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INNOVATIVE METHODS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING

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ABSTRACT
In this article reviewed innovative methods of foreign languages teaching and different techniques used in the teaching process. Actual materials reflect the history of pedagogy since ancient times to its modern state. Extracts from the works of Russian and foreign specialists let us know the main trends of development, the formation of new directions in the methodology of foreign languages teaching. The main goal is to introduce innovative methodological techniques.

Keywords: educational process, foreign language learning, modernization, communication activities, innovative methods

Introduction
In modern society foreign languages is becoming an essential component of professional training. Experts in different fields interested in a high level of language proficiency, because it affects the successful solution of issues and professional growth. In many areas there is a need to establish contacts with foreign partners. School would provide a basic set of knowledge that will help to study foreign language in higher educational institutions, training courses or independently. Today, there is a large set of training materials for people with different levels of language knowledge.

The success and the achievement of this goal depend on the applied methods and teacher qualifications. The ability to use information technology and modern teaching methods contributes to the rapid understanding of new material. By combining different techniques, teacher will be able to solve specific educational programs. With this in mind, teachers and students should be familiar with modern methods of foreign languages teaching. They further can choose the most effective techniques to achieve their goal.

Methods and approaches of foreign languages teaching
According to scientific calculations of national and foreign scientists, the term "method" has two basic meanings:
- A certain path to the goal, means to achieve the result.
- Complete methodological system and the fundamental direction of the learning process, which prevail in the various periods of the science development.

Modern stage is characterized by careful selection of methods of foreign languages teaching. Particular emphasis today is made on modern information technology and actual trends. There is a sort of selection of the most effective methods, techniques and tools during the preparation of specialists in various fields. The most important goal, according to scientists - is the formation of a secondary language personality. Students must take a new language to a fundamentally new level. To do this, it is important to separate it from the mother tongue, in order to avoid errors in perception.

During selection of innovative methods following criteria taken into account:
- Creating a comfortable and supportive atmosphere for student, promotion of natural interest and desire to learn a new foreign language.
Involvement of emotions, feelings, experiences in the educational process to stimulate verbal, written and creative abilities.

Use of the cognitive approach in the educational process.

Call to work with the language on their own at the level of emotional and physical capabilities.

Various forms of work will help to achieve these goals. Practical experience allows concluding that the personality and interests of the student directly affects the quality of foreign language understanding. To do this, it is important to use a variety of techniques and learning tools. By the end of the 20th century in pedagogy has accumulated a lot of interesting and effective methods and approaches. Scientists have enriched the methodology of foreign languages teaching, so it has become complex and multifaceted science.

Humanistic approach

In 1960–1970 formed a humanistic approach to learning. According to it, the learning process is guided directly to the individuality of the student. Bringing his interests and needs contribute to a more rapid studying of foreign languages. Creating game situations, taking into account the individual characteristics of a person stronger involve him in the process. In humanistic approach personality of the teacher becomes less important, although still important enough.

The humanistic approach has led to the formation of a number of alternative methods of learning. Their aim was to study a foreign language, the formation of speaking and writing skills. These unconventional methods include:

- Reliance on physical actions.
- The method of "community".
- "Quiet learning".
- Neuro-linguistic programming.

Some techniques have proved their worth and have survived. The pedagogy adopted combined various methods to increase the efficiency of the learning process.

Communicative approach

With the development of high-tech usual methods of teaching through books, similar grammar exercises, reading and translation of texts go on the back burner. The humanistic approach eventually led to the formation of the communicative approach, on which is based the whole procedure.

Traditional grammar-translation methods do not form language skills. The student is capable to read and translate various textsat high-level, but he is not able to apply the knowledge of a foreign language in real life situations. The communicative approach allows the use of grammatical knowledge in a form of speaking and writing skills.

One of the key tasks is the enriching of vocabulary. However, new words must be stored not only in a passive, but also in active form. In other words, the student must not only know the translation of a word, but should be able to use it in speech or in writing of own texts.

As a simple exercise to develop skills can be noted spontaneous group dialogues. Students are divided into pairs and try to communicate on various topics. Usually the teacher oversees the conversation or helping with leading questions.

During learning of new words used exercises with cards. On them written new words, and then they are turned and mixed. One student draws a card and tries to explain the meaning of a foreign word so the others can guess it. This exercise allows you to "feel" new words and remember situations in which they are used correctly.

At a certain stage of development can be implemented into the learning process different movies in a foreign language. Students are asked questions, the answers to which should be identified directly from watched videos.

Within the communicative approach there is almost no simple reading and translation of texts. Most often, teachers organize some group discussion. One of the options - a creative answers to questions about the material covered.

