static assessment can in fact be blended together with the goal of forming a comprehensive view about the language learning ability of the test-takers. Though complementary they might appear, static and dynamic assessment have methodological differences. Since this type of assessment considers the learners' abilities as already matured i.e., fixed and "stable across time" (Leung 2007), in DA, such abilities are "malleable and flexible" (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). In addition, while scores in SA may be praised for their objectivity, they nevertheless fail to infer much about the learners' cognitive processes.

5- EFL teachers in Iran and their role in DA administration

Language learning processes in Iran consist of teachers doing most of the talking in class. Based on some interviews to teachers and cross-sectional visits to some EFL classes in Iran, it was found that most of the teachers' attention during classroom interaction was geared towards the treatment of students' grammatical errors even in tasks calling for greater attention to communication, discourse and sociolinguistic appropriateness. In Iranian EFL classes learners are studying to pass exams which are still informed by structuralism and behavioral views of language and language learning. This view of teaching of most of Iranian teachers is also reflected in testing. Teachers are not even trained in how to carry out classroom-based assessment such as DA, nor are they exposed to developing effective teaching strategies. This is the current situation now. They learn test design out of teaching experience.

In this regard, in most Iranian EFL classrooms the number of students exceeds the standards, and teachers still stick to the traditional way of assessing learners by one-shot multiple-choice or, essay-like exams; in fact teachers are not trained enough to practice DA in this particular EFL context. Also, according to the parameter of practicality, a method should be applicable in real situation; otherwise, the practice-theory relationship cannot be approached argues against the existing dichotomous distinction, perceived in applied linguistics, in which the teacher is spoon-fed with whatever knowledge and theory theorist produces (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Regarding the role of teachers in Iranian EFL classrooms, often the dominant pluralistic society of Iran influences the educational contexts of EFL, which leads to ignoring teachers' sense of plausibility (Prabhu, 1990) and dictating some pre-determined set of materials and methods to be implemented in classrooms. However, this restricted view of methodology is limited mostly to school classrooms; in other language institutes, teachers have more liberty of deciding on the methodology and materials. On the basis of the principle of possibility, authors encourage critical thinking of teachers and students to question the status quo that keeps them restrained on what to teach, how to teach, etc. This parameter, moreover, highlights the importance of the experience they bring to the classroom; their values and background including culture, education, language, race, and other variables, directly or indirectly, influence the content and character of classroom input and interaction (Benesch, 2001, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

As for Iranian EFL classrooms, the trend of critical thinking and giving teachers a voice in questioning the current methods of assessment and teaching is gradually gathering momentum, but compared to the global tempo, in Iranian EFL contexts, it is relatively restrained and slow. In fact, EFL teachers in Iran cannot cause a radical change in the existing traditional static testing, dominant in educational settings. Moreover, there is no tendency in educational settings to keep up with the pace of the paradigm shift in ELT, and replace the present system with DA or any other alternative assessment tools.

6- Implications

DA may be beneficial for learners who are mediated to activate their cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies to notice things. In classical standardized testing, however, such mediation is not offered. DA may be at stake when validity and reliability are concerned. These two notions have been largely addressed in dealing with psychometric standardized testing. However, DA researchers have not managed to find reasonable arguments for validity and reliability, except for Lantolf (2009) and Poehner (2011). Lantolf (2009) believed that "DA makes a strong claim with regard to predictive validity." DA concentrates on changing the learner to better levels of linguistic attainment. Since the use of effective dynamic instructions leads the test-takers to perform better in the future, proponents of DA (e.g., Lantolf & Poehner 2009) remark that this future success does in fact echo predictive validity.

This study addressed a need to examine and improve current assessments of language learning. It had theoretical, pedagogical and methodological implications which could be addressed for future research. First, in the theoretical implications, results of DA brought to light the fact that there should be an interface between language learning and language testing. This interface has been addressed in research (e.g., Alderson 2005; Bachman 1989; Bachman & Cohen 1998; Douglas & Selinker 1985). This link integrates instruction and assessment in class to help the learners meet their needs and reach the stage where they can perform independently. DA is not an alternative to classroom assessment, nor can it replace other types of assessment. Rather, it is integrated with classroom instructions to help test-takers overcome their testing difficulties by, for instance, developing their cognitive and meta-cognitive processes. The findings of DA interactions can be considered additional contributions to the link between assessment and learning.

Second, the pedagogical implications addressed the different steps through which teaching and testing can be improved. In this regard, assessing the learners in a progressive dynamic test can help locate the areas of weaknesses in the language program or in the learners' cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. In addition, grabbing the test-takers' attention to notice things and praising them to overcome their difficulties are in fact at the heart of any learning process. Research on DA and learning in general highlights this endeavor. Despite the threats to validity and reliability of the test, assessing learners in a dynamic way in Iran may be practical and useful given the tremendous language problems these learners have. In terms of authenticity, DA echoes the authentic tasks and activities that the learners are supposed to meet in everyday life, not like psychometric standardized tests. In short, implementing DA has the goal of changing the learners' behavior in their perception of the different courses undertaken at the university level in Iran.

Third, the methodological implications called for the importance of using qualitative (interaction in the dynamic test and interview) and quantitative instruments (test scores). Like other studies (Buck 1994), the use of qualitative and quantitative methods played a crucial role in assessment. The feedback teachers suggested about the nature of problems has immediate implications for teaching as well as for testing. In the light of this feedback, the teachers can address and remedy these shortcomings in teaching, and, therefore, in testing.

7- Conclusion

Dominating the field of language testing, static assessment used to determine whether some pre-determined achievement level had been reached. Traditional static assessment was limited because it did not directly aim to stimulate learners into becoming independent knowledge constructors and problem solvers. Unlike static assessment, DA gives the language teacher a chance to appropriately gauge the students' understanding and ability level and how to improve the students' level development. To put it in another way, by engaging in DA activity, teachers may be able to challenge individuals to reach higher levels of functioning (Poehner, 2005, cited in Naeini and Duvail, 2012). As a matter of fact DA with its monistic view toward teaching and testing not only assesses the learners'

abilities but also provides them with opportunities for learning and development. This in turn has some positive results both for teachers and learners; therefore, the implications can be multifold. Mixing assessment and instruction can be beneficial for EFL learners in learning. Process-oriented dynamic assessment can improve the learning of EFL learners. The researchers believe that adopting DA in EFL classes leads to more involvement of learners in the process of learning. It also increases learners' motivation and reduces the anxiety of taking test. On the other hand, teachers can exploit DA to gauge the learners' understanding and awareness and diagnose the areas that learners need more help. Teachers may be able to challenge learners to reach higher levels of functioning by engaging in DA. The current study may offer suggestions to the EFL test developers as well as those involved in educational administrations. EFL teachers, syllabus designers, curriculum planner, and materials developers and also the learners interested in learning EFL can take advantage of the study.

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS (A CASE STUDY: GENERAL ENGLISH IN AHAR AZAD UNIVERSITY)

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ABSTRACT

Sociolinguistics and language education are trying to bring together the most authoritative voices in the field to explore the intersections of language and education in contexts around the world. At a time of unprecedented population mobility and cross-cultural contact and the realization of global village, policy-makers and educators are searching for ways to adapt 20th century assumptions about the static nature of constructs such as language, culture, power, identity and communication to the dynamic and shifting realities of 21st century schools and communities. The application of sociolinguistic principles and their proper implementation should be the concern of every professional person who has any control over what goes on inside a classroom, particularly the teacher, who has the most regular, if not the closest contact with the student and who acts as a coordinating agent for the social acts being carried out within the classroom. In college classes, the teacher should consider him-herself a model not of "correct" English or of the "prestige dialect", but of linguistic versatility. The researcher intends to investigate English textbooks taught in Iranian universities in order to find out strong points and weak points of the textbooks chosen and make suggestions to improve efficiency of textbooks, and help university teachers to improve present situation in teaching English in Iranian universities, regarding the principles of sociolinguistics.

Keywords: *sociolinguistics, education, textbooks, Iranian universities*

1- Introduction

Teaching and learning a foreign language is one of the most important challenges of academics in today's world. Especially in non-English-speaking world it is undeniable during academic studies. Since English is an international language in almost all fields, linguists, sociologists, psychologists, computer experts, and ... are trying to help learners to learn it properly and devise suitable methods for university teachers to teach it. The researcher intends to investigate English textbooks taught in Iranian universities in order to find out strong points and weak-points of the textbooks chosen and make suggestions to improve efficiency of textbooks, and help university teachers to improve present situation in teaching English in Iranian universities, regarding the principles of sociolinguistics.

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) suggest that textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting action research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can also be a valuable component of teacher training programs for it serves the dual purpose of making student/teachers aware of important features to look for in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language instruction materials.

The researcher thinks that most of graduates in Iran do not have enough ability to express themselves in a foreign language (namely English) and they do not have enough knowledge to use their English properly, while it is supposed that they have been trained in different classes to learn enough of English language. Besides other factors such as lack of interest and motivation, improper tutoring classes, having contacts with only non-native English teachers, ..., they cannot express their ideas in a foreign language (English) because they have not been learning the language but they have only learnt about language and they have almost all the time been exposed to grammatical investigations of the target language in abstract atmospheres. An exaggerated idea about this fact is that maybe they know much more than they do need in grammar and instead they do not know the language itself.

Of course, these days grammar is not as much blamed as in some previous decades and it still has revived some parts of its previous importance, but the fact to be considered here is that grammar is not all the language. Besides learning the grammar of the target language, which is one of the important parts of the language learning process, Iranian students at universities should know that they should consider the social context of materials presented for them during their studies at universities in order to achieve their goals in a foreign language learning class.

A discussion on textbooks is inevitable in light of the arguments advocating the infusion of culture in EFL education. The significance of textbooks is seen in the many roles textbooks play in facilitating the foreign language teaching and learning process in the classroom. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the textbook "can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, and an ideology." Hence, the textbook can be a major source of cultural elements besides providing linguistic and topical contents which necessarily reflect the ideology inherent in the EFL context of a particular circle. Textbooks across the world are of different cultural orientations; whether they are based on source cultures, target culture or international target cultures. Source cultures refer to learners „own culture, target culture is the culture in which the target language is used as a first language while international target cultures refer to various cultures in English, or non-English-speaking countries which use English as an international language (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999).

2- Review of related literature

Investigations about language teaching/learning still continue and sociolinguistics is one of important branches of language study. It seems as if it is going to become a more prevalent phenomenon in the field of language teaching/learning process. This is due to the fact that communicative language teaching/learning is supposed to achieve more accomplishments in today's EFL classes. As human being is a social creature, everyone should know the communication properties of different social situations in order to convey his/her intended meaning. So besides learning the structure and grammatical characteristics of a foreign language, the learner ought to find the social relationships of the interlocutors in order to convey the intended meaning. And as Wardhaugh (1993) states: "Sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationship between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and how languages function in communication".

According to Gardner & Lambert 1972, "instrumental orientation" refers to a positive inclination toward a language for pragmatic reasons, such as obtaining a job or higher education opportunity; and "integrative orientation" refers to a favorable inclination toward a language in order to become a valued member of a given community. "Integrativeness" thus implies not only an interest in a language, but also an open attitude toward another cultural group; in the extreme, it suggests emotional identification with the community of the target language (Gardner 2001). Although such a socio-cultural model is often criticized as being too simplistic to explain L2 learning motivation (Dornyei 2001), it offers a macro perspective that allows researchers to characterize the perceptions of a community as a whole.

Recent linguistic anthropological approaches (e.g. Woolar 1989, Rampton 1995b, Urciuoli 1996, Zentella 1997, Bailey 2002) have continued to build on this foundation, particularly in investigations of code-switching, which is regarded as "systematic, skilled, and socially meaningful" use of two or more codes (Woolard 2004:74)

Halliday and Hasan (1990) have claimed that sometimes we are misled simply because of the way we have referred to something; we tend to behave as if the possibility of using the same word implies complete identity between the referents. For example, we go shopping in Macy's, and we go shopping in the market in Madras. Simply because we have used the words 'go shopping' for both

types of events, we might be misled into behaving the two events are the same type of thing; that, in fact, they contain the same values. The Macy's salesman would be at least surprised, if not affronted if, at his telling to you the price of an object, you respond with, "Well, ok, that's fine; but now tell me the real price." This is precisely the kind of response you are expected to offer at the first telling of the price in a market shop in most parts of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Consequently, so as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances. So a language learner should try to get communicative competence in foreign language being learnt. Communicative competence is not possibly achieved without cultural understanding as it is the core of language acquisition. This is demonstrated in the fact that when a learner decides to learn a language, such as German, the learner is not only learning the linguistics of German but everything else German and Germany. Therefore, learning the linguistics of a language involves assimilating cultural associations and its entire cultural load. A learner then avoids all the pitfalls of cultural misunderstanding or ignorance which leads to the breakdown of communication. In addition to communication, learners who are said to have acquired a language are those who are able to align themselves with the culture of the target language. They can also think in the target language thus enabling them to identify with the language by capturing the essence of the language. (Tang, 1999)

Gumperz (1972) explains communicative competence as follows: "Whereas linguistic competence covers the speaker's ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, communicative competence describes his ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him, forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behavior in specific encounters."

As the literature on language socialization amply demonstrates (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986a, 1986b, Garrett & Baquedano- López 2002), linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge are acquired simultaneously and are inextricably bound up with one another; thus language socialization is in large part a matter of the child's or novice's acquiring the particular configuration of historically, socially, and culturally specific "dispositions" that, taken collectively and as an integrated whole, constitute his or her habits.

3- Research questions

What is the most prominent cultural dimension portrayed in English Language textbooks in Iran: the aesthetic, sociological, semantic or the pragmatic (sociolinguistic)?

How can we manipulate the textbooks to include the optimal materials for EFL students' cultural empowerment in Iran?

4- Methodology

The researcher intends to find out what the scholars can devise as remedial courses, where the present textbooks are thought to be improper or misleading the students, to fill the gap and how they can help the students not get frustrated by non-discrete phenomenon of grammatical exposure to the target language. In this way the field of sociolinguistics can be very helpful and will give the guidelines needed to overcome problems in foreign language materials designing.

The materials presented to the students in Iranian universities surely include some parts which are completely conducive to learn English properly. These materials are surely from among those which are socio-linguistically analyzed and accepted by the sociolinguistics as valid sources to rely on in English language teaching environments. The scholars should reinforce the use of these materials in teaching English classes and present their guidelines to exclude the unnecessary and useless parts of the materials presented to the students and give any useful suggestions to prepare new and effective materials which help the process of language learning.

A specific and operational definition of culture which outlines four dimensions or senses of culture; the aesthetic, sociological, semantic and the pragmatic posited by Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990) will be adapted to be used to facilitate the investigation. These aspects are representative of the myriad dimensions of culture as well as providing concrete substance to the abstractness of culture. It should be mentioned here that the analysis of cultural component in this study does not include the prescribed literary texts integrated into the ESL syllabus by the Ministry of Education.

It should be mentioned that although this framework was developed for an EFL context, it is found to be compatible to Iranian EFL context which resembles EFL in the psychological distance of L2 in the majority of learners. It is also appropriate as a framework for studies on non-native speakers.

Four meanings of "culture": Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990)

The Aesthetic Sense: Culture with a capital C: the media, the cinema, music (whether serious or popular, literature- the study of which used often to be one of the main reasons for language teaching. Many of these forms of culture are at the same time sources of information on culture in our second sense.

The Sociological Sense: Culture with a small c: the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institution.

The Semantic Sense: The conceptual system embodied in the language, conditioning all our perceptions and our thought processes, time and space relations, emotional states, colors.

The Pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) Sense: The background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication:

- ▶ The ability to use appropriate exponents of the various communicative functions
- ▶ The ability to conform to norms of politeness, where different from the learners' culture, including taboo avoidance
- ▶ Awareness of conventions governing interpersonal relations- questions of status, obligation, license, where different from the learners' culture
- ▶ Familiarity with the main rhetorical conventions in different written genres, e.g. different types of letters and messages, form-filling, advertisements

5- Procedure

Examination of the four cultural dimensions adapted from Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990) will be carried out on the textbook sample. The written text in the textbooks will be scrutinized looking out for language discourse which suggests and conforms to the cultural dimensions in the conceptual framework. Text analysis will be carried out drawing attention to:

- Informative or descriptive text material
- Texts presenting foreign attitudes and opinions
- Human-interest texts (including dialogues), authentic or fictitious, with details of everyday life
- Contextualized practice activities, writing tasks
- Lexis- particularly idioms – and unfamiliar collocations, which involve alien concepts
- The exponents of the communicative function

(Adapted from Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990))

Cultural information can be effectively communicated through this particular analysis thus it will be adopted and adapted to facilitate the study.

6- Data Analysis

The book introduced as the main source to teach General English Course for all BA students in Ahar Azad University is "**Active Skills for Reading, Book 1**", by Neil J. Anderson (2006) and the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is: ISBN-13: 978-1424001866 ISBN-10: 1424001862 Edition: 2nd.

As it can be observed, the book above cannot be fully covered within the predetermined time allotted for General English Course because there are at most 16*3 hours (16 weeks and 3 hours per week). Also there are some unrelated issues posed within the book. For example, students are presented with a text on unusual sports in a chapter of this book and neither they are not interested nor they are able to understand the expressions used in that lesson. There are many contradictory issues posed by the book regarding the local Iranian culture and if some minor changes are applied in order to localize the text, the originality of the text would be violated.

There is a cultural norm in Iranian context regarding the relationship between boys and girls and it is not observed in this source because it considers the context globally and not incorporated locally to suit a special culture. Thus, in order to make it compatible with what norms are acceptable in Iranian culture, the book should be modified by the text writers or at least the lecturers to observe the limitations imposed by the dominant culture in Iran.

Another point to make is the inclusion of some national figures in the book that belong to western countries and they are unfavorable for the authorities and people in Iran, although they have been

adored in the book because of the original writer's viewpoints. Thus, these names should be omitted or at least altered by some other politicians for example to suit the setting better. Some people are also valued highly although they are not considered so in Iranian context regarding the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), and this would need some modifications to make the book more useful.

The textbook lacks cohesion in some parts and there are many repetitions of unnecessary information. Some items have been introduced and reintroduced several times. And as it has been pointed out earlier the extent of the time available for this course does not let the teachers to present the whole book to university students and since the book is composed of repeated items, it would be very difficult for universities to choose proper sections of the book to work on in class or leave out to students to cover by themselves.

7- Implication

It is observed that the cultural focus or content of the textbooks is local culture or "localized culture" made up of the cultures of the various ethnic groups. In line with this, the cultural orientation of textbooks is based on the source cultures in which there is a direct and explicit inclusion of local culture such as found in the passages explaining about local festivals and dances. There is also an attempt to introduce intercultural behavior and communication. No instances of comparison with western or target language culture are found. In this respect the EFL context in Iran is extended to English as an international language (EIL) context as it is used to describe local culture and values to other global speakers of English. In conclusion, hence the inclusion of culture is beneficial to language proficiency. Therefore the Iranian ELT ideology on culture is successfully translated into the cultural occurrences in the textbooks which will be investigated in this study.

8- Limitations

The scope of the study is only confined to the analysis of written text. It does not consider illustrations and other visuals, tape scripts of listening texts, sound recordings, realia and pseudo-realial of all sorts. Besides that, the book introduced is one of the materials presented as the source for one of the universities in Iran and it would be impossible to generalize the findings in this study for all universities in Iran.

9- Discussion and conclusion

The goal to undergo this research is to investigate the strong points and weak points of the materials presented to the university students and reinforce the inclusion of the materials which are conducive to learning/teaching the foreign language. For this reason the researcher wants to review the materials presented to the students and the materials which are not presented to the students, but are sought to have good effect on the students' learning, based on sociolinguistics.

Clearly, ESL and EFL educators support the inclusion of a cultural component in the teaching of English. Therefore the issue now is not whether to include but what aspects of culture to include, what role culture should play and more importantly how culture should be taught in the teaching of English as a second language

This research may lead the scholars to have more investigations on the issue. Also material-writers should take into consideration that students in Iranian Universities are in need of more socio-linguistics-based materials in order to learn more of English and communicate the target language more easily.

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THE STUDY OF USING POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN REQUEST BY IRANIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

People in different situation in order to decrease imposition upon hearers use some politeness strategies (Kitao, 1987). This study aimed at investigating differences in using different politeness strategies in request between Iranian male and female students in different situations. The subjects of the study were 64 EFL students of Rasht Azad University 32 male and 32 female with an age range between 20 to 26. The participants were given a discourse completion test (DCT) designed by Tanaka and Kawade (1982). The data obtained through this test were analyzed by the valid statistical procedures. The statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the two genders with regard to the type of politeness strategies in request speech act except in informal friendly situation that males were more polite than females and the differences in using politeness strategies in request in this situation was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The findings of this study provide some evidences for the relationship between the learners gender and type and frequency choice of politeness strategies. Based on the result of the present study, the material developers and teachers are recommended to note that male and female students use almost the same types of politeness strategies in request speech acts except in informal friendly situation.

Key words: politeness strategies, situation, university students

1. Introduction

One issue that attracted sociolinguists' attention is conversation analysis. Through this analysis researchers can understand intended meaning of interlocutors. Searle (1979) and Austin (1962) categorized speech acts into various types with a special rule for each one. And Grice (1964) suggested that conversation has four maxims that are Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner. Lakoff (1973) changed Grice's maxims into two and called them as: Be clear and Be polite. Since he believe that for pragmatic competence these two items are enough.

Recently investigation on politeness strategies was attracted my sociolinguists which seems to be a controversial topic among sociolinguists. "In different languages people use different strategies for one speech act for example, request which is one from of speech act has different forms in different languages. One form may be considered as a politeness form in one language but in another language is less polite. Kitao (1987) illustrated that politeness in request is a communication strategy use by speaker to decrease Imposition upon the hearer to maintain good relationship. There are many factors that play roles in using of different politeness strategies in request from which are factors such as social statues, familiarity and gender. Tanaka & Kawade (1982) indicated that using strategies depends on psychological and social relationships between speaker and hearer. Since I supposed in Iran especially Iranian university students use same politeness strategies in different situations, I was eager to know whether I can support my hypothesis or not. To be more specific I asked whether there is any difference in using politeness strategies in request between male and female university students or not? In other to answer this question I asked some university students through distributing questionnaire in which consist of four situations and each with six kinds of strategies. I asked them to mark one that they use in each situation.

2. Review of the literature

During years there have been many researches about politeness in order to recognize that weather different people in different situations were same politeness strategies or not. According to Watts et al. (1992) there has been no consensus among researches as to what politeness is all about. Leech (1983) has categorized politeness principle into several maxims and each one goes in pairs such as agreement, disagreement, praise and antipathy and sympathy which can be evaluated with respect to speaker and hearer. But others like Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that politeness is based on notion of face, threatening acts which threaten another person's face so person should be careful about such acts that may threaten other's face.

Reiter (2000) has indicated in their article a precise definition and division of politeness which has been done by Brown & Levinson (1987). Face has two components: positive face and negative one. Positive is a way that person wants to be other and to be behaved as a friend and also speaker builds another positive face when he lets people understand that he enjoys their company or is interested in their well-being. On the other side is negative face when someone desires not to be imposed in by other people. For example if someone wants to lend a book in order to neutralize the negative face effect, he adds *would* and *could* at the beginning of a sentence and by using such strategies the distance between speaker and hearer is minimized. Some other researchers pay more attention to culture.

In order to make more clear and understandable the result of any new research, it is rationale to indicate some researches. By this I mean like to reiterate some research results. Lin (in press) has done a research about using politeness strategies. He used some data from a role-played dialogue involving a request in the southern Bantu language Zulu. Speakers are first located culturally. Then sequence of verbal utterances and integration of verbal and non-verbal channels of communication is examined. It is concluded that status plays a crucial role in negotiating interactions in Zulu and that posture, gesture and gaze contribute to making status. Bell (1998) has done a study and examined the production of three speech acts by small group of Korean learners of English at a high school. In comprising disagreements, request and suggestion it was found that although the students demonstrate the ability to increase the level of politeness use, their disagreements tended to be direct and unmitigated. So it is suggested that status and in particular age as a component of status is an important factor influenced the students' choices regarding the perceived level of appropriate politeness.

A study done in Turkey by Carrell & Konneker (1981) investigated the discourse strategies used by native speakers of Turkish in using speech acts of correction and disagreement to status-unequal interlocutors. The focus of study was on: (1) the politeness marker used for softening the impact in face threatening speech situations and (2) the relationship between social status, power and context and language use. Subjects were 80 individuals aged 19-22. Data were collected and analyzed statistically for pattern of positive and negative politeness markers: direct and indirect. The situation included interactions between student and professor and between corporate executive and assistant. Results showed that there is preference for negative pattern over positive pattern across situations although positive pattern strategies were used more in classroom situation than in work place.

Seglin & Coleman (2002) did a study to examine the marked cross-cultural differences in the degree of requisite directness between the Greek native speakers (GNSS) and the British English native speakers (ENSS) in telephone business encounters. The findings of the study indicate that there are marked cross cultural differences in the strategy selection and degree of directness employed between the GNSS and the ENSS as far as their requesting strategies are concerned, and reveal the tendency on the part of the Greek native speakers to employ greater directness in their requisite production more than ENSS.

Lin (2009) contrasted the use of query preparatory modals in conventionally indirect requests produced by native speakers of English (NS-ES), native speakers of Chinese (NS-CS), and Chinese learners of English-as-a-foreign language (EFLs). A total of 3600 expressions of request were extracted from 180 EFL using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The findings of the study showed that first, although the same range and types of modals are used in Chinese and English, the preference orders and distributions of the sub-strategies vary cross-culturally, which results in inter-language deviations from what is observed in DCT-elicited.

Al-Marrani & Azimah, (2010) conducted a study to investigate the linguistic strategies employed by monolingual native speakers (NSs) of Yemeni Arabic in making requests. The findings show that

there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of directness in male-male interactions. Male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the male-male interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face'. This is not indicating the appropriateness of directness in 'close' social distance relationships but probably the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations. The use of direct strategy (imperative) by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interactions could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors. Also it was found that there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of indirectness in male-female interactions. The use of indirect strategy by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-female interaction Result do not support that the traditional assumption that directness and politeness are incompatible. This study followed Taka and Kawade (1982) distance politeness hypothesis, according to this hypothesis social and psychological distances play an important role in selecting strategies, this hypothesis indicates that when the distance between two persons is close they use less politeness strategies and those that are less close and more formal use more politeness strategies so in formal and unfriendly situation two persons were socially and psychologically very distant but in informal and unfriendly situation the distance is so great. Therefore, this study was going to compare using politeness strategies in request used by male and female university students. In this regard, the following research hypothesis were posed.

1. There is no difference in using politeness strategies between male and female university students at formal and unfriendly situations (first situation).
2. There is no difference between female and male in using politeness strategies in formal and friendly situations (second situation).
3. There is no difference in using politeness strategies between male and female university students at informal and unfriendly situation (third situation).
4. There is no difference in using politeness strategies between male and female university students at informal and friendly situation (forth situation).

3. Method

3.1. Subjects

The participants of study were selected from among university students through stratified random sampling. The subjects of the study were 64 non-EFL students of Rasht Azad University 32 male and 32 female with an age range between 20 to 26. Students were selected from non-English courses in order to nullify the interference of foreign language learned strategies.

3.2. Instrument and procedure

For data gathering, a multiple choice form of questionnaire designed by Tanaka and Kawade (1982) selected. Then it was translated to Persian and in order to make it more valid two native Persian professors asked to adjust whether they use such politeness strategies in their normal communication or not. The questionnaire consists of four situations and each situation has six strategies that student must select one that they really use in given situation. These four situations include formal and unfriendly situation in which students must ask a distinguished professor for something. And the second situation includes formal and friendly situation in which students have to ask a young professor that they have good relationship with him for paper. The third situation was on informal and unfriendly situation in which student must ask their neighbor for a pen they have not good relationship with him. And the last situation in which they had to ask their friend for a pen which is informed and friendly situation.

3.3. Data analysis

To determine difference between male and female in the use of politeness strategies in four situations, data were analyzed based on Distance politeness hypothesis by Taka and Kawade (1982). The frequency of using each strategy in different situations was calculated and to find differences chi-square formula was utilized.

4. Results and discussion

The first hypothesis indicates that whether there is any difference in using politeness strategies in request between male and female university students at formal and unfriendly situation.

In first situation in which requesters socially and psychologically felt more distance among themselves and a distinguished professor so more politeness strategies were used. As it was mentioned before, according to hypothesis the more psychologically and socially distance between learners the more politeness strategies can be used (Suk, 1991). Frequency table (table 1) showed that 87% of male and 96% female students used more politeness strategies that are I'd appreciate and would you? And running chi-square formula revealed that there is no difference in using politeness strategies between male and female university students ($.00 < .05$) therefore, first hypothesis was confirmed.

Table.1. Frequency Table

Situation 1		male		female	
		F	N	F	N
1	I want you to lend me an umbrella.	-	0	-	0
2	Would you lend me an umbrella?	1	3.7%	4	12.5%
3	Lend me an umbrella.	-	0	-	0
4	I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.	30	92.3%	28	87.5%
5	Can you lend me an umbrella.	1	3.7%	-	0
6	Lend me an umbrella, will you?	-	0	-	0
		32		32	

Table.2 Chi-square Table

χ^2	df
0.06	2

The second situation that investigates whether female and male students used same politeness strategies in formal and friendly situations or not that is they asked for an umbrella their neighbor whom they dislike. According to distance - hypothesis when two persons' relationship are psychologically distant, more politeness will be used. Strategies would you..... and I'd appreciateused by female and male students 60% and 63% respectively and also chi- square used in order to determine the differences. The results showed that there is no difference between female and male in using politeness strategies in the second situation ($.06 > 0.05$). Therefore, first hypothesis was not rejected.

Table.3 Frequency Table

Situation 2		male		female	
		N	F	N	F
1	I want you to lend me an umbrella.	5	15.7%	4	12%
2	Would you lend me an umbrella?	12	36.3%	13	39%
3	Lend me an umbrella.	0	-	-	0
4	I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.	11	34%	12	36.3%
5	Can you lend me an umbrella.	3	10%	3	10%
6	Lend me an umbrella, will you?	1	3.3%	1	3.3%
total		32		32	

Table.4 Chi-square Table

χ^2	df
0.07	2

The third situation in which the requester and requestee relationship is psychologically close but socially distance that is in formal and unfriendly . According to distance- Hypothesis psychological variable is more important than social variables (Suk, 1999). It means that when two people feel that they are psychologically close used more politeness strategies than socially close. So female and male

used 83% and 71% respectively of politeness strategies that showed some differences but these differences were not meaningful. Also running chi- square showed no significant differences in using this strategy in this situation ($0.07 > 0.05$). Therefore, third null hypothesis can't be rejected.

Table.5 Frequency Table

Situation 3		male		female	
		N	F	N	F
1	I want you to lend me an umbrella.	2	7%	4	12%
2	Would you lend me an umbrella?	10	31.3%	10	33%
3	Lend me an umbrella.	0	-	-	0
4	I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.	13	40%	16	50.3%
5	Can you lend me an umbrella.	5	15%	1	3.3%
6	Lend me an umbrella, will you?	2	7%	1	3.3%
total		32		32	

Table.6 Chi-square Table

χ^2	df
.07	2

The forth situation in which requester and requestee relationship is psychologically and socially very close. Since Distance-Hypothesis predicts that the closer relationship the less polite strategies will be used (Suk, 1999). The frequency table (table 7) showed that in such a situation 10% of male students and 6% of female ones used more politeness strategies. On the other hand 70% of male and 86% of female use imperative sentences to ask their friends for something, although female used more imperative than male ones it shows that female students especially girls are very close to each other than boys and boys used some formal strategies in such strategies than girls. The X^2 formula revealed that there is a significant difference between males and females in using politeness strategies ($0.00 < 0.05$) it mean that null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table.7 Frequency Table

Situation 4		male		female	
		N	F	N	F
1	I want you to lend me an umbrella.	5	14.8%	3	9.3%
2	Would you lend me an umbrella?	0	0	0	0
3	Lend me an umbrella.	15	46.8%	18	56.4%
4	I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.	0	0	0	0
5	Can you lend me an umbrella.	2	6.8%	1	3.6%
6	Lend me an umbrella, will you?	10	33.2%	10	30.6%
total		32		32	

Table.2 Chi-square Table

χ^2	df
.07	2

5. Conclusion

The main focus of this paper has been to recognize whether female and male Iranian University students use same politeness strategies in request in different situations or not. The findings of the present study revealed that among four different situations just in one situation, that is informal and friendly situation, female used more politeness strategies in request than male. However in other three situations no statistical differences were observed. The result of the study is in line with findings of Al-Marrani & Azimah, (2010) it was found that there was a general trend in Yemeni

Arabic for higher levels of indirectness in male-female interactions but higher levels of directness in male-male interactions in imperative strategies. These differences are because of cultural preferences in Iranian societies, that is girls in intimate situations are less formal than boys to show their closeness and solidarity, and these differences do not derive from language itself but from learners' schemata and background built in the society.

This study implies that politeness is a social and cultural concept and it is not merely relevant to linguistics issues. These findings can add teachers' sociocultural knowledge to teach learners about such pieces of pragmatic information and preclude probable serious misunderstanding in interaction. In addition, to be more authentic, students can record subjects' responses to some stimulation and use camera observation for more detailed analysis of situations made in planned role play. The study has some weak points including generalizability of the results of this research, since questionnaire which is in multiple choice form was used and it cannot predict abilities of students exactly.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Please read each situation carefully and circle only one which you would be most likely to use in a given situation.

1. It's raining heavily. You are talking with a distinguished professor about your academic problems. After the talk, you what to borrow an umbrella from him

Which request form of the followings would you like to use?

- a. I want you to lend me an umbrella.
- b. Would you lend me an umbrella?
- c. Lend me an umbrella.
- d. I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.
- e. Can you lend me an umbrella?
- f. Lend me an umbrella, will you?

Situation2)

It's raining heavily. You want to borrow an umbrella from a neighbor in his forties. But you don't like him.

Which request form of the followings would you like to use?

- a. I want you to lend me an umbrella.
- b. Would you lend me an umbrella?
- c. Lend me an umbrella.
- d. I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.

- e. Can you lend me an umbrella.
- f. Lend me an umbrella, will you?

Situation3:

It's raining heavily. You are talking with a young, sociable professor about your academic problems. After the talk, you want to borrow an umbrella from him because you know that he has two umbrellas in his office.

Which request form of the followings would you like to use?

- a. I want you to lend me an umbrella.
- b. Would you lend me an umbrella?
- c. Lend me an umbrella.
- d. I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.
- e. Can you lend me an umbrella.
- f. Lend me an umbrella, will you?

Situation4:

It's raining heavily. You want to borrow an umbrella from Brown. He is an old friend of yours.

Which request form of the followings would you like to use?

- a. I want you to lend me an umbrella.
- b. Would you lend me an umbrella?
- c. Lend me an umbrella.
- d. I would appreciate it if you could lend me an umbrella.
- e. Can you lend me an umbrella?
- f. Lend me an umbrella, will you?

THE COMPARISON OF COMPUTER ASSISTED TEACHING AND TRADITIONAL EXPLICIT METHOD IN LEARNING/TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

Learning and teaching vocabulary has gained a considerable attention in the last decades. The advent of computer technology, on the other hand, has opened new windows to learning and teaching practices. The purpose of this study is to incorporate computer technology to teaching vocabulary practices by providing online contextualization of vocabulary. The participants of the study were 60 male EFL learners, aged about 15, from Zanjan city who were in two groups; traditional explicit group and technologically contextualized group. The data came from final post-test questions, open-ended questionnaire and subsequent informal interview with the students about their attitude toward the teaching practices. The data was analyzed using independent and paired sample t-test for quantitative data and systematic comparative analysis for qualitative data. The analysis of the results revealed that while both of the groups had improved significantly the technologically contextualized group could not outperform the traditional group. Students' attitude, however, toward the classroom activities was different in the groups. Pedagogical implications are presented

Key words: Vocabulary, Context, CALL, TEFL.

1. Introduction

More than three decades ago, Meara (1980) called for more research on the nature of vocabulary acquisition; since then, there has been a considerable amount of literature devoted to the role of vocabulary in second and foreign language learning and how vocabulary itself can and should be taught. (Bell, 2009; Churchill, 2008; Laufer, 1998; Laufer and Paribakht, 1998; Schmitt, 1998; Webb, 2008; Zheng, 2009). On the other hand, the so-called computer era has revolutionized most of the fields of human endeavor including ELT. This revolution in ELT has another noticeable aspect; the computer facilities and what they can offer to ELT is constantly changing. These changes have their repercussions in ELT and there is a need for revising previous findings and moving toward new theories. This study tried to compare two ways of doing vocabulary instruction; the traditional explicit one which has so far been with us (and most probably will continue to be) and an innovative one which tries to open new windows to contextualization of our vocabulary teaching practices and effective teaching of it through computer. Since technology is improving in almost daily bases, it is indispensable to interpret any claim in the context of the technology of that very particular day in which the claim is made. The purpose of this study is to determine and compare learning vocabulary through Computer Assisted Teaching (CAT) and learning it via traditional method. We will specifically try:

1. To determine the impact of computer assisted teaching on vocabulary learning.
2. To determine the impact of traditional explicit teaching on vocabulary learning.
3. To determine students' attitude toward two different vocabulary teaching strategy.