Teachers are moving away from the traditional grammar and translation exercises. They use a variety of techniques and combine them with each other to achieve the desired result. Students use grammar knowledge to form conversational skills. Exercises involve listening, reading, writing, and so on.
Culturological approach
When you create a methodical system of teaching a foreign language is often taken into account culturological approach. Its main objective is the formation of intercultural competence. On this basis, particular models of learning and key principles. The teacher may choose a set of exercises, taking into account the task. The described method is based on the principles of private teaching, describing culturological direction of foreign language learning.

Experts identify the following principles:

- Verbal orientation of training.
- Taking into account characteristics of speech activity in a foreign language.
- Modeling a situation of intercultural communication in the learning process.
- Taking into account consciousness and modularity.
- Rational use of native and foreign language.
- Taking into account personal needs of students.
- The desire for systematicity in the preparation of exercise set.

Exercises of verbal and conditionally verbal nature are always have bigger priorities. This is evidenced by the principle of the speech focus of the learning process in the culturological approach. Through this we can form intercultural communication skills.

In the modern methods of foreign language teaching accepted division into vocabulary, spelling, phonetics, grammar, speech, language, receptive and productive skills. However, the practical goal of learning still amounts directly to the ability to maintain intercultural communication. An important role played the principle of exercise adequacy. They are designed to simulate situations for intercultural training. To do this, you must consider the culture, values, communication intentions and expectations, as well as background knowledge. The teacher should select tasks, taking into account various aspects, so students will be able to participate in intercultural communication at various levels.

The possible exercise could be dialogue between students, discussing various texts and films, comparing features of native culture and the target language culture. Simulation of different situations allows you to expand your language skills and train your speaking skills.

Problem approach
In the area of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the training studies conducted continuously. One of the key areas - a problem-based learning, affecting the development of various aspects of a foreign language. Experts are looking for means to solve the problem tasks - development of cognitive activity, including in the work of all mental powers, stimulating creativity and independence.

Pedagogy has concluded that the student should not be simply a passive object, perceiving the information, but a full participant in the process. Problem learning today refers to innovative methods of foreign languages teaching. It acts as a mean for skills self-development and students' thinking.

The specific of the problem approach to learning is the involvement of students in the process by which they make their own specific findings, get new knowledge, it is the next stage of learning. They make assumptions and arguments in favor of certain conclusions, not just learn information provided. Thus, problem-based learning stimulates self-reliance and contributes to the formation of skills of teaching and research activities.

Teachers who use the problem approach in training should pay attention to the systematic development of independent work of students in the group. The main goal is to help them to get knowledge by themselves. Development of creative imagination, speculations and attention to detail help in further training.

The main aspects of this method:

- The development of logical, creative and dialectical thinking.
- The conversion of conventional training material in a more demonstrative.
- Regular working of problematic situations.
- Creation of a training system.

The main varieties of problematic situations are pedagogical and psychological. They are appearing at all stages of education, affecting both the activities of students and the learning process itself. The teacher creates a problematic situation for the development, consolidation and control of acquired knowledge.

Objectives for creation of problematic situations:

- Motivation to the theoretical explanation of the various facts.
- An analysis of life situations with a detailed analysis.
- Independent search of practical application of knowledge.
Motivation to generalize, and comparison of new facts. In practice it is used in various ways. The teacher creates a problematic situation that students subsequently study. They are looking for contradictions, new information and facts. After this, they have independent work on the systematization and analysis.

It can be concluded that in the problem approach students face different tasks that leads to self-discoveries.

Examples of innovative methods of foreign languages teaching

Problem method.

For several decades in education system dominated mainly training with an authoritarian approach. As a result, students played the role of passive objects, which rarely take the initiative. Currently at the forefront there is personality-oriented education designed to change the situation and to involve students in the process.

Problematic method allows to develop in a person the necessary qualities for being an independent person. Through this the process of learning a foreign language goes more effectively.

Leading didacticians identify several basic ways of organizing the learning process using the problem method. They are based on certain activities emerging in the forefront:

- monologic;
- dialogic;
- research;
- reasoning;
- heuristic;
- programmed.

Most often, students are given a new text in which there is a new vocabulary and unknown information. As a monologic activity they write a story or essay, where express their opinions and produce new facts.

Dialogic activity involves the construction of a dialogue between teacher and students, who have to answer questions. For this used information from the new text.

The next stage of study is thinking activity. Students write the presentation, which make certain conclusions. This allows to check logic and reasoning, as well as the correct understanding of the text as a whole.

Heuristic tasks is a special form of activity in which students themselves must do some sort of discovery of a new rule or law. For example, they can identify the particular use of the verb or time in text.

Research tasks is a higher level of performance. Students are required to independently uncover new phenomena and essence. As a specific form of organization of classes, you can choose the experiment, reports, simulations, surveys, data collection, analysis of the facts, and so on.