The secondary purpose of this study is to discuss the pedagogical implication of the findings of the study in the light of new developments in the views toward SLA and TEFL. That is, the implications

for curriculum design; teacher and student roles as well as testing vocabulary are discussed. So the research hypotheses were as follows:

H01: There is no effect of explicit traditional teaching of vocabulary on first grade high school students' vocabulary achievement.

H02: There is no effect of technologically contextualized teaching of vocabulary on first grade high school students' vocabulary achievement.

H03: There is no difference between the performances of the group taught by technologically contextualized vocabulary and the group taught by using traditional explicit method.

H04: There is no difference of attitude among first grade high school students toward explicit traditional teaching of vocabulary and technologically contextualized teaching of vocabulary.

2. Vocabulary knowledge and its importance

What does the knowledge of the vocabulary of a language involve? What is the role of this knowledge? Paribakht and Wesche (1993) created a five stage Vocabulary Knowledge Scale. Their scale starts from no knowledge of vocabulary to a native like mastery of them:

Stage 1: The word is not familiar at all.

Stage 2: The word is familiar but the meaning is not known.

Stage 3: A correct synonym or translation is given.

Stage 4: The word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence.

Stage 5: The word is used with semantic appropriateness and grammatical accuracy in a sentence.

They mention that while talking about vocabulary gain the first question arising for the researchers is to know what it means to know a word. Nagy and Scott (2000) pointed out five characteristics of vocabulary knowledge. First, knowing a word is a matter of degree, not all or nothing. This is known as the incremental view of word knowledge. The first comprehensive scale for vocabulary knowledge is maybe for Dale (1965) who proposed four stages of degree of word knowledge; (1) never heard it before, (2) heard it but doesn't know what it means, (3) recognizes it in context as having something to do with, and (4) knows it well.

The second characteristic of vocabulary knowledge is referred to as multidimensionality: word knowledge involves several qualitatively distinct kinds of knowledge. Nation (1990) offered eight aspects of word knowledge: (1) the spoken form of a word, (2) the written form of a word, (3) The grammatical behavior of the word, (4) the collocation behavior of the word, (5) the frequency of the word, (6) the stylistic register constrains of the word, (7) the conceptual meaning of the word, (8) the associations the word has with other related words.

The third characteristic is the idea of polysemy: words often have multiple meanings that must be inferred from the context in which they occur.

The fourth is interrelatedness: one's knowledge of any given word is not independent of one's knowledge of other words.

The fifth and last characteristic is heterogeneity: what it means to know a word differs substantially depending on the kind of word.

For instructional purposes, Stahl (1983) proposed two types of knowledge about words: definitional information and contextual information. Definitional information comprises knowledge of the logical relationship between a word and other known words, as in a dictionary definition involving knowing a definition, synonym, antonym, or affixes, and so on. Contextual information can be defined as knowledge of the core concept of the word and how that concept changes in different contexts. Depending on the students' knowledge of the word, effective vocabulary instruction will employ different techniques. Huckin and Bloch (1993) pointed out that second language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge, and a lack of vocabulary knowledge is the largest obstacle for second language readers to overcome. They found that the main obstacle for second language readers is not lack of reading strategies but rather insufficient vocabulary knowledge in English.

3. Historical backgrounds of vocabulary teaching and learning

The history of research on vocabulary instruction is complex. In spite of its centrality to language learning, the importance of vocabulary acquisition is not always recognized. It has for most of the time been overshadowed by studies prioritizing syntax, pronunciation and language skills. In the early days of teaching language when it was the heyday of Grammar translation method, vocabulary had a high status. In this non-scientific and intuitive teaching method, students had to memorize lists

of wide range of vocabulary which especially came from literary texts (Rivers, 1981). As Zimmerman (1997) puts it vocabulary teaching “was based on definition and etymology throughout the nineteenth century at least in part because of the prevalent belief that the connection between the etymon and derivative should be protectively preserved to avoid degeneration of the language” (p. 6). In this period, word lists, organized semantically, were regarded as material of teaching rather than as a reference for teaching practices. The earlier criticism of the method goes as far back as mid-1800th (Rivers, 1983). For example Sweet (1899/1964) mentions that:

Although language is made up of words, we do not speak in words, but in sentences. From a practical, as well as, scientific, point of view, the sentence is the unit of language, not the word. From the purely phonetic point of view words do not exist. (p. 97)

Research concentrated on four areas before 1950: (1) vocabulary size at various ages, (2) the relationship between vocabulary and intelligence, (3) identifying the most useful words to know, and (4) identifying a core of words that make text more understandable (Irvin, 1990). However, the study of vocabulary became one of the weakest areas in early research for English language learners while the study about grammatical and phonological structure had been dominant throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s especially with the advent of audiolingual method. Charles Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945) was the most influential study for this tradition based on behaviorist psychology. It valued audio-lingual method as a good way to learn second languages by paying systematic attention to intensive drills of basic sentence patterns and their pronunciation (as cited in DeCarrico, 2001). The basic assumption was that once students learned the structural frames, lexical items could be learned later to fill the grammatical slot in the frames. Direct method or audio-lingual method in this period emphasized oral skills, accurate pronunciation as a way to build good language use habits and vocabulary was not regarded as important dimension of language use. From this perspective, good language habits would eventually lead to an increased vocabulary. In other words, in this view, all aspects of language was decomposable to a series of habits and learning a language was understood as a series of activities with reinforced habit formation. So, in this period rote learning of vocabulary was enhanced. Though rote learning of some of the lexico-grammatical aspects of language can be effective in earlier stages of learning a language, as Schmitt (1997) points out, it becomes extremely boring for more advanced learners. As learning is also a cognitive process, adults prefer to engage in the tasks which involve their cognition. The emphasis on rote learning of vocabulary did not mean that vocabulary teaching got the attention it deserves, since the major emphasis was on patterns of the sentences as the building blocks of language. That is, learning extensive lists of vocabulary was discouraged based on the fact that it gives the students the false belief of equating knowing the language with knowing its vocabulary.

Revolutionary changes in linguistic theory were made by Chomsky (1957). He criticized the basis of audio-lingual method of teaching and set the stage for more cognitively oriented approaches. This was his first major contribution to linguistics in which he introduced the idea that language is represented in mental grammar by a finite and abstract set of rules. In his work, language teaching was viewed as a rationalist's framework rather than the behaviorists' notion of habit formation. The central assumption was that language is represented as a speaker's mental grammar, in other words, a set of abstract rules for generating grammatical sentences. Since, language learning was considered as rule acquisition, not habit formation, vocabulary was somewhat important; however, rule learning still has a place in language learning. But Chomsky, in his search for universal, did not give any priority or whatsoever to vocabulary which was the major source of linguistic variation across languages. Richards (1976) who was among the first scholars to alert this neglect relates it to effects of trends in linguistic theory which was at the time dominated by Chomskyan approach.

In 1970's, Hymes's concept of communicative competence emphasized the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors governing effective use of language (Hymes, 1972). He was especially concerned about using language for meaningful communication, including the appropriate use of language in particular social contexts. Hymes tried to show that Chomskyan linguistic competence was particularly narrow to be able to encompass the whole variation of language. He believed that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance did not involve language use as a social practice in a real communicative acts and also it makes no references to issues concerning the appropriateness of the utterances (for example politeness issues and felicity conditions). He introduced the notion of *communicative competence*, which in his idea included not only grammatical competence which is the rules of usage but also the rules of language use in real communicative

situation. The communicative competence also involves the context of situation and is sensitive to socio-cultural norms of appropriacy. Arising from this view was interactionist school of thought in which language is not only what is in the minds of the speakers but also it is formed by interaction between the mind and the social variables. Though it made language more concrete and in a sense brought it from sky to the earth, it created its own complexities, the least of which was dealing with a large number of variations. But it had, however, some advantages as far as learning and teaching vocabulary was concerned. Since the communicative language teaching promoted fluency over accuracy, lexical competence became a central part of communicative competence. In other words, teaching vocabulary started to become a central part of teaching language in contrast to early language research. However, during the 1970's contemporary linguistics and cognitive psychology supported the psycholinguistic approach, which focused on guessing the meaning of unknown words through the use of contextual clues (Coady, 1993). Psycholinguistic studies provided insights concerning mental processes involved in vocabulary learning, such as memory, storage, and retrieval. This approach argues that the proficient readers utilize both bottom-up and top-down processing, and that successful comprehension is the result of an interaction between both types of processing. Within this approach, schema theory emphasizes the role of preexisting knowledge which the learner relates to the input from the text interactively. Thus, interactional activities in this framework emphasize teaching students to take advantage of all of their prior knowledge. As a result, vocabulary acquisition was viewed in terms of the students' background knowledge of concepts as well as of word forms.

In this framework, the emphasis was on the role of the environment and its interaction with the minds of the children which were supposed to be prewired to acquire language. The interactionists claim that internal and external dynamics both have some roles in language learning processes. Interactionist disregard innatist ideas on the basis of the fact that unlike innatists they believed language input are modified for the learners (here the children learning their first language) (Lightbown and Spada 1993). As van Els et al. (1984: 26) mention; the interactionist approach characterize a shift "away from innate versus learned linguistics ability, and toward the children's cognitive capacity to discover structure in the language around them." This shift of focus on cognitive abilities of the learners by not losing the sight of environmental factors had some implications for teaching language. One implication is that learning is dynamic, social and communicative by its very nature and the learners need to have a good command of soci-cultural variations of language. The second implication is for teachers. They are recommended to focus on developing the students' communicative competence and to take into account the learners' cognitive abilities. In other words, this approach to learning language which tries to take into account the context of language use in real life situations emphasizes the factors contributing to the processes of interaction as well as learners' cognitive abilities involved in such processes. All these functional dimensions are necessary part of learners' communicative abilities in learning second language(s).

Also notable works contributing to the broadening of the views toward the nature of language was Austin (1962) and Searle (1973) that put forward the notion of 'speech act' and Grice (1975) that proposed 'cooperative principle'. Drawing on the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) there were some attempts to investigate how language users were able to perform actions by speech (e.g., requesting, apologizing, complaining, refusing) and how these speech acts were to be performed in a normative background of social context. In pragmatics, there was a shift away from focusing on producing grammatically correct sentences and more attention was paid to communicants' appropriate use of utterances within different situational contexts which in turn had some bearings on appropriacy of use. In this regard, the politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) was of importance, since it described "the three sociopragmatic factors which qualified a linguistic form as being appropriate".

Cooperative principle tries to highlight the processes by which people interact with each other. As introduced by Paul Grice, himself, "make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice, 1975: 46) The principle is not supposed to prescribe how to talk (as it seems to be!) but to describe what happens when people encounter verbally in normal situations.

Works of Halliday (for example, 1970) also contributed significantly to a more extended view of language. Halliday (1975) proposed seven communicative functions characterizing the child's early communicative development, all of which were related to aspects of social life. These functions were:

instrumental, which involves the use of language to get things; regulatory, which involves the use of language to regulate people's behavior; interactional, which involves the use of language to interact with other people; personal, which involves the use of language to express one's feelings; heuristic, which involves the use of language to explore the outside world; imaginative, which involves the use of language to create an environment, and representational, which involves the use of language to communicate information. He theorized that children learned to talk because it served a function for them. Halliday's (1975) theory underscored the crucial importance of context of situation in the description of language systems and language was viewed as meaning potential. Therefore, the decontextualized analysis of formal structures followed by structural and generative linguistics was losing ground in favor of a contextualized perspective followed by systemic functional linguistics. (Juan & Flor, 2006: 9)

More broadened views toward 'language' changed the standpoints regarding the role of vocabulary in language learning, since the words were not regarded as signs capable of containing the meaning but they were considered as indices referring where the meaning was hidden. The renewed interest in vocabulary has ironically enough raised the bell of pendulum swinging; like that of teaching methods. "the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the grammar translation method) to incidental (the communicative approach) and now, laudably, back to the middle: implicit and explicit learning" (Sökmen 1997, p.239).

4. Contextualized learning of vocabulary

There exist conflicting views among language professionals concerning the relative superiority of two approaches of 'contextualized' and 'de-contextualized' ways of learning, the ideas which are termed as implicit and explicit teaching of vocabulary (Stoller & Grabe, 1993 and Sökmen, 2000). Oxford (1990), for example, observed that while 'de-contextualized learning' (word list) may help students memorize vocabulary for tests; students are likely to forget rapidly words memorized from lists.

According to Nielson (2006) at early stages of language development, 'decontextualized' vocabulary instruction has been found to be more effective in building a fundamental vocabulary than the contextualized reading. The relevant literature on facilitating vocabulary acquisition is vast and has covered various aspects.

On the other hand, research on vocabulary acquisition has been carried out by investigating vocabulary learning strategies by (Chen, 2001; Nation, 2001). Among them, most studies have concentrated on some types of strategies such as using dictionaries, guessing and mnemonics (key words). According to Schmitt and Meara (1997), a number of types of strategies for learning vocabulary have been identified, such as using guessing from context, using certain mnemonics like the key words method (Pressley, et. al., 1982), using inference from the context (Nation, 1982), using association and the keyword method (Pressley, et. al., 1982), using word lists (Nation, 1990), using guessing (Nation, 2001) and rote repetition (O'Malley & Chomot, 1990).

Nation (2001) discussed that vocabulary is a very important as well as challenging aspect of learning additional language(s). Nonetheless, some teachers may think that it is an easy task and left to their own devices, students can manage accomplishing it.

Wang (2009) in a quantitative study investigated 164 non-English major students from Jiaying University on the use of English vocabulary learning strategies. It was a comparative study focusing on high achievers versus low achievers, Science students versus Arts students and male students versus female students. The study found that, firstly, there are significant differences between high achievers and low achievers in the use of eleven strategies such as learner autonomy. Secondly, there are significant differences in the use of four strategies such as selective attention between Science and Arts students. Third, there are a few differences between male and female students.

In a study, Nemati (2010) meant to compare the impact of teaching vocabulary learning through memory strategies on experimental group in comparison to the control group. The subjects were 140 and 170 pre-university female students in India who served as control and experimental groups respectively. The results indicated that the students of the experimental group outperformed both in short-term and long-term scores. The findings also revealed that for both short-term and long-term retention memory strategies were useful.

A number of researchers have made a contribution to vocabulary learning strategies research (Chen, 2001; Nation, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wang, 1998; Wu & Wang, 1998). Among them, most

studies have concentrated on some types of strategies such as using dictionaries, guessing and mnemonics.

Stoller & Grabe (1993) have discussed the idea from the same point of view, by saying that teaching new words can occur in one of the explicit or implicit method. However, recent research emphasizes a need for explicit vocabulary instruction at all levels of language proficiency.

Zhang, Gao and Liu (2002) found female graduates employed more vocabulary learning strategies than male students, and female students used eleven strategies more frequently than male students. On the other hand, Wang (2006) found that there was no significant difference between male and female students in the use of vocabulary learning strategies.

In the same way, Gao (2004) compared the differences in using vocabulary learning strategies between male and female students. He found that female students had significant differences from male students in the use of vocabulary learning strategies; however, female students used vocabulary learning strategies more frequently than male students. In the 70's and 80's the communicative approach and interactional approach focused on implicit, incidental learning. Incidental vocabulary learning is defined as learning that occurs when the mind is focused elsewhere, such as on understanding a text or using language for communicative purpose. In a review of 144 studies, Krashen (1989) argued that incidental acquisition of vocabulary occurs through the operation of his input hypothesis, which proposes that learners acquire a second language as they are exposed to comprehensible input.

A number of studies which support this hypothesis have shown that guessing from context can lead to vocabulary acquisition. So the notion of context, partly because of some philosophical development toward the nature of language, received more attention. Raptis (1997) showed that many current second language reading textbooks promote the assumption that vocabulary is best learned incidentally from context. Based on this learning theory, teachers encouraged their students to recognize clues to word meanings in context and to use monolingual rather than bilingual dictionaries, and textbooks emphasized inferring word meanings from context. In the review of contextualized vocabulary learning, Huckin and Coady (1999) stated some advantages of incidental vocabulary learning over explicit introduction: (1) It gives the learner paired-associate exercises, (2) it is pedagogically efficient in that it enables two activities – vocabulary acquisition and reading – to occur at the same time, and (3) it is more individualized and learner-based because the vocabulary being acquired is dependent on the learner's own selection of reading materials. However, Huckin and Coady in the same article point out some limitations of incidental learning: (1) guessing is imprecise because many reading tasks call for precise interpretation, (2) accurate guessing requires accurate word recognition and careful monitoring because there are many deceptive lexical items that can easily mislead the learner, (3) guessing takes time and thus slows down the reading process, (4) guessing is effective only when the context is well understood and almost all of the surrounding words in the text are known, (5) guessing requires good reading strategies, (6) guessing often does not translate into acquisition, and (7) guessing is not effective in the acquisition of multiword lexical items. In spite of the above, they concluded that the contextualized and incidental learning can still be seen as an important part of vocabulary building, especially among advanced learners, but it requires a great deal of prior training in basic vocabulary, word recognition, metacognition, and subject matter. Contextualized vocabulary learning without these and other clear guidelines on how to conduct it in the class cannot have desired results, especially taking into account the fact that there are many vocabularies which are whether abstract or contain concepts that are difficult to contextualize using traditional equipment available to the teachers. And historically this has even led to some conclusions which highlight the superiority of traditional learning over contextualized learning.

As cited in Mijin Won (2008), Hulstijn (1992) reported that the number of new words learned incidentally is relatively small compared to the number of words learned intentionally. Incidental vocabulary learning tends to be incremental and slow even with the use of dictionary and the inferring strategy. He believed that second language learners could not have enough learning incidentally due to the following reasons:

- (1) The learners fail to notice the new words,
- (2) they notice the new words, but ignore them,
- (3) they do not focus their attention on the unknown word,
- (4) they infer the meaning from context incorrectly, and
- (5) the low frequency of most unknown words prevents effective learning (quoted in p. 24).

It was emphasized by Hulstijn (1992) that both incidental and intentional learning should exist together in vocabulary instruction. Coady (1993) concluded after exploring the basic argument for a mixed approach to vocabulary acquisition in ESL that the basic or core vocabulary should be taught, but less frequent vocabulary will be learned "naturally" via context, but even in that case the techniques for that purpose should be taught.

There was the conclusion that in spite of the evident role of reading in much advanced vocabulary acquisition, there are some problems from the perspective of effective learning. In incidental acquisition through reading, the acquisition process is slow, often misguided, and seemingly haphazard, with different outcomes for various learners, word types and contexts. According to Sternberg (1987), even if most vocabulary is learned from context, one should not conclude that this is the fastest or most efficient way of learning specific vocabulary. These findings, however, date back to the time when the technology had not swept its ways into the classes, at least in way it has done now.

5. An overview of computer assisted teaching

As the requirement for access to education grows and increasing numbers of adults come back to schools for education and training, the need for new technologies to make easy learning is becoming more important (Wang, et al, 2014). Contribution of computer to language learning gave rise to computer assisted language learning (CALL, henthforth) which has come to be known as learners' learning language in any context ?structure?

The convergence of a variety of technological, instrumental, and pedagogical developments in recent decades has dramatically altered the process of teaching and learning of almost all high-school and university subjects across the world (Bonk & King 1998). According to Warschauer and Healey (1998), historical development of CALL shows that at first studies of CALL, researchers mainly focused on the design of system and software. They also started to discuss the role of computers in language learning, and the comparison of traditional and computer-enhanced classes. Later, as cognitive psychology was developed as the dominant school of psychology, CALL practices and research focused both on software design and task development. The roles of teachers and students in the environment of CALL also attracted researchers' attention. The last stage which has come to be known as integrative CALL, started in 1990s (which has continued to the present time) is based on multimedia and the internet. Under the influence of humanistic, communicative, and constructivist approaches, learners' needs, individual differences, experience, and feelings received considerable attention in education.

CALL has been used as a means of generating learners' opportunities for engaging in learning of the target language and thereby overcoming traditional classroom teaching limitations (Chapelle, 2003). Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) propose that present generation of the students have the opportunity of engaging in more visual communicators and therefore have better spatial skills than their predecessors; because they grew up with technology as an integral part of their lives. Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) and social media can enhance English language skills both effectively and functionally. Learners communicate with each other using chats, forums (bulletin boards), internet telephony, video conferencing, shared online white boards as well as more recent social networking systems like Viber, Tango, Whatsap, Line etc.

As Wang & Vasquez (2012) put it, the language learning environments which benefit from developments in computer technologies have given more opportunities for exploration of different topics and practices: the scope ranges from traditional focus on four language skills to more recent topics, such as identities of the students and teachers, online collaboration, and learning communities. Although the field demands closer scrutiny of learners' achievements, the general consensus is that students can experience more favorable learning conditions which can subsequently enhance their learning.

Elam & Nesbit (2012) claim that EFL programs which use CALL, have adapted their regular programs to incorporate such changes in syllabus. In another study, it was found that students' attitude was "particularly high and self-transformation of knowledge was achieved" (Alonso, Alcalá & Brugos, 2007). Technology applications offer many qualities that can increase quality of works and the motivation of the students (Alonso et al., 2007). An added benefit of using technology in the class is that teachers can take the position of a facilitator (that has always been a desired role for the teachers) because it generates a condition that augments independent learning skills such as autonomy (Alonso et al., 2007). In such cases, students can decide on which part of the subject they

would like to focus on and search for their own answers. Finally they have the opportunity to demonstrate or share their own mastery of materials. Considering most of the research in CALL, it is easy to see that it creates an environment that essentially becomes student- driven along with many other benefits that could enhance any EFL program.

6. Learners' attitudes toward vocabulary

"Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone but only his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind"

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from the Underground (as cited in Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009)

It can be understood that we are not always aware of our attitudes and even if we are aware we cannot always say them. In course of their leanings students develop attitudes that subsequently guide their other activities and their engagement with learning processes. American Heritage Dictionary defines attitude as the 'state of mind' and Webster 9th New World Dictionary refers to it as the 'mental position related to a fact or state'. Regarding our purpose, we can define it as a state of mind about an object which in our case is vocabulary acquisition. Once it was thought that attitudes are unchangeable and once established, can be criteria for anticipating the future performance (Fleming, 1967). In this sense attitude was similar to previous views of intelligence; something that the learners are born with as well as motor movements were regarded to be the central component of attitude (Zajonc & Markus, 1984).

Attitude most of the time has been associated with negative or positive and its role in performance and deeds of individuals is emphasized (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Attitudes toward foreign language acquisition have also been a determining factor of success or failure closely being associated with motivation to learn. It can be implied from research on second and foreign language acquisition that attitude toward intentional vocabulary acquisition can predict future success or failure in this regard and contribute to the processes of acquisition. For example, a positive attitude toward how foreign language speakers think can pave the way for interpreting the words uttered with the lens of foreign language speakers.

7. Methodology

7.1 Participants and setting

A sample of 60 participants was selected for the present study. They were all male students whose age ranged from 14-16. They were studying in the same school in Zanjan city. The name of the school was kept confidential due to an agreement with school principal in return for his permission to conduct the research in the school. Five of the participants from each group (10 totally) were selected randomly for qualitative study. Their school was a public school and the classes were divided according to their previous year average, so, a kind of homogeneity could be assumed (this was later confirmed by pre-test given to them).

7.2 Variables of the study

One of the groups was taught vocabulary in explicit traditional way, i.e. giving the translation of them as they were taught in reading passages and the other one was taught by revealing the meaning of intended vocabulary by searching it online in Google image and some other online picture dictionaries. That is, the former group was presented with only the Persian equivalents of vocabulary but the latter was provided with ample opportunity to learn vocabulary in the context provided by an internet connected computer. So, there are two independent variables (1) explicit teaching of vocabulary and (2) technologically contextualized teaching of them. The dependent variable was the students' knowledge of the vocabulary gained as measured by multiple choice researcher made tests (see Appendix 1).

7.3 Instrument and material

The instrument used in the study was tests selected and piloted by the researcher-teacher. The tests involved two packages of 30 vocabulary items which were piloted for the purpose of this study from among 85 original tests (see Appendix 1). One set was used as pretests and the other set as post-test. The vocabulary tests mostly were taken from Paul Nation 4000 vocabulary and an online quiz (http://www.examenglish.com/KET/KET_vocab.htm). The criteria for this selection were the simplicity of the texts (students were at elementary level) and multiple exercises which were provided at the end of each lesson for vocabulary learning. Another instrument was an open ended

questionnaire for 5 of the students from each of the groups (see Appendix 2). They were asked about their general attitude toward teaching vocabulary at the end of the experiment. The open-ended questionnaires provided the data for qualitative section of the study.

7.4 Procedures

7.4.1 Data collection procedures

The data for both pre-test and post-test as well as for open-ended questionnaires were collected at the same class in which the study were conducted. Because of the familiarity of the students with multiple-choice format no instructions were required on how to answer the questions. They were provided with an answer sheet. To reassure them that the scores they get are only used for research purposes they were asked to deliver only the answer sheet (and not the main papers involving the questions) with no names on it. This could also limit the possibility of cheating which could influence the findings of the study. For the questionnaire the researcher told the participants that there are no right or wrong answers and they only need to write down their thoughts.

2.9.1 7.4.2 Data analysis procedures

In the quantitative analysis of the study we used SPSS software program. The analysis involved two paired t-test for each of the groups to see the differences between their pre-tests and post-tests. Also two independent t-test were conducted; one for comparing two sets of pre-tests to ensure lack of significance differences before the treatment was applied and the other for comparing two sets of post-tests to look for possible differences.

The qualitative analysis procedure used in this study was Straus and Corbin's (1998) systematic approach. The data gathered through open ended questionnaire from 10 of the students were studied carefully. Then we used the constant comparative method which is the primary analysis technique in Straus and Corbin's model (Ary, 2010). In this model according to Ary (2010);

Open coding is used to develop major or core categories with axial coding to develop categories around the core. Think of a wheel with a center and spokes extending. The spokes are all related to the central category. A visual model is developed called an axial coding paradigm. Selective coding is then used to develop propositions or hypotheses based on the model, showing how the categories are related. The resulting theory can take the form of a narrative statement, a picture, or a series of hypotheses (p. 464).

The rational for using qualitative analysis was that they provide the researchers with a means for an in-depth analysis of research topic. As Genesee (2009) points out, they offer an opportunity to view the problem from many perspectives.

8. Data analysis

As it was mentioned in previous chapter the data from this study comes from two sources; First, administrations of the vocabulary tests to the students of both of groups as well as open-ended questionnaire delivered to 10 of the students about their attitude toward the method that was adopted in their classes. The former aimed to address the first three research question regarding the effects of different vocabulary teaching methods on achieving them and the latter was aimed to provide the present researcher with the evidence by which to clarify how the learners view their foreign language vocabulary learning and how their learning processes interacts with the kind of teaching method they are exposed to.

8.1 Comparison of the pre-tests of two groups

To ensure that there were no pre-existing differences before the treatments, a pre-test was given to both of the groups. This test consisted of thirty vocabulary items. The descriptive statistics for this test for group one (technologically contextualized group) and group two (traditional explicit group) is presented in table 4.1. As it is clear from the table the means of the two groups before the start of the actual experiment are so close to each other 10.43 and 10.26 for technologically contextualized group and traditional explicit group, respectively.

Table 4.1 descriptive statistics for pre-tests of the two groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group 1	30	10.43	3.53	.64449

Group 2	30	10.26	3.25	.59487
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To see whether the difference is only attributed to chance factors or it is significant, we ran an inferential statistics. The results of the comparison of two independent means were calculated using independent sample t-test and are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Independent t-tests for the two pre-tests

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
.054	.818	.190	58	.850	.16667	.87706	-1.5889	1.92229

Since the significance is about 0.82 (more than 0.05), we can say with certain degree of confidence that the groups has no differences (not more than chance differences) at the beginning of the experiment.

8.2 Traditional explicit group

The descriptive statistics for the group who received traditional instruction is presented in table 4.1 which involves pretest [M: 10.43, SD: 3.53 and SEM: 0.64] and post-test [M: 13.66, SD: 4.50 and SEM: 0.82] statistics.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for traditional group pre-test and post-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	10.4333	30	3.53000	.64449
posttest	13.6667	30	4.50542	.82257

To see the effectiveness of instructing the students by traditional explicit method, the researcher run inferential statistics to compare the mean of scores on pre-test and post-test. Since it was within the same group, paired sample t-test was used. The results are presented in

4.4 Paired Sample t-test for traditional explicit group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Mean	Lower			
Pair 1	pretest posttest	-3.23333	3.02499	.55229	-4.36288	-2.10378	-5.854	29	.000

As it is clear from the table the significance is less than .05, so we can say with considerable confidence that the instruction was effective and participants in traditional explicit group did gain some knowledge of vocabulary.

8.3 Technologically contextualized group

The comparison of pre-test and post-test for this group revealed that the participants have significantly improved their vocabulary knowledge. Table 4.5 and table 4.6 show descriptive and

inferential statistics for this group, respectively. This improvement shows that treatment was actually effective for this group.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics for Technologically contextualized group pre-test and post-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 pretest	10.2667	30	3.25823	.59487
posttest	14.1333	30	3.85722	.70423

4.6 Paired Sample t-test for Technologically contextualized group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest2 - posttest2	-3.86667	3.07081	.56065	-5.01333	-2.72001	-6.897	29	.000

8.4 Comparison of two post-tests

The two groups under investigation were finally given post-tests. The purpose was to see whether there was any significance difference between two groups after they had been subject to treatment. The descriptive statistics for the two groups are presented in Table 4.7.

4.7 Descriptive statistics for post-tests of the two groups

	VAR00001	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group 1	1.00	30	13.6667	4.50542	.82257
Group 2	2.00	30	14.1333	3.85722	.70423

The means were 13.66 for traditional group and 14.13 for technologically contextualized group. As our later inferential analysis (Table 4.8) revealed there were no significant difference between the performances of the two groups. So the third null hypothesis cannot be rejected and it is retained.

Table 4.8 Independent t-tests for the two pre-tests

		t-test for Equality of Means						
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
posttest	Equal variances assumed	-.431	58	.668	-.46667	1.08285	-2.63423	1.70090
	Equal variances not assumed	-.431	56.655	.668	-.46667	1.08285	-2.63533	1.70199

8.5 Qualitative analysis of students' attitude

The data gathered through the questionnaire in its raw form did not reveal much about the students' attitude toward what they experimented in the classes. That was partly because the students who answered the questionnaire had not spent much time on answering the questions and some of them had only replied 'yes' or 'no'. So, the researcher conducted an informal session with the students. The answers to the questions along with the conversation the researcher had with the students provided a rich resource for enabling the researcher to answer the fourth research question.

Generally, most of the students in traditional group had not felt any considerable difference between this class and the other classes they had except the material used in the classes were more attractive for them. They said the class was much like they have seen of English classes. They said they had gained some knowledge and the class was generally useful for them. Students in the technologically contextualized class also found the class useful in terms of what they had learned. Unlike the other group, they indicated that the class was more interesting. One of the students asked the teacher to hold all their other classes in this way. The other student said the pictures helped me to remember the words. Still other one said I will try to check the word meaning online like what we did in the class instead of using paper or cellphone dictionary.

9. Discussion of the results

As long as three decades ago, Long (1983) in a state of art article mentions that instruction is generally good. He tried to remind us that we need to examine every measure we take in educating the EFL learners to find the effectiveness of our activities as language teachers. This study is an attempt to answer research questions set out at chapter one which are repeated here as a matter of convenience:

1. Does the explicit traditional teaching of vocabulary have any effect on first grade high school students' vocabulary achievement?
2. Does the technologically contextualized teaching of vocabulary have an effect on first grade high school students' vocabulary achievement?
3. Are there any differences between the performances of the group taught by technologically contextualized vocabulary and the group who was taught by using traditional explicit method?
4. Are there any differences of attitude of first grade high school students toward explicit traditional teaching of vocabulary and contextualized teaching of vocabulary?

Regarding the first research question we found that traditional teaching was effective and the students did actually learned by traditional teaching of the vocabulary. And our participants gained some knowledge of vocabulary through explicit method. For the second research questions, the findings also indicated that there was a significant improvement in students' learning. Though the mean of this group was generally higher than traditional explicit group, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between the performances of the groups. We can, however, talk about tendency. Contextually teaching of the vocabulary raised higher interests among students and students in this group tend to perform better than traditional group. This is supported by the qualitative study we conducted. This claim is confirmed by our qualitative analysis. There are some other studies in the context of Iran (Kamalian & Sayadian, 2014 among them), however, which have found considerable improvement in students' learning through some forms of technology.

10. Summary

The present study attempted to investigate the learning of technologically contextualized vocabulary on the Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. To carry out the research, two groups of foreign language learners from a public school were selected. They were all in their first grade in a high school. In order to collect the relevant data, the material were administered to the participants by two methods; one through regular classroom teaching and other through computer. The analysis of the results revealed that the technologically contextualized group could not outperform the traditional group. So, the third null hypothesis could not be rejected and was retained. However, we are able to talk about some tendencies that were confirmed by our qualitative study. Technologically contextualized group was more eager to learn and had found greater interest in learning English which was not the case for traditional group. The results also clearly illustrated that both of the methods had a facilitative effect on L2 vocabulary learning. The findings of the study bear implications for EFL teachers and material designers.

11. Conclusion

Vocabulary learning is now regarded as an important aspect of learning four language skills. Students of second and foreign language often relate their lack of comprehension in listening and reading and their lack of ability in production skills (i.e. writing and speaking) to their inability to understand or produce vocabulary of target language (Huckin & Bloch, 1993). Traditional presentation of vocabulary has been with us for a so long time and in most parts of the world it will still continue within the walls of the classes. But the technological advances are there calling for appropriation to our classes. This study was conducted with this purpose in mind; how can language teachers improve the efficiency of their teaching by adopting computer technology to their classes.

12. Pedagogical Implications

Though we did not arrive to clear statistical confirmation of the superiority of technologically contextualized teaching of vocabulary, we did find some tendency among the group who participated in technologically administered materials. The results of this study can open new windows in methods of teaching vocabulary. In order to enhance vocabulary learning and to encourage them, utilizing technology as an available tool can be an innovative method in teaching English as a foreign language.

Learning a foreign language is stressful and demanding, so new methods and new technique need to be examined in order to improve quality of the teaching practices which enhances students motivation to learn and subsequently yields higher learning outcomes (Krashen, 1998). Hence, employing technology for presenting new vocabulary might be a possible change in teaching English as foreign language. The use of technology for teaching vocabulary has its repercussions in other aspects of learning and teaching practices. Curriculum designers can plan teaching and learning activities to count on this technology in the course of learning a language and material developers can also devote a section of the textbooks to vocabulary to be learned on the bases of technology.

When we are going to teach something the natural and logical questions are; what is that 'something' we want to teach and how is it learned? As Robinson (2001) warns us it is not important what teachers teach but what is important is what students learn. No matter how teachers try to make their classes useful it is the way that the students approach and view the vocabulary which is important. Second, and along the same lines, whatever the teaching methodology the teachers adopt in their classes (whether grammar translation or communicative approaches) the words, the new words finally are there for students to learn. That is, adopting strategies of teaching vocabulary like guessing from context sometimes can be enhanced by using technology. This researcher has discussed the implications under two major themes; teachers and teaching practices and curriculum designing.

12.1 Teachers and teaching practices

There are many ways by which teachers can teach vocabulary. For example, Oxford (1990) suggests memory strategies to aid learning which can be divided into:

- creating mental linkages: grouping, associating, placing new words into a context;
- applying images and sounds: using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords and representing sounds in memory;
- reviewing well, in a structured way;
- Employing action: physical response or sensation, using mechanical techniques.

Vocabulary is commonly taught using strategies such as defining synonyms and antonyms, illustrating the word in its different texts and contexts, giving the context or co-text that the vocabulary cannot be used and trying to relate the words to students' own lives and things that they are more interested in. In all of these and other methods of teaching, teachers should be concerned with the fact that how they can make vocabulary accessible to the students. The teachers are required to present different uses of vocabulary to facilitate students learning and this is made easier by technology.

12.2 Curriculum designing

"Curriculum designing is a 'how-to-do-it' activity" (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. xv) which is considerably based on needs analysis of the learners. The knowledge of what the students know and how is the mechanism of gaining this knowledge can be a valuable resource for curriculum designers. The findings of this study can inspire material developers and curriculum designers to devote a section to contextualized vocabulary learning.

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STATE-OF-THE-ART ARTICLE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: FOCUS ON IRANIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

In this study, a systematic review was conducted targeting the studies that employ discourse studies in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context of Iran. Reviewing the literature, the current study found the scopes discourse analysis studies in different Iranian contexts in terms of classroom discourse, discourse markers, critical discourse analysis, and teacher discourse. After a brief introduction to each of these aspects of discourse analysis, the related noticeable studies were critically reviewed with the focus on Iranian contexts. Finally, the mentioned studies were compared with each other to investigate their weaknesses and strength. The results are discussed separately for each section. Accordingly, the results of the current systematic review would provide further support for the use of discourse analysis in the classroom, which could be an alternative for facilitating the learning of English as a foreign language in an EFL context. Suggestions for further research and pedagogical implications are provided.

Key Words: Classroom Discourse, Discourse Markers, Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis, Teacher Discourse, EFL.

Introduction

"Discourse analysis" (DA) or discourse studies, developed in 1970s, are used to describe various activities related to different disciplines of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophical linguistics, computational linguistics, education, anthropology, cultural studies, international relations, human geography, communication studies, and translation studies. In another attempt, Abrams and Harpham (2005) mentioned that discourse analysis "concerns itself with the use of language in a running discourse, continued over a number of sentences, and involving the interaction of speaker (or writer) and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions" (p. 134).

There are two forms of discourse analysis: descriptive analysis and critical analysis. These two concepts refer to the analysis of language in use through analyzing linguistic forms (the linguists' function) and also the aim or functions to construct those linguistic forms (the discourse analysts' function) that relates to the content of the language being used. Meanwhile, Gee (2014) mentioned that "all discourse analysis is critical discourse analysis, since all language is political and all language is part of the way we build and sustain our world, cultures, and institutions" (p. 10).

As Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 12) discussed, all discourse analytical approaches are agree on the following main points:

Language is not a reflection of a pre-existing reality.

- Language is structured in patterns or discourses – there is not just one general system of meaning as in Saussurian structuralism but a series of systems or discourses, whereby meanings change from discourse to discourse.

- These discursive patterns are maintained and transformed in discursive practices.
- The maintenance and transformation of the patterns should therefore be explored through analysis of the specific contexts in which language is in action.

The current study aims to investigate some areas of discourse analysis as: classroom discourse, discourse markers, critical discourse analysis, and teacher discourse with a view to the Iranian works done in these realms.

Methods

Because the purpose of the current review was to investigate the discourse analysis studies in the Iranian EFL context, we included the studies that met the following eligibility criteria: (a) the study was conducted in Iran, (b) the study involved discourse analysis, and (c) English was the target language in the class. The methodology used in the current study was through classifying the studies based on different criteria (classroom discourse, critical classroom discourse analysis, teacher's discourse, and discourse markers) and comparing the findings of Iranian studies with those of international ones.

Classroom Discourse

Classroom language is important as it is the medium through which the education is transformed. Classroom discourse, as a special type of discourse received a significant attention in the late twentieth century. Murnane and Levy (1996) mentioned that this increase in the attention is due to the "new basic skills" required for high-wage jobs include "the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing" and "the ability to work in groups with persons of various backgrounds" (p. 32). Behnam and Pouriran (2009) mentioned that classroom discourses are different in form and function and they have some special features include: unequal power relationships, turn-taking at speaking, patterns of interaction, etc." (p. 118).

The important issue in investigating classroom discourse is paying attention to the patterns of teacher talk. Ellis, McCartney and Bourne (2011) mentioned three findings resulted from the studies done in this realm: "(i) the way teachers and pupils talk in the classroom is crucially important, but (ii) the dominant pattern of classroom discourse is problematically monologic, so (iii) it should be replaced with more dialogic models" (p. 165).

Worldwide Studies on Classroom Discourse

Zhang (2008) investigated the interrelation between classroom discourse and student learning by discussing the role of classroom talk in student learning. The findings showed the direct relation between classroom discourse and students' learning. It recommends teachers to improve their spoken discourse and to perform their role "as consultants but not just mere transmitters of information" and to "recognize various group-based discussions as real work" and to "encourage students to generate their own questions and to explore alternative answers" (p. 82). Hence, "authentic questions should be structured to encourage thoughtful answers, and further student questions built on previous responses are promoted. In addition, oral tasks should be given greater prominence than it is in the traditional ratio of spoken and written tasks. In order to achieve this, teachers ought to improve self-teaching skills" (p. 82).

Baxter (2002) conducted a post-structuralist discourse analysis of girls' and boys' speech in a secondary English class which was being assessed for its effectiveness in public contexts. The findings indicated "a link between the more powerful discursive positioning of boys, and the extent to which they were adjudged more 'effective' than girls as public speakers" (p. 827). Moreover, the results of the post-structuralist analysis shows that "because girls are multiply located in discourse and not constituted as victims, they can be taught to resist certain dominant classroom practices" (p. 827).

Iranian Studies on Classroom Discourse

Rashidi and Rafieerad (2010) applied a discourse analysis approach to investigate the classroom discourse in EFL classrooms in Iran. They aimed to identify the interaction patterns between teachers and students, the kind of interaction between them (teacher-dominated or student-dominated), and also the role of gender on their interaction. The participants of this study were 16 teachers (8 female and 8 male) together with their adult students in EFL classes in Shiraz University Language Center and a Language Institute. In these single-gender classes, boys were taught by male teachers and girls

by female ones. The classes were observed and the data analyzed based on the model proposed by Tsui (1994): Teacher-Student Talk, Student-Teacher Talk, and Student-Student Talk. The results showed that "although the classroom discourse was following an IRF pattern in which the teachers dominated a high portion of classroom talk, the students did initiate exchanges with their teachers, and at times they even did follow up their teachers' responses to their questions, resulting in an IRF pattern even in Student-Teacher Talk" (p. 93).

Behnam and Pouriran (2009) investigated the classroom discourse by analyzing teacher and learner interactions in Iranian EFL task-based classrooms. Six classes were observed in this study and the findings indicated that "Display questions were used by the teachers more frequently than Referential questions. Also, it was concluded that NOT all Referential questions could create enough interaction" (p. 117).

Hemmati and Nasser Karimvand (2011) analyzed the classroom discourse of five reading comprehension classes of BA students majoring TEFL in Iran. The participants of this study were 5 language teachers (3 male and 2 female) and 20 students (12 male and 8 female). Two instruments were used in this study: an open observation based on the elements extracted from Foucauldian critical discourse analysis (CDA) and validated observation sheet of Nunan (1989). Results of the data analysis provided the researcher with almost clear information about type of the elements of discourse in these language classes.

Studies on Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are mentioned as implicit side of human communication (Erman, 2001) and the researchers in this field focused on discourse analysis of the use of discourse markers by both native speakers and nonnative speakers (Yang, 2011). The first author wrote about discourse marker was Schiffrin (1987) who defined them as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (p. 31) including sentences, propositions, speech acts, and tone units, with the function of segmenting sections of an interaction. Swan (2005) defined them as a 'discourse marker' as "a word or expression which shows the connection between what is being said and the wider context" (p. xviii).

Fraser (1999) also was one of the pioneers in this realm who defined discourse markers as "a pragmatic class, lexical expressions drawn from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases" (p. 23). Although discourse markers are from syntactic classes, but they are syntactically independent, i.e. their removal from a sentence makes no error in the syntactic structure of a sentence.

Four distinct perspectives for discourse markers' roles proposed by Nejadansari and Mohammadi (2014): "the social consequences, DMs' function in special situations, DMs as the relationship signaling elements, and classroom interaction" (p. 5).

Related Worldwide Studies on Discourse Markers

House (2013) developed pragmatic competence of the English speakers' as a lingua franca by using discourse markers to express subjectivity and connectivity. The discourse markers used in this study were *yes/yeah*, *so* and *okay*. The participants were among the Hamburg University's students and the data gathered from their academic consultation hours. Analyzing the data showed that they "tend to strategically re-interpret certain discourse markers in order to help themselves improve their pragmatic competence and thus function smoothly in the flow of talk" (p. 57).

Taboada (2006) discussed the adequacy of discourse markers by investigating two kinds of studies: conversations, and newspaper articles. The rhetorical relations of the data were analyzed and the findings indicated that "a high number of relations (between 60 and 70% of the total, on average) are not signalled. A comparison between the two corpora suggests that genre-specific factors may affect which relations are signalled, and which are not" (p. 567).

Trillo (2002) conducted a corpus-driven analysis to investigate the pragmatic fossilization of discourse markers in non-native speakers of English. The participants of this study were native and nonnative children and adults. The use of pragmatic elements among these groups was investigated and the findings proved the role of pragmatic fossilization as a significant element interfering second or foreign language learning and teaching.

Fuller (2003) examined the influence of speaker roles on discourse marker use in interviews and casual conversations. Based on the obtained results, among the six investigated discourse markers (*you know*, *like*, *oh*, *well*, *yeah*, and *I mean*), *oh* and *well* occurring more frequently in conversations as

reception markers to create coherence between speaker turns but in contrast, they had less frequency in interviews. The frequency of discourse markers: *you know*, *like*, *yeah* and *I mean* as more universal discourse markers were used in the similar rates of frequency.

Iranian Studies on Discourse Markers

Nejadansari and Mohammadi (2015) analyzed the frequencies of discourse markers (DMs) quantitatively by applying Fraser's (1999, 2008) taxonomy and their functions qualitatively via Brinton's (1996) classification in the Iranian university EFL classroom discourse. Four EFL teachers' and students' classroom interactions showed that "subjects applied few DMs -7.76% out of the whole lexical size; overemployed message relating DMs; underused focus and attention markers; and never used comment and attitude markers" (p. 3). Also, teachers utilized more than 60% of DMs and the subjects applied textual functions more frequently than interpersonal functions, overusing information indicators and underusing closing and turn giving markers.

Rezvani Kalajahi, Abdullah and Baki (2012) explored the attitudes of Iranian post-graduate students towards discourse markers in order to constructing an organized and coherent text. The participants were five university students studying in different fields of study. This study conducted through semi-structured in-depth interview. The findings indicated that the participants were aware of using discourse markers in their writings but they did not have enough knowledge about their proper usage.

Jalilifar (2008) investigated discourse markers in descriptive compositions of 90 Iranian university students who majored TEFL. The participants' compositions were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by three raters following Fraser's (1999) taxonomy of Discourse Markers. The results showed that "Elaborative markers were the most frequently used, followed by inferential, contrastive, causative and topic relating markers" (p. 114). There was a direct and positive relationship between the quality of the compositions and the number of well-functioned discourse markers. Also there were significant differences between the use of discourse markers and composition quality in the groups. Graduate students used more discourse markers, and consequently they produced more cohesive texts.

Khatib and Safari (2011) investigated the relationship between knowledge of discourse markers and reading comprehension. The participants including 86 Iranian sophomores majoring in English took a test of discourse markers alongside a reading comprehension test. Analyzing the data showed "a high correlation between the students' knowledge of DMs (i.e., their correct recognition of discourse markers) and their reading comprehension. Moreover, high correlation carries a strong regression power and scores on a test of DMs could be a good indicator of the test takers' reading ability" (p. 243).

Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh (2007) aimed to search the effect of discourse markers on academic listening comprehension of 72 university students majoring in TEFL. Two different versions of a lecture were prepared for the participants to listen. Finally, the results indicated that the subjects comprehended the lecture better when discourse markers were included than when they were deleted.

Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

As Cots (2006) stated, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) considers the discourse as a 'social practice' in which the language is socially influenced and influential. It also "attempts to reveal connections between language use, power, and ideology" (Cots, 2006, p. 336). As Dijk (2003) expressed, in critical discourse analysis, discourse is considered as a practical, social, and cultural phenomenon; and also the relationship between discourse and context is considered as a dialectical relationship. Fairclough (1992) stated that CDA is not a discrete academic discipline and research in CDA is a problem-oriented interdisciplinary one; he also proposed a CDA model in which considered discourse as the result of three different types of practice: social, discursive, and textual.

Dijk (1993) discussed some principles of critical discourse analysis such as the explicit sociopolitical stance of discourse analysts, focus on dominance relations by elite groups and institutions, the patterns of access to (public) discourse for different social groups, cognitive interface' of models, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies and other social representations of the social mind, and the micro- and the macro-levels of social structure.

Worldwide Studies on Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

Baker, et al. (2008) combined critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press by analyzing a 140-million-word corpus of British news articles about refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants. Finally, they suggested a framework for adopting corpus approaches in critical discourse analysis.

Lamb (2013) examined new methods of analysis in critical discourse analysis of multiple genres over time which provides a detailed way of using critical discourse analysis diachronically for multiple texts, analyzing the textual, intertextual and contextual. The author argues that "because there is not a binary relationship between power at an elite level and resistance at a grassroots level, power and resistance rather being present everywhere, critical discourse analysis can and should examine simultaneously multiple societal 'levels' (p. 334).

Bergvall and Remlinger (2014) investigated the production of and resistance to traditional gender roles in the classroom discourse of university students. Based on the results achieved through turn and word count, "women appear to have achieved an equal access to the public floor in these academic exchanges, yet a closer examination of the content and context of their discourse levels complex struggles for control of the conversational floor" (p. 453).

Iranian Studies on Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

Sadeghi, et al. (2012) applied Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis (CCDA) in order to analyze English Language classroom interaction with 22 EFL learners (12 females and 10 males). The required data gathered from learners' performance on Oral Interpretation course. The findings indicated that "the male dominance could be concealed in discourse control, types of questions, and turn-taking. Male participants tended to exert more power and used less indirect language, more negative face, and fewer politeness phenomena" (p. 166).

Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2012) investigated the impact of critical discourse analysis (CDA) on TEFL students' critical thinking (CT) ability in Reading Journalistic Texts classes. The participants divided into control group (24 participants) and experimental group (29 participants). After ensuring the homogeneity of groups' proficiency level and critical thinking ability through pretest, the experimental group received critically analyzes teacher-distributed articles and devise follow-up presentations based on CDA. The findings indicated that "CDA has a positive and significant influence on learners' critical thinking ability. CDA was also found to have the highest impact on two components of CT, interpretation and recognizing unstated assumption" (p. 37).

Sadeghi and Asadi (2011) examined the applicability of critical discourse analytical tools in an Iranian EFL classroom. The participants of the current study were 20 upper-intermediate EFL learners who received a writing test as pretest and then in the treatment stage they trained how to apply the critical discourse analytical tools into their writings and finally they concluded that "teaching critical discourse analytical tools can lead to improvements in writings of upper-intermediate EFL learners" (p. 53).

Hemmati and Nasser karimvand (2011) conducted a critical discourse analysis of five English language classes in Iran. The participants were BA students majoring in TEFL. The method used in this study was observation of five reading language classes through Foucauldian critical discourse analysis (CDA) and Nunan's (1989) observation sheet. The findings indicated that classroom discourses of similar classes could be different as "instructors' different viewpoints toward language teaching and learning that casts effect on the discourse of their classes" (p. 176). Hence, "when the final goal of language learning is transformation and social awareness, increasing instructors' awareness toward principles of language teaching and learning as social practice can make dramatic changes. This awareness can be built and fostered via various methods like holding teacher education programs or conducting open and critically based discussions among language teachers" (p. 176).

Teacher Discourse

Teacher's discourse is important as a part of teacher's teaching manner. Teacher talk as a tool to communicate with learners is defined as "the variety of language used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 543). Responsible teachers pay a significant attention to the quality of teacher discourse as a means to enhance the quality of their teaching which has a direct relation with the students' success or failure. This issue has a prominent significance for

EFL teachers in order to make a productive learning situation where the nonnative students can participate and learn from.

A long history presented for teachers discourse that indicate that most portion of classroom discourse is dedicated to teachers and students are rarely asked to share their thinking (Kennedy, 2004). Related to this, Read (2008, p. 612) mentions that "the classroom teacher has the highest degree of authority/power in the classroom, followed by other adults such as classroom assistants, and then the pupils, who have the least degree of power/agency".

Worldwide Studies on Teacher Discourse

Webb, et al. (2004) examined the impact of teacher discourse on the behavior and achievement of students in the context of a semester-long program of cooperative learning in four middle school mathematics classrooms. The results indicated that the "student behavior largely mirrored the discourse modeled by and the expectations communicated by teachers. Teachers tended to give unlabeled calculations, procedures, or answers instead of labeled explanations. Teachers often instructed using a recitation approach in which they assumed primary responsibility for solving the problem, having students only provide answers to discrete steps. Finally, teachers rarely encouraged students to verbalize their thinking or to ask questions. Students adopting the role of help-giver showed behavior very similar to that of the teacher: doing most of the work, providing mostly low-level help, and infrequently monitoring other students' level of understanding. The relatively passive behavior of students needing help corresponded to expectations communicated by the teacher about the learner as a fairly passive recipient of the teacher's transmitted knowledge.

Lemaire, Dessus and Baillé (1998) conducted a study to investigate the lexical, morphosyntactical, and pragmatic aspects of the two discourses depending whether the teacher is face-to-face or at a distance. The results showed no difference at face-to-face or at a distance for each of the investigated levels.

Webb, et al. (2007) searched the role of teacher discourse in effective group work. Their sample included three elementary school teachers and their students in Southern California. Based on the method used in this study, teacher and student participation videotaped and audiotaped, and student achievement measured. The results showed a relation between teachers' participation and students' participation. "While all teachers asked students to share and to explain their thinking, they implemented these practices to different degrees and in different ways. The differences in teacher practices corresponded to differences in student participation and student achievement across the three classrooms" (p. 28).

Iranian Studies on Teacher Discourse

Hosseini Fatemi, Pishghadam and Adel (2012) aimed to analyze the commodified identities construction in EFL context of Iran. The participants were six teachers and six learners. The results of the content analysis of the textbooks, teachers and learners' data showed "the existence and construction of commodified identities, though there were intra and inter variations among the teachers' responses regarding commodified identities" (p. 32).

Jahankhah and Mohseny (2014) analyzed the role of teacher's discourse in the development of learners' speaking skill. The participants were 32 intermediate English Foreign Language learners in a control and an experimental group. The treatment for the experimental group was exposing to teacher's discourse (written and spoken). It was concluded that the teacher's discourse has a significant impact on the learners' speaking skill.

Ghabanchi, Morady Moghaddam and Malekzadeh (2011) investigated EFL teacher discourse while presenting reading skill using Bloom's cognitive taxonomy. To meet the end, the researchers analyzed learners' pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities and audio-recorded voices of teachers. The research concluded that "a) there is little congruency between teachers' discourse and learners' proficiency level; b) teacher discourse is so limited and is incapable to target higher-level thinking processes which are placed in more abstract levels in Bloom's taxonomy; and c) higher-level thinking processes are to a great degree dependent on learners' language proficiency" (p. 2).

Discussion

Based on the studies done on discourse analysis and by comparing the worldwide and Iranian studies conducted in this realm, following the results are mentioned and discussed separately for each of the sections: classroom discourse, discourse markers, critical discourse analysis, and teacher discourse.

Comparing Worldwide and Iranian Classroom Discourse Studies

Classroom discourse, as one of the important strategies resulted in the produce of teaching and learning, needs to be investigated especially in the EFL contexts, like Iran. Most of the (worldwide or Iranian) studies conducted on classroom discourse investigated one of the qualities of teacher-student interaction in the class.

The number of studies done in the EFL context of Iran on classroom discourse is very limited in comparison to the worldwide studies in this realm. This lack back to the investigation of discorsal aspects of power relations in Iranians' classes, the impact of students' classroom discourse on their public context (like Baxter's study, 2002), studies on linguistic perspectives (like the study of Green, 1983). Hence, the research done on the students' and teachers' interaction in Iran are adequate enough and revealed similar findings as the worldwide ones and both confirmed the direct relation between them.

Comparing Worldwide and Iranian Discourse Markers Studies

Reviewing the worldwide and Iranian studies on discourse markers shows that most of these studies analyzed certain discourse markers or their impact on different macro or micro skills. In both of the contexts, the frequency and function of discourse markers in interview or conversations (such as: yes, no, Okay, yeah, you know, etc.) were analyzed (e.g. House, 2013; Nejadansari and Mohammadi, 2014). A comparison among these studies shows that there is a difference between the usage of discourse markers by native and nonnative speakers of English in quantity and quality. Furthermore, Jalilifar's (2008) study confirmed the Norment's (1994) findings as both found a correlation in the frequency ties and the quality of writing.

Another studies done related to discourse markers is investigating them for different skills (like reading comprehension, listening comprehension, etc.). Further Iranian studies on discourse markers would be on: investigating certain discourse markers' usage among Iranian EFL learners (like the study of Fuller, 2003), utilizing discourse markers by male and female learners (like the study done by Liao, 2008), investigating discourse markers in oral narratives (like the study of Norrick, 2001).

It seems that in comparison to the other scopes of discourse, the studies conducted in Iran on discourse markers, the studies conducted in Iran on discourse markers are adequate. The past studies conducted on the use of discourse markers by Iranian students (Lahuerta Martinez, 2004) indicated that they found it difficult to use in order to provide a coherent text, and the recent studies done in this realm also confirmed it (e.g. Rezvani Kalajahi, Abdullah & Baki, 2012). Altogether, most of the researchers investigated the discourse markers from descriptive and contrastive perspectives, it is recommended to investigate them from experimental view.

Comparing Worldwide and Iranian Critical Discourse Analysis Studies

Most of the conducted studies on classroom discourse confessed the essential role of critical skills in the teaching and learning processes. There are many worldwide studies of critical classroom discourse analysis, the researchers suggested new methods for analyzing critical discourse. Among the literature, there is no Iranian query attempting to construct a framework or method of analyzing critical classroom discourse that suits the EFL context of Iran. It is recommended for further research to prepare these pre-requisites to done research in this realm and to achieve more accurate results.

A comparison between the studies done by Bergvall and Remlinger (2014) and Sadeghi, et al. (2012) showed controversial findings as the latter one discovered equal access of women to the public floor in the traditional roles of gender but the Iranian study indicated that in the classroom interactions male participants have more power. Hence, further studies are needed in order to assess the validity and generalizability of the findings.

Comparing Worldwide and Iranian Teachers Discourse Studies

In the teachers discourse scope, the study conducted by Ghabanchi, Morady Moghaddam and Malekzadeh (2011) is comparable to the Nystrand's (2006) study and Applebee, Langer, Nystrand and Gamoran's (2003) study as both investigated the role of teacher discourse on reading comprehension. The findings of worldwide studies (such as two studies mention below) discussed the direct effect of teachers discourse on reading comprehension skill but the Iranian study indicated no effect on reading comprehension or proficiency of Iranian students. It must be mentioned that these results are not generalizable unless the duplication of research on the issue. It must be mentioned that the study run by Jahankhah and Mohseni (2014) on the relation between teacher discourse and students' speaking is a unique one that no worldwide research was found as empirical and clear as this query.

Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to conduct a systematic review investigating the studies that have made use of discourse analysis in an EFL context. Reviewing the conducted studies in the related literature suggested that classroom discourse, discourse markers, critical discourse analysis, and teacher discourse were the main interested research area in different Iranian contexts. Such a wide application of discourse analysis approves the fact that discourse analysis can be used in different aspects of EFL teaching. Classroom discourse which emphasizes on different interactional patterns in a classroom is a relatively new research area in Iranian contexts. Further studies can investigate the classroom discourse by making use of different frameworks in different types of classroom in order to identify the type of interactions used by teachers and students. This may enable them to improve their interactions based on the identified problems. It seems that in comparison to the other scopes of discourse, the studies conducted in Iran on discourse markers are adequate. However, there are still many variables playing important role in usage of discourse markers. Critical Discourse Analysis which considers the discourse as a 'social practice' is one of the least researched area of investigation in different Iranian contexts, due to socio-political reasons. As far as the authors are concerned there is no Iranian query attempting to construct a framework or method of analyzing critical classroom discourse that suits the EFL context of Iran. Teachers' discourse as an important part of teacher's teaching manner investigates different types of discourse used by teachers during classroom activities. This may include "challenging students' perspectives, asking cognitive and metacognitive questions, and scaffolding students' learning" (Gillies & Boyle, 2008, 1333). Further research can investigate these factors in teachers' discourse which is relatively an unnoticed area of investigation.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ASSESSMENT AND READING SKILL OF FEMALE EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between self-assessment and reading skill is the subject of language learning. The main purpose of the thesis is to find out the role of self-assessment in EFL learning in developing language learning and then improving reading ability. From One hundred and sixty EFL learners studying in institutes, one hundred and thirty intermediate learners were chosen based on their scores on Oxford Placement Test. The students were asked to answer the self-assessment questionnaire. Then a reading test was run, which was based on the TOEFL test. Spearman rank-order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test to using SPSS 22 to answer the research questions and to investigate the possible relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners. Spearman rho value was positive, indicating a positive correlation between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

Key Words: Self –assessment, Self –evaluation, Reading skill, Intrinsic motivation.

1. Introduction

Students need to know about their ability, how much progress they are making and what they can (or cannot yet) do with the skills they have acquired. Boud (1995) explained that Student self-assessment, as one type of alternative assessment, has gained substantial attention among educators due to its potential both to facilitate learning as well as to serve as a measurement tool. Self-assessment has been assumed to be effective for learning because it promotes learner's self-regulatory learning and autonomy (e.g., Dann, 2002; Oscarson, 1989, 1997; Paris and Paris, 2001).

The self-regulation of cognition and behaviour are important aspects of learning and the extent to which school students become self-regulators of their own learning influences their academic success (Beishuizen & Steffens, 2011; Lyn, Cuskelly, O'callaghan & Grey, 2011; Zimmerman, 2008; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Assessment has "the most powerful influence on student learning" (George & Cowan, 1999, p.8). Therefore, teachers should always keep enough, and accurate, information on which they can build their judgment to improve their students' performance (Shaaban, 2005).

Blanche and Merino (1989) describe Self-assessment accuracy as Self-assessment is a precondition for learner autonomy. Students need to be able to appraise their performance accurately for themselves so that they themselves understand what more they need to learn and do not become dependent on their teachers. A fundamental reason for self-assessment is then to help the learner become aware of achievement reached at any given time and over a longer term, and in this way enhance learning. Blanche and Merino (1989) summarized the literature on self-assessment of foreign language skills and pointed out that self-assessment accuracy would lead to learner autonomy and help teachers to become aware of learners' individual needs. Also, they reported that self-assessment practices "appeared to have increased the learners' motivation" (p. 324).

Self-assessment practices in the classroom also had an effect on teachers in that they involved "making explicit what is normally implicit" and required the students to become more active and aware of their own learning, as noted by Black et al (2003, p. 60; 2004, p. 16). According to Crooks (2001) explained assessment is "any process that provides information about the thinking, achievement or progress of students" (p. 1). Moreover, not only students can benefit from self-assessment, but also teachers can receive very useful information to notice the level of their students'

skills. Based on this, teachers can plan their teaching methods and future lessons (cited in Oscarson, 2009, p.17).

Oskarson (1989) talked of six different reasons why self-assessment procedures can be beneficial in language learning, namely promotion of learning, raised level of awareness, improved goal-orientation, expansion of range of assessment, shared assessment burden and beneficial post-course effects. Reading comprehension strategies help readers get meaning from text. Readers employ prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading. According to Baniabdelrahman (2010) teachers assess whether students are able to comprehend the general idea of a text; recognize the type of a text, e.g. interactive, informative, narrative, or evaluative; arrange the sequence of information in a text; use pre-reading activities to predict what a text would be about; guess the meanings of particular words from context; extract specific information from a text; and use different reading strategies, e.g. skimming, scanning, speed reading, paced reading, or timed reading. The idea of self-assessment has obtained an advantage in recent years in the European countries, as it has been emphasized in curricula (Huhta 2003: 20). Self-assessment can be used in every area of knowledge. Self-assessment can play a crucial role in learning process because it gives information about their abilities in different areas, especially when they need improvement. The study examines how the students understand their own Reading abilities. It is suggested to realize whether students' perceptions of ability in this area may be affected by their acquaintance with and practice of self-assessment (cited in Oscarcon 1989).

The effect of self-assessment on language teaching and learning has been described and researched in a large number of studies (see Maslovaty & Kuzi, 2002; Pope, 2005; Sadler, 2006; Tan, 2004, 2007). The effect of self-assessment on language teaching and learning has been described and researched in a large number of studies (see Maslovaty & Kuzi, 2002; Pope, 2005; Sadler, 2006; Tan, 2004, 2007). According to Sullivan and Hall (1997) students who overestimated their performance are not clear about the standard of judging their work and there should be some guidance about the teacher's expectation.

She also found that self-assessment process leads to learners' autonomy but she did not mention that self-assessment can be useful for employing it in class or not. Brookhart (1997) suggested that self-evaluation encourages students to think of what is important for them in the process of learning. According to Ellis (1999) if students learn to estimate their strength or weaknesses, they can make a difference in their view of the real world. She believed that when students do the action of self-assessment they can think of what is good for them. Claxton (1995) realized that self-assessment is an important activity for learners to realize the subject matter better and this process is an initiative activity.

According to Glazer (1995), Levy (1999), Manning (1997), and Optiz (1995) self-assessment process can improve writing process, encourage independency and improve reading, because in this process students share their work with other people and realize about their improvement. In the field of self-assessment, Javaherbakhsh (2010) studied the impacts of self-assessment on Iranian EFL learner's writing skill. He concluded that the administered self-assessment techniques to the experimental group improved writing skill significantly.

Baniabdelrahman (2010) investigated the effect of Jordanian Eleventh grade students' self-assessment on their performance in reading in English. The findings of the study revealed that student self-assessment had positive effect on their performance in reading in English. Vangah (2013) investigated the effect of self-assessment on reading skill and vocabulary Knowledge. The results showed that self-assessment had a significant effect on reading and no impact on vocabulary. Lynch (2007) emphasized the importance of self-assessment for improving speaking performance.

Naeini (2011) investigated Self-assessment and the impact on language skills. The results indicated the significant improvement in the learners' writing ability applying the writing self-assessment check list in experimental group.

The present study has educational significance and extends professionals' understanding of possible relation of self-assessment and reading skill. This paper makes an attempt to consider the following question: Is there any relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian students?

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the participants were 160 students who were learning English as foreign language at institute in Iran. They were female students. They were from five different classes and had the same

teacher. Their ages varied between 14 to 18 years old. In order to choose a homogenous group the researcher used an Oxford Placement Test. Among these, 130 students who had one SD below the mean and one SD above the mean were selected. All these 130 students involved in the study and took part in all the self-assessment research.

3. Instruments

The instruments for data collection consisted of Oxford Placement Test, TOEFL test and self-assessment test. First, The Oxford Placement Test measures students' proficiency. And it was designed to assess students' knowledge. According to Dave Allan (1985) it is designed to measure a test taker's ability to understand a range of grammatical forms and the meanings they convey in a wide range of contexts.

Second, TOEFL is a trademark of ETS (Educational Testing Service), a private non-profit organization, which designs and administers the tests. In the present study, the reading test was chosen from Broukal (2005) Published by Peterson's test book. The reading comprehension test included ten passages, with reading comprehension questions in multiple choice formats. The students had to read a given text then to select the correct item. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was (.742) which means that the test was reliable.

The result of reliability indicates that the instrument could be considered as a reliable tool for the main study. Third, The questionnaire used for data collection developed by Oskarsen (1987). It consisted of 30 items. In order to consider the validity of items, the back translation process was done. The values of Cronbach's Alpha for self-assessment questionnaire were (.820).

First, in order to select the students among 160 students of five classes, an Oxford Placement Test was run. 130 of them with intermediate level of proficiency were selected as a homogenous group. This reading test was conducted by the researcher. The time allotted for the test was 60 minutes. Then the self-assessment and questionnaire were run. Spearman rank-order correlation test was run to the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test using SPSS 22 to answer the research questions and to investigate the possible relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL learners.

Table 1- Correlation between Self-Assessment and Reading Skill of Iranian EFL Students

			Reading scores
Spearman's rho	self- assessment	Correlation Coefficient	.490**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	130

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output provided a table giving the correlation coefficient between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students, the significance level and the number of cases. Spearman rho value ($\rho = +.490$) was positive, indicating a positive correlation between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students. This value indicated the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The higher the participants estimated their command in using foreign language, the better their reading comprehension scores were. The result of the Spearman Rank-Order was interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) classification. Cohen (1988, pp. 79-81) suggested the following guidelines for interpreting the results of the correlation coefficient:

Table 2- Cohen's Guidelines for Interpreting the Results of the Correlation Coefficient

Interpretation	Correlation value
Small correlation	.10 to .29
Medium correlation	.30 to .49
Large correlation	.50 to 1.0

The above guidelines were applied to interpret the rho value found in the present study. There was a "medium" correlation between the two variables ($\rho = .490 \leq .5$), suggesting "medium" relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students. The result suggests that there was a significant correlation between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students.

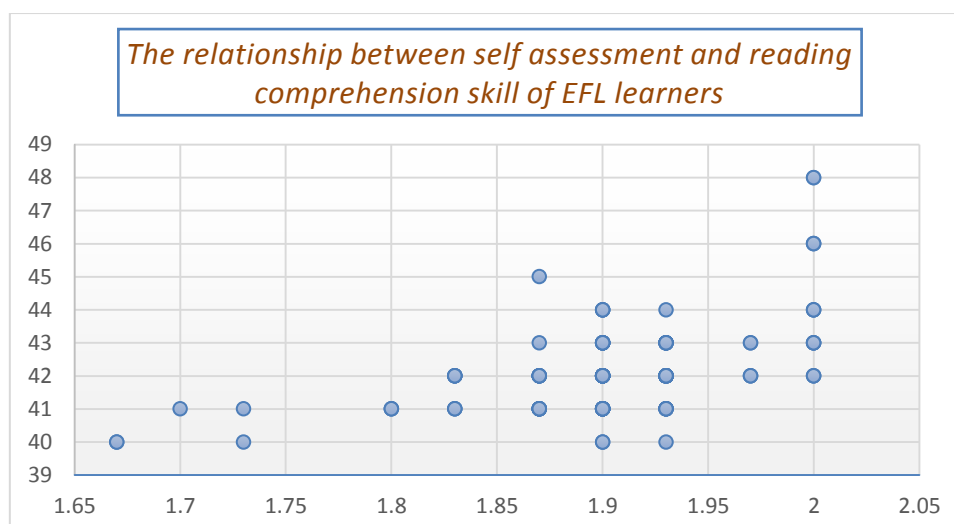


Figure 2- The relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students

4. Discussion

In this part, the result of the present study compared with different findings. The subject of this study is *the relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of female student*. Based on this topic, this study makes an attempt to consider the following questions: The relationship between Self-assessment and reading Skill of Iranian intermediate EFL students.

To provide answer to the research question and to examine the possible relationship between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students, Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Test was run to the results of the self-assessment questionnaire and the reading test scores. SPSS output provided a table giving the correlation coefficient between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students, the significance level and the number of cases.

Spearman rho value ($\rho = +.490$) was positive, indicating a positive correlation between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students. These findings are consistent with Baniabdelrahman (2010) who investigated the effect of Jordanian Eleventh grade students' self-assessment on their performance in reading in English. The findings of the study revealed that student self-assessment had positive effect on their performance in reading in English.

The result of self-assessment in this study are consistent with Vangah (2013) who investigated the effect of self-assessment on reading skill and vocabulary Knowledge. The results showed that self-assessment had a significant effect on reading and no impact on vocabulary. All of these studies support the result of our research.

5. Conclusions

The present research studied the relationship between self-assessment and reading skill. 160 students studying in an intermediate level took part in this study. In order to select a homogenous group the researcher used an oxford placement test. Then 130 students were selected. Then the self-assessment questionnaire used for data collection. Then reading test was run. This test was adapted from the TOEFL reading comprehension (Broukal, 2005) Published by Peterson's book.

This test used as a tool to explain the reading proficiency of the students. Based on the information obtained from the study, there was a significant correlation between self-assessment and reading skill of Iranian EFL students. ($\rho = +.490$, $p \leq .01$). . Based on research done by researchers, Self-assessment can be an extremely useful tool for improving the overall quality. Therefore, they started to overcome their problems and their problem improved. Then self-assessment reveals their learning problem and leads to improvement in students' learning.

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THE EFFECT OF MI-ORIENTED LANGUAGE TEACHING ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to apply multiple intelligences theory in an Iranian Technical and Vocational College (TVC), based on the profile of intelligences, which resulted from the administration of the MIDAS questionnaire in order to investigate the effects on the reading comprehension. Students of TVC are considered to be 'academically weakest' among all other Iranian university students. The results of the questionnaire and the data generated from observations have been used in designing sets of activities for various types of intelligences (logical mathematical and linguistic) in order to foster students' reading comprehension. The overall activities of students were analyzed and compared to the intelligences' profiles. Two homogenous classes of TVC, cautiously selected, took part in the study and the control group did not receive any special treatment in the form of instruction based on multiple intelligence theory whereas the experimental group received the MI-oriented instruction in 14 consecutive sessions. Then an achievement test was administered to the two groups. The statistical analysis of the results showed that the MI-instructed class appeared to be most advantageous for TVC students and they outperformed the control group. Pedagogical implications for curriculum and assessment review of TVC students are discussed.

Key Words: multiple intelligence, technical and vocational college, reading comprehension

1. Introduction

In his book *Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner (1983, 1993a) introduced a controversial concept pertaining to human intelligence that impacted educators' views of the teaching and learning process. Gardner (1983, 1993a) rejected the unitary concept of intelligence and proposed the existence of eight intelligences which he called Multiple Intelligences (MIs). Common to all eight intelligences are the abilities to deal effectively with real-life problems, to produce new problems and solve them, and to make a positive contribution to society (Campbell, Campbell, & Dickinson, 2004).

Adherents of the MI theory believe that it opens chances for students who possess a low IQ and get labeled as a result as having low intelligence (Gardner, 1991; Sew, 2003). For educators, the acceptance of MI theory implies that instruction can and should be differentiated; this allows for instruction catering to a wider variety of learners (Valiande, 2010).

However, detractors of the theory believe that it lacks any empirical evidence that would make it suitable for classroom application (Waterhouse, 2006). Some researchers also warn against using the theory because it may be misunderstood (Hoerr, 1996; Kornhaber, Fierros, & Veenema, 2004). For example, Hoerr (1996) argued that teachers tend to expose students to all kinds of intelligences in every lesson, while Kornhaber et al. (2004) suggested that teachers tend to utilize only low-level and

superficial activities when they use MI theory. Despite the existence of a large body of research that has addressed the employability of MI in classrooms (Anderson, 2007; Armstrong, 2009; Huebner, 2010; Kornhaber et al., 2004; Lash, 2004; Loori, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Snider, 2001), few studies have been conducted on foreign language acquisition using MIs, especially in the technical and vocational setting (Campbell et al., 2004; Folse, 2004).

Technical and Vocational education aims to train skilled and semi-skilled workers in a variety of vocational fields. Courses are offered at different levels depending upon the student's previous standard of education. Technical and Vocational education and training is overseen by the Technical and Vocational Training Organisation (TVTO) under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. With the exception of the full High School Diploma in the technical or skills stream (which is overseen by the Ministry of Education), all formal and non-formal vocational training is overseen by this body. The first award available at tertiary level in Iran is the Associate Degree (also known as the Kardani). This is a two year post-secondary course offered by universities and higher education institutes shortly technical and vocational colleges (TVC). Candidates are required to complete between 67 and 72 credits over the course of 2 years.

Students of TVC are from technical/vocational and Kar-Denesh (knowledge-skill) streams and are considered to be 'academically weakest' among all other Iranian University students. They are required to pass 7 credit English courses including: 2 credit pre-requisite course, 3 credit general English, and 2 credit technical English. Although they study 7 credit courses at college, the result is students with the least command of English in reading comprehension skill as most teachers and instructors put it.

The Eight Intelligences

According to Gardner (1983), "there exist some intelligences, that are relatively independent of one another, and that can be fashioned and combined in a multiplicity of adaptive ways by individuals and cultures" (p. 9). Thus, seven autonomous intelligences were originally posited by Gardner (1983): verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Naturalist intelligence, the eighth dimension of intelligence, was added by Gardner in 1999 to his initial group of seven. Gardner explains that the possibility of unveiling new intelligences exists such as "existential intelligence," which he suggested as the ninth intelligence (Gardner, 1999).

In proposing the theory of MI, Gardner promoted a more inclusive definition of intelligence by advocating a shift from evaluative testing and correlation of test scores, to look at more natural sources of information relating to how people develop skills that are important to their culture and way of life.

Armstrong (1999) suggested that intelligences are multidimensional, whereby individuals may not have developed all dimensions of a given intelligence to an equal degree. Even though each person possesses all eight intelligences, everyone has a unique profile; the same way, everyone has a unique finger print profile (Armstrong, 1999). Some intelligences may be stronger than others, and a given intelligence may be enhanced and developed over time through new experiences and opportunities for learning (Armstrong, 1999). While reasonable, Armstrong's claims remain questionable as they lack any rigorous empirical evidence.

MIIs in the Classroom

Although Gardner (2006) never expected his theory to become so popular among educators, Campbell et al. (2004) claimed that "every human life will be enriched through developing many kinds of intelligence to the greatest extent possible" (p. xxii). By recognizing that everyone has different cognitive strengths, Gardner (1993b) emphasized the pluralistic view of learning and hence the multiplicity of learning styles. Though any individual can develop each of the eight intelligences, Gardner (1999) suggests there is usually one that is the strongest which becomes our preferred learning style.

MIT is proposed and put into practice in a way to call for an alternative classroom design to traditional classroom setting. It has been embraced by the teachers in need of an educational program which addresses a variety of ways people learn (Shore, 2004). In order to explain why MI is an effective way of teaching and why it can overcome some of our problems in education, Moran, Kornhaber and Gardner (2006: 23) give the following example;

Think of LEGO building blocks. If we have only one kind of block to play with, we can build only a limited range of structures. If we have a number of different block shapes that can interconnect to create a variety of patterns and structures, we can accomplish more nuanced and complex designs. The eight or nine intelligences work the same way.

In support of the quotation above, Nolen (2003: 119) suggests that the presentation of foreign language teaching material should engage all or most of the intelligences due to the fact that each of the intelligences is potentially available in every learner. Hence, employing MI does not necessarily mean designing a lesson in nine different ways so that all students can access classroom materials prepared separately for each and all of the intelligence types. Instead, materials should allow students with different intelligence types to interact with each other and to develop the intelligences in which they are less strong (Moran, Kornhaber and Gardner, 2006; Heacox, 2002).

Poole's (2000: 532) clear description of an MI classroom seems to be helpful in understanding the potential of the theory in practice. In an integrated and cooperative MI classroom, the teacher employs non-traditional approaches to construction of meaning through a flexible but careful planning. The small social groups and learner-centered activities enable the students to share information and get a better understanding of what is learnt. In such a relaxed and non-threatening learning environment that is characterized by contextual clues, learners receive comprehensible input by working collaboratively. These characteristics of an MI classroom, as described by Poole, lead the researcher to the conclusion that MIT is inclusive of many familiar approaches such as whole language, cooperative learning, and other appropriate pedagogies that take children beyond the limits of rote learning (2000: 540).

Classroom research has reported that MIT is a promising theoretical construct which can foster students' learning. Haley's (2004: 171) research on the ways teachers apply MIT in foreign and second language classrooms showed that students in experimental groups outperformed those in control groups while developing a high degree of satisfaction and positive attitude toward the content. Emig (1997: 50) associates MIT with "magic" since it is highly advantageous for both students and teachers because students feel more competent and confident in an MI-based classroom. Similarly, in agreement with Emig (1997) and Haley (2004), Hamurlu (2007) found that MIT-based instruction increased students' achievement in English classes and had positive effect on students' attitudes towards English.

Assessment and evaluation of the instruments designed specifically for intelligence types have also drawn attention. With such an aim, McMahon and Rose (2004) evaluated the reliability of the Teele's (2000) Inventory of Multiple Intelligences (TIMI) and investigated the relationship between intellectual preferences and reading achievement. Their results revealed that the instrument does not provide consistent measurement and needs further development and refinement (2004: 48) although relationship was found between reading comprehension and logical-mathematical intelligence. Research has also shed light on the effect of MI activities on a diverse group of students' learning of another language. Noble (2004: 205) claimed that one of the greatest challenges for teachers today is to provide curriculum which effectively caters to the needs of diverse groups students and "...the MI framework was providing more options for children who were not academically or linguistically strong in English to demonstrate their knowledge." Shearer (2004) investigated three interrelated propositions about a reliable and valid assessment for multiple intelligences, MI-inspired instruction and curriculum and the use of strength-based learning activities and concluded that MI profiles of students may be used by students and teachers alike to further students' educational agendas because they serve as the basis for personalized educational planning.

Work on MIT has growingly been carried out in Turkey most of which were on young learners and revealed clashing results. Özdemir, Güneysu and Tekkaya (2006) found that logical-mathematical intelligence was the leading intelligence type followed by interpersonal and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence while the musical intelligence was the least common intelligence type held by students. In contrast, Yilmaz and Fer's (2003) small scale study with 16 primary school students showed that visual-spatial intelligence was the leading whereas interpersonal and intrapersonal were the least common intelligence types.

While learners are in the center of some studies, teachers are the center of attention in some others (Sad and Sarýbas, 2008; Barrington, 2004). Sad and Arýbas (2008) investigated the effect of materials and activities based on MIT in relation to some variables on 102 English teachers from 32 primary

schools and found that English teachers utilized MIT at a moderate level and that a balanced attention was not paid to students' intelligence types. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in terms of gender, the program of graduation and seniority in relation to teachers' utilization of MIT. Likewise, Barrington (2004) ran three workshops for university-level foreign language instructors which allowed them to consider MI in the context of their own teaching. According to the results of that study, most of the instructors knew little or nothing about the theory before the workshop. After the workshop, they found the theory relevant to and applicable in their higher education teaching contexts. However, since the study was based on a three-hour workshop, it was insufficient to bring about much change in terms of the teaching practices of the participants of the study.

As can be seen in the aforementioned review of literature looking at various aspects of MIT, there are clashing results which require more research shedding light on the issue. No research has been done in the realm of Iranian Technical and Vocational College Students in order to show the different types of intelligence and their effect on their reading comprehension. Hence, in order to build onto our current knowledge of MIT, this study aims to explore:

1. The types of intelligences held by Iranian technical and vocational college students;
2. The effect of MI-oriented language teaching on the reading comprehension of these learners.

2. Methodology

Participants

This study was conducted with two groups: the control group was composed of 38 students (18 males, and 20 females), the experimental class comprised of 37 students (19 males, and 18 females). Their ages ranged from 18-27. None of the classes received any special kind of treatment. They all were taught by the researcher through the course called pre-requisite English course in the normal instruction of SAMA technical and vocational college lasting for some 14 sessions. They were not told that they are under experiment. As the main focus in Iranian educational system is on developing students reading comprehension, no other skills such as listening, speaking or even writing is emphasized in the system. Therefore, the researcher had no intention whatsoever to teach other modules such as listening, speaking, and writing.

In terms of homogeneity, the both classes had roughly studied English in technical/vocational and knowledge/work streams in high school before entering the university. None of the students attended any private and institutional English courses. In fact the researcher did not have that much difficulty determining the homogeneity of the groups since the subjects were all technical and vocational students with a command of English in an elementary stage. The researcher used Nelson's ABC Test in a pilot study to determine the homogeneity. A t-test was run between the two groups to see whether there was any significant difference between them in terms of their reading comprehension skills. There was no significant difference between the two groups ($t\text{-value} = 0.184$, $P > 0.05$, $df\ 22$).

Data Collection Procedure and Instrument

The instrument used was the Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS), a commercially designed instrument which was designed by Shearer in 1996. MIDAS has been used to determine the subjects' multiple intelligence scores. It is a self report instrument of intellectual disposition designed by Shearer (1996), a professor of MI research from Kent State University, to be completed by respondent. MIDAS is the instrument recommended by Gardner himself for measuring multiple intelligences (Hosseini, S., 2011).

It contains 119 Likert-type (from a to f). The questions cover areas of abilities, interests, skills and activities. There is no right or wrong response, and respondents are asked to read each item and select what they perceive as the best answer at that point in time in their life. Research on the reliability and validity of MIDAS has revealed that the MIDAS scales can provide a reasonable estimate of one's MI (Shearer, 1996). At the time of the present study, the instrument tapped eight of the nine multiple intelligences; existential intelligence, which is one of the recent additions to the list, was not part of MIDAS. It should be mentioned that MIDAS scores are not absolute and it may change during the individual's life as he/she grows up (Hosseini, S., 2011).

MIDAS is in fact a self report measure of intellectual disposition; it may be completed by either the user (Shearer, 1996) or, in the case of a young child, by their parents. It takes approximately 45 minutes to complete the 119 multiple choice questions that cover eight areas of abilities, interests,

skills and activities. Users are asked to read each item and select what they perceive as the best answer at that point in time in their life. It is so important that the responses are realistic. Since the MIDAS is not a test, there are no time limits and as all humans differ, there is no right or wrong response. Users are not forced to answer or guess at every question, as each item has an "I don't know" or "Does not apply" choice. Users are asked to select this answer whenever it is the best (Hosseini, S., 2011).

According to Shearer, C. B. (1997) the reliability of MIDAS is .85 (alpha cronbach). A lot of its reliability and validity (Shearer, 1996, 2006) have indicated that the MIDAS scales can provide a reasonable estimate of one's MI strengths and limitations that correspond with external rating and criteria. The MIDAS questionnaire has been completed by approximately 10,000 people worldwide (Hosseini, S. 2011).

3. Findings

This paper describes a project for measuring the improvement of the reading comprehension through the use of multiple-intelligence based instruction for technical and vocational college students. We were interested to know whether MI-oriented language instruction can make any meaningful difference in reading comprehension for TVC students who have some unique characteristics such as Number of Newly Acquired Vocabulary Words Immediately Following Lessons.

Theme		Control group	Experimental group
Space	<i>Average %</i>	90	60
States of matter	<i>Average%</i>	68	68
Pollution	<i>Average%</i>	66	94
Five senses	<i>Average%</i>	72	64

low attention span, being intractable, low mathematical and linguistic intelligence.

Table 1 represents the number of vocabulary words acquired by participants immediately following the lesson. It shows that students who were taught via traditional methods acquired the greatest number of new vocabulary words. This is apparent in all four cases with no exceptions. In fact, right after the first theme, students in traditional classes (control group) were able to use 90% of newly acquired vocabulary as opposed to 68%, 66%, and 72% in the case of the other sections that were using MI (experimental groups). Similarly, the highest percentages were noted in the case of the other three themes: 92% (Theme 2), 94% (Theme 3), and 94% (Theme 4)

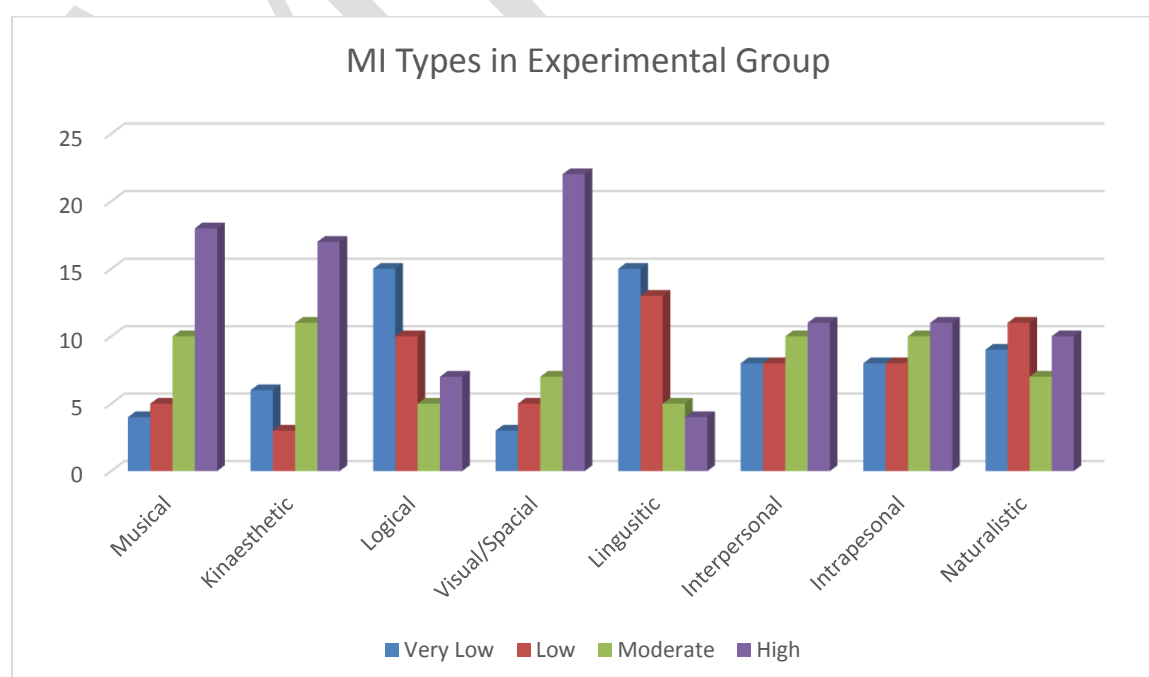


Figure 1 MI types

The experimental group (N=37) and were freshmen TVC students from the city of Urmia in East Azerbaijan, Iran. The group was tested using the MIDAS questionnaire (the questionnaire was translated into Persian and interpretation of results was done by MIDAS) at the beginning of the course which students were almost starting their pre-requisite English course. During the course educational activities were designed based on profiles and levels generated by MIDAS. The 8 types of intelligences and levels are presented for the experimental groups in figure 1.

Table.2. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
TOTAL SCORE	Equal variances assumed	8.641	.004	4.156	74	.000	3.35526	.80742	1.74644	4.96408
	Equal variances not assumed			4.156	66.717	.000	3.35526	.80742	1.74352	4.96701

An independent sample T-test was conducted to compare the final exam scores for the control and experimental classes. In this section of the research we are only interested to see whether

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
TOTAL SCORE	CONTROL	38	13.7763	4.05944	.65853
	EXPERIMENTAL	38	10.4211	2.87998	.46719

there is any significant difference among the two groups or not. The rationale behind selecting independent sample t-test is that we would like to compare the mean scores of the two different groups of people. Since the Sig. value is not larger than 0.5, we deduct that equal variances are not assumed hence, we are to use the second line of the table (table 2). What can be inferred from the statistical analysis is that there is a significant difference between control and experimental performance (Sig. 2tailed .000). ($M = 13.77$, $SD = 4.059$) $M = 2.87$, $SD = 2.879$; $t(76) = 4.156$, $p < .05$.

The eta-squared calculated shows that this difference is outstanding. The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 3.35, 95% CI: 1.74352 to 4.96701) was very large (eta squared = .189). As stated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p.55) the eta squared within the range of .138 and higher is considered to have a large effect on the size of the effect. Table 2 is rewarding for it clearly indicates that the experimental and control class which we had chosen at the beginning of the study and which were so homogenous that there was not any difference, have now outstandingly significant difference.

4. Results and discussions

As mentioned before, this study was an action research by nature to confirm whether there is any difference between *MI-oriented language teaching* for technical and vocational students in terms of their reading comprehension achievement and the *traditional style of teaching*. The researcher's own experience and anecdotal accounts triggered the hypothesis that TVC students are unique in nature and their musical, visual, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences are better than their linguistic, logical and naturalistic intelligences. In order to test this hypothesis two groups were selected. They all were the students of SAMA technical and vocational training college. Their ages ranged from 18 to 26. The researcher himself was the instructor of the teaching material in the 2 groups. They were all exposed to a reading comprehension textbook grade 5-6. Due to some limitations of the study regarding students' low level of language proficiency, students' short attention span, their demotivation of the learning, the negative feeling and background they bring to the class, the researcher had too much difficulty in pretest as well as the post test. Nelson's ABC test was administered to the both groups in order to determine the homogeneity of the groups. As it was presupposed by the researchers and their colleagues, there was not difference in the groups' level of English language command. The rationale behind is that these students' level of proficiency was as low as those at pre-beginner level. They all confessed that since their base of learning was weak, they all gained their high school grades in English unfortunately through paying some extra money to the school principal. Interestingly enough, there were some students in each group which did not even know, English alphabets.

The experimental group received 14 consecutive sessions instruction based on Multiple Intelligence Theory. All the following four steps proposed by Christison (1996) were meticulously observed. The first step was to identify the activities frequently used in the classes and categorized them to each particular type of intelligence. Christison's list as a frame of reference was utilized in this step. Step two was to make plans by selecting appropriate classroom activities/tasks taking the following factors into account: students' needs, strength, levels, learning potentials, the nature of the subject matter, and teacher's personal teaching rationals. Step three was to use ELT multiple intelligences weekly checklist to keep track of different activities/tasks conducted in the class. As po-Ying (1999) points out we were not supposed to include activities for developing all the eight multiple intelligences within each lesson. And finally the last step was to expand classroom activities for the neglected intelligences by way of examining and analyzing the checklists for a period of time.

5. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the importance of using MI in ESL classrooms, particularly in reading comprehension as well as the learning of vocabulary. This is parallel to Schumann's (1997) finding that learning is better maintained with the use of MI theory in classrooms. However, the study also suggests two aspects that need to be taken into consideration by teachers who wish to use MI in their classrooms. The first caveat is that teachers should check their MI profiles and make sure that they do not only address those intelligences that they enjoyed most. They should address the wider spectrum of MI so that all students will learn. In addition, teachers need to be cautious not to neglect teaching higher order thinking skills when they use MI theory. The same way breadth is needed, depth within a given intelligence is also required. Actually at this level of TVC students, the application of higher thinking abilities should be postponed to its appropriate level so that students can keep the pace of understanding the basic and fundamentals of the reading skill.

Although a number of shortcomings and drawbacks can be assigned to females' classroom, the results of the study seemed to reveal that this particular ELT context reasonably acted well to a detailed and in-depth learning of reading comprehension at grade 5-6. Instructor's anecdotal accounts showed that MI-oriented language teaching context is in line with the goals set by its curriculum developers.

The findings of this study can be incorporated in practical areas of second or foreign language learning and teaching and specifically technical and vocational training colleges for a number of reasons. English teachers are expected to benefit from this study because it gives them an idea about the characteristics, and the nature of the technical and vocational students. In this case, they will have the necessary information for selecting or rejecting the types of traditional styles of teaching and

adopt and adapt an MI-oriented language teaching and modify their their teaching based on their expectations and needs.

Applying different media for providing input such as graphics, illustrations, audio and visual forms of input should be considered by materials developers in order to make the textbook more appealing to the learners and make the most of visual/spatial intelligence which is more prevalent than other intelligences among TVC students.

As Sheldon (1988) states classroom research is not a once-only activity. When a classroom is selected for research, its success or failure can only be meaningfully determined during and after its period of in-depth research. He believes that learners are not taught in a vacuum, but come from somewhere and are proceeding towards specific educational goals and future training. The type of instruction MI versus traditional ultimately needs to be evaluated in terms of its integration with, and contribution to, these longer-term goals. Different aspects of instruction are open to further evaluation and analysis. Supplementary study is needed to extract psycholinguistic analysis of the students' attitudes and perceptions towards MI-oriented language teaching. Pragmatic aspects of the instruction of TVC classrooms can also be examined in a study. Also it is possible to study what teachers and learners actually do with regard to different types, style, strategies and number of students in a TVC classroom through classroom observation and interviewing teachers and learners.

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THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WRITING SKILL ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and writing skill on Iranian intermediate EFL learners studying in English language institution in Iran. Participants of this study were randomly divided into two groups (control and experimental) on the basis of their emotional intelligence levels. They were 46 students with the same proficiency level which was intermediate specified by the institute itself. Then, the learners of both experimental and control group took a specific writing test which included six topics each of which was narrowed down into several sub-questions related to learners' personal information. The findings of the study indicated that there was significant relationship between EI components and writing skills of the learners. Moreover, three EI components had stronger impact on learners' writing skills, namely self-esteem, realism, and problem solving.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Writing Skills, Learners, Proficiency Level, Self-esteem, Realism, Problem Solving.

1. Introduction

In the cradle of science, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a significant superscription among scholars since 1995. However, in the nineteenth century, it was rooted, and in the twentieth century it reigned over the field of studying as a greater part for scholars.

Intelligence was traditionally known as memory or problem-solving ability of human in 1900s, although the non-cognitive aspects of intelligence were being studied in the ground of science by researchers. It was Thorndike who described the skill of managing and understanding people as social intelligence (Goleman, 1995).

Also, intelligence was defined by Wechsler (1958) as "the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment" (p. 7). The importance of 'intrapersonal' and 'interpersonal' aspect of intelligence as 'multiple intelligence' was proposed by Gardner (1993). He notes that they are as important as the type of intelligence typically measured by IQ and related tests. Goleman (1995) declares that "people with a lower IQ often do better in life than those with a high IQ, and explains this fact by the abilities he calls emotional intelligence" (p. 237).

It has to be mentioned that EQ has been applied into many fields of study especially in the field of second language acquisition. According to Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey, (1999, cited in Jahandar, Khodabandehlou, Seyedi, & Mousavi Dolat Abadi, 2012), EQ is a power of diagnosing what an emotion and feeling tend to be meant and what they are going to convey and the correspondence between them and how to solve problems by the vigor of them. In addition, the ability to bear emotions in mind, how to assimilate their related attitudes, and how to fathom their information and manipulate them.

As noted by Elias, 2003, (cited in Jahandar, et al, 2012), current studies have been based on the impact of emotional intelligence on success in pedagogical achievement. Almost, this concept of emotional

intelligence has been explored by a few studies conducted to see the results in the areas in which English is spoken as a second language (Goleman, 2001).

In this case, emotional intelligence is known by the idea of internal mechanism and external environment in the field of language learning (Goleman, 2001).

The integral part of language learning is writing by truth and it is a form of an art. "Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is a productive skill" (Sapkota, p. 70). It is known as calligraphy of graphic symbols that is regarded a language in written and representative form to convey thoughts and meaning so that the reader could understand the intended meaning of the writer. Kirkman (1989) (cited in Brown, 1994) writes, "... we start from the assumption that thinking about writing can improve it, and that everyone can learn to write well. Most people, in reality can write successful letters to their friends and effective complaint about faulty goals" (p. 1). Rivers (1968) declares that "writing is regarded as graphic conventions of the language which are organized in a systematic way and defining the ideas" (p. 243). This is the ultimate aim of writing skill to make students be able to express themselves through vocabulary and certain refinement structure. Also, Jordan (1999) takes writing as, "method of human inter-communication by means of conventionally visible marks" (p. 41).

Students are usually having trouble with this skill in language learning context. "Lack of ideas, cannot think of anything interesting or significant enough to write or do not know the words to use are some of the voices heard whenever the teacher assigned them an essay to write" (Nor Puteh, Rahamat, & Abdul Karim, 2010, p. 580).

Dixon, Isaacson, and Stein (2002) follow the view of some language scholars that students who usually encounter difficulties with writing are those who have emotional and/or behavioral problems. Pre-writing is the first step for writing where a writer normally should start to think and initiate. At this stage, usually students are having trouble, based on Nor Puteh, et al (2010). At the second step, students are regarded to compose the first draft. Shameem (1988) spells out the coherence and cohesion, styles and syntax as well as grammar which are the important part in this step, and writing a language is nonsense without them. In fact, it has to be taken into account that managing these all for students makes the process difficult and boring. Besides, they rarely activate their competence and try to overcome the whole task.

For this instance, it has to be said that competence and confidence can be achieved through manipulating anxiety, stress management, and intrapersonal skills under the influence of emotional intelligence.

2. The Purpose and Research Questions of the Study

In fact, this study essentially targets to measure the EI capacity of Iranian EFL learners. It evaluates the scale of their writing skill and demonstrates whether there is a relationship between EI and writing skill or not. To enhance the capacity of critical thinking, EI makes the learners be capable to perceive emotion to achieve better work in one of the most important and magnificence area of second language learning which is the writing skill. This study aids us to have students with a creative and innovative competence and tolerate the stressful and threatening writing skill's situation and finally leave better writing products, with a better result in the field of EFL.

So, this research aims to answer the following two questions:

- Do EI components influence the writing skill of Iranian EFL learners?
- Which one of the EI components has stronger impact on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill?

3. Methods and Procedure

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were 46 intermediate students from English learners of Soroush City Art Workshop, Rasht, Guilan, Iran. All participants were studying English as foreign language at intermediate level. The age range of these participants was from 13 to 22 (all were selected by the gender of male).

3.2. Instruments and procedure

The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On EQ-i) instrument was taken into consideration to estimate the degree of emotional intelligence of every participant. In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding for intermediate students, the Bar-On EQ-i was translated into learners' native language, and it was scored based on Interpretation Guide for EQ-i Composite and Content Subscale

Scores provided by Bar-On (2003). And, raw scores were used only for the research purpose. This questionnaire which consists of ninety questions, is a standard form of Bar-On EQ-i questionnaire in the field of emotional intelligence; moreover, it has the highest rate of reliability.

The participants were required to answer a Likert's five-point scale; in fact, the ratings are made on a five-point scale ranging from "Very Seldom True of Him" to "Very Often True of Him." The average time to complete the test was 15 minutes. The high or low scores in the set of tests on emotional intelligence designed by Bar-On were based on their distance from the mean of 100. The scores which were one magnitude standard deviation (15 scores) nearer or farther from the mean fell in the normal boundaries of the scores.

There are five major scales (interpersonal, intrapersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood), each of which has some sub-scales which are fifteen totally. The EQ scales of Bar-On (2006), are included in the table of Bar-On EQ-i Scale.

Since the writing teaching method of the English institution was product oriented and students were just given grades based on what they wrote and there was not enough attention to the process of their writing skills, the scores obtained from their midterm and final exam were awfully negative and were not reliable on the basis of this study.

Consequently, it was decided to give the students some topics to write as an extra activity to add up to their language proficiency. It has to be mentioned that these topics were just like questionnaire because all the topics included three to four questions which matched with their personal information that can get their interest involved into the act of writing, and they corresponded with the EQ-i components. These topics concerned students' ideas about their hometown, family, free time, work, food, and dreams. The major part of the class tended to write and increasingly compared to their own writings this time. They demonstrated a much better result in this skill. For instance, one of the students who did not use to submit an appropriate composition, this time still about the topic of his family he was not willing to write a word at all. On the other hand, he demonstrated that he was really fond of writing about his work and corresponded to his EQ-i level. It can be seen that he had a high rate of EQ in optimism and this facilitated his ability to write about what job he was planning to get in future.

4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the research which was performed by using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and deductive statistics (Pearson correlation, multiple regression) accompanied by SPSS-20 software were applied for the data analysis. In this research, emotional intelligence as predictor variables and the writing skills as the criterion variables were examined.

Table 4-1: Descriptive statistical analysis of the study variables

In table 4-1, the average and the standard deviations of variables are presented. Among the

Variable	M	SD
self-awareness	20/89	3/45
Assertiveness	19/33	4/10
Self esteem	22/54	4/09
Self-actualization	21/50	4/14
Independence	20/98	3/38
Empathy	22/48	3/02
Responsibility	21/83	3/74
Interpersonal relationships	22/44	3/75
Problem Solving	22/33	3/35
Realism	19/24	3/30
Flexibility	18/80	3/18
Psychological tolerance	18/78	4/24
Impulsive Control	17/43	4/58
Optimism	21/94	3/71
Merrymaking	21/94	4/10

variables, the greatest mean is related to self-esteem component (22/54) and the lowest is for impulsive control component (17/43).

Table 4-2-1: Multiple correlations between predictor and the criterion-related variables

Variable	r	sig
1. Self- awareness	./57	./01
2. Assertive	./53	./01
3. Self esteem	./72	./01
4. Self-actualization	./59	./01
5. Independence	./40	./01
6. Empathy	./29	./04
7. Responsibility	./54	./01
8. Interpersonal relationships	./50	./01
9. Problem Solving	./38	./01
10. Realism	./64	./01
11. Flexibility	./33	./01
12. Psychological tolerance	./47	./01
13. Impulsive Control	./41	./01
14. Optimism	./70	./01
15. Merrymaking	./57	./01

As it is shown in Table 4-2-1, there is a significant correlation at the level of 0/01 between the components of emotional intelligence and the writing skills of English language learners; therefore, the hypothesis that EI components do not have significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills is rejected; and with 99 % confidence, we can conclude that EI components do have significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills.

Table 4-2-2: Correlation coefficients and standard multiples for the prediction of writing skills on the basis of EI components

Variable)R()R ² (Beta	t	sig
Self esteem	./72	./52	./530	5/64	./01
Realism	./81	./66	./367	3/86	./01
Problem Solving	./84	./70	./212	2/44	./01

In table 4-2-2, the results of regression are presented in the stepwise method; variables have been ordered in the model on the basis of the most influence on the writing skills of English language learners. Self-esteem with greater influence with (Beta=0/530), single-handed specified 52% of the variance of writing skills of English learners; next, realism as the second strongest predictor variable added to the model with (Beta=0/367), with 66 % of the variance in self-esteem has been able to explain writing skills of English language learners. Finally, the problem solving was added to the model with (Beta=0/212), with 70 % of the variance accompanied by two previous variables specified the writing skills of English language learners. The hypothesis that no EI components have stronger impact on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills was rejected; $p < 0/01$, with 99% confidence. We can conclude that the EI components do have stronger impact on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills.

5. Discussion of results

The main finding of the analysis shown in Tables 4-2-1 indicated a positive answer to the major question of the study. It was found that EI components have positive impact on students' writing skills. This was proved through the higher mean scores that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Specifically, the experimental group's performance was more differentiated than that of the control group in the post-test. Furthermore, the pre-test results for both groups did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the two groups. This means that before the application of

the experiment they both had nearly similar writing level. That is to say, they had the same language background.

The findings of the present study, as mentioned before, showed that the experimental group had higher gain scores on the post-test than the students in the control group did. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group.

The big difference between the experimental group and the control group could be attributed to many reasons. Firstly, it has to be mentioned that the institution's writing skills teaching's curriculum was product-oriented and students were used to write for obtaining scores to pass their exams and terms. There were no corrections in what they wrote and teachers just gave scores to them on the basis of what they wrote. By the way, students' tendency toward writing was too low. This provided us with this idea that experimental group's writing skills' scores at pre-test (the test provided by institute as students' mid-term exam) were the same as control group, but after they were given post-test, they made extra effort to show off and to try harder, and this time it was not because of scores and passing the term, but due to self-esteem of students together with their realistic views. Secondly, the writing post-test task itself aimed exactly to encourage the learners to write about themselves. It was like a questionnaire which asked learners to write whatever they wanted toward some specified topics. Of course, the way that they wrote, managed, and applied the appropriate words into their writings together with counting the grammatical errors were considered to grade them, and incredibly, the experimental group represented that they were fond of answering to those questions. On the other side, the control group's results were constantly the same as the results taken from the pre-test.

Language is a means of communication and EQ has the most significant role in the communication. When students were asked to write about a topic, they did not show any interest in this instance since they saw no goal and benefit in this task, but when they saw that they have to communicate through their language knowledge, they showed enough interest to convey their intended meanings. For this case, it can be said that when someone has the high EQ ability, he can communicate in a better condition when he is asked to write about a related topic about his own personal information.

However, though the experimental group involved in the present investigation appeared at first to be willing to participate in the experiment, they showed some unwillingness during the mid-term exams. Because of examination stress, most of them came to care more about their grades. After seeing that they had done fairly well on the tests, they became more relaxed and enthusiastic about the experiment in spite of the tests and the extra effort the experimental group had to make.

6. Conclusion

The present study tried to measure the effect of the EQ components on the writing skills of intermediate learners of Soroush institution. As discussed in detail in chapter one, different factors have made Iranian students not be able to write in English proficiently and appropriately. Among these factors is the dominance of traditional methods. A possible answer to this problem would be the implementation of the EQ components. After the EQ implementation in the present study, the experimental group outperformed the control group with a statistically significant difference. Overall, such result yielded an evidence of the positive effect of the EQ components on students' ability to understand and write in the target language effectively. Therefore, the present study recommends effective implementation of the EQ with careful control of any constraints.

In order to complement the findings of the present study, some further research can be suggested: 1. Much empirical research is needed world-wide to further our understanding of the positive effects of the EQ components on both receptive and productive skills. 2. Further investigation is needed to find ways to facilitate the adaptation of the EQ to the Iranian EFL classroom and thereby enhance students' opportunities to write in English proficiently and accurately. 3. Similar studies are critically needed in other parts of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to see whether the results will be the same as or different from the results of the present study.

This study included some limitations. The most obvious limitation of this study was gender difference of the participants. They were all selected by the gender of male, since in Iran there is not any coeducational institute, such a study which aimed to be conducted in English language institute in Iran was not capable to evaluate both genders' performance. The next limitation was the learners' age which is one of the important factors in discourse of EQ. It has to be mentioned that, Soroush institute strictly concerned about students' curriculum to be carried out on the exact time set for each

class, by the way, the time for this study was restricted. Also, this study was just conducted in one institute, for this instance, it cannot be generalized.

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