Subsequently, to secure the teacher can use a programmable tasks. Teacher makes exercise so that this knowledge can be used and new rules can be trained.

Modeling a lesson with the problem method

Subject: Environment.

Targets and objectives: the development of language competence and critical thinking, the formation of a responsible approach to team targets.

1. Organizational stage.

Welcome words and opening remarks of the teacher. A brief introduction to the key environmental issues. The call for reading a new text and discussion of new information in the classroom.

2. Preparing students for independent and informed understanding of the material (updating of knowledge).

Suggesting students to name the causes of negative impact on the environment, to find the relationship between the industry and the economy.

3. Formation of skills and abilities.

Text reading, identifying of new vocabulary, re-reading with comprehension, making certain conclusions about environmental issues. Grammatical analysis of sentences. Translation.

4. Summarizing.

In this lesson, the usual reading and working with new words mixed with dialogues and arguments, thereby realized problematic approach. As an exercise you can give making a report or an essay about environmental issues.
Communicative approach

The act of communication is the main unit of communication activities that play an important role in the development of foreign languages. The student must be able to communicate in a new language. In the training needs to be given enough attention to the formation of speech skills and development of communicative competence.

Communication is always accompanied by a number of conditions to ensure the adequacy of:

- the individual characteristics of each person;
- speech focus;
- functionality;
- contextuality;
- novelty.

Subject to these conditions, we can talk about communication. Otherwise, the feasibility of communication will be open to questioning. In learning these issues need to be addressed.

Development of lexical speaking skills performed using specific exercises. E.I. Passov and other scientists spoke about the appropriateness of conditional speech exercises. They can be divided into several subspecies:

- imitative (expression of thought on the model);
- substitution (selection of appropriate statements within the meaning);
- transformation (change replicas to transfer other information);
- self-reproductive (student independently makes suggestions for statements).

Students gradually pass the different stages of developing of their own skills. In the future, they need to engage dialogue on their own, using the acquired skills. The system of exercises helps to achieve a high level of speaking. They must be applied at various stages of training. This allows you to develop speaking to a proper level.

To begin the lesson you should ask a warm-up questions like:

- How are you?
- What were you doing at home?
- What topics have you done before that?

A similar situation occurs during the development of new material. The teacher should regularly ask questions about studied topic, offering each member of the audience to give their answer. Thanks to this two basic problems are solved:

- assimilated new vocabulary;
- language skills developed.

Adequate communication contributes to this. By providing novelty, functionality and contextuality, they let you form speech and thinking.

According to many experts, the development of dialogue and monologue speech should be spontaneous. To do this, offered to answer questions or talk on various topics without preparation.

Interactive methods

At present, widely used interactive learning tasks and exercises. They demonstrate high efficiency, depending on the age group. To such actions are usually related:

- speech warm-up;
- group work in teams (round tables, discussions, mini-conferences and so on);
- various games;
- the use of audio and video materials.

Warm-up implies some dialogue between teacher and students, allowing you to enter a class in a subject. It also serves to master language skills and vocabulary repetition. As the games improvisation, theatrical performances, contested dialogues and so on are good. Each student can have a role that he should play. With these games solved several problems:

- provided novelty of communicative situation;
- appearance of opportunities to use new and old vocabulary;
- development of creative abilities;
- freedom from fear before speaking in a foreign language.

For the development of speech and other skills today used audio and video materials. They allow to gain new information, listen to texts and practice pronunciation. On lessons used tape recorders, interactive
whiteboards, projectors and a variety of multimedia equipment. This ensures diversity in the process of learning a foreign language.

The modernization of the process of foreign language learning
Mobile and qualified people are needed to the social, economic and spiritual development of the government. To solve the problem modernization of the learning process is made in accordance with the relevant requirements. In particular it relates to foreign languages teaching. Modernization involves changing of goals, the volume of mandatory content, as well as methods and tools for the development of new knowledge. Today there is a tendency to individualize the learning process and the use of new information technologies in the education system. Modern processes are focused on the saving of fundamental education. In this case, in learning of foreign languages can be traced the problem to strengthen practical and activity orientation. As a result, the traditional system of formation of knowledge and skills is undergoing some changes.
Competent-active approach implies changes in the content of education in order to create competence of the student. The development of new knowledge has activity manner, so students are trying in various ways to apply their knowledge in practice.
Characteristic features of competencies are:
- The versatility and the ability to use in daily life.
- Interdisciplinary and versatility.
- Forming the basis for the further development of thought, reflection and self-assessment.
It can be concluded that formed competences are a valuable asset in the learning process. In the future, the student has the opportunity to develop skills and to analyze new information. To solve the problem, and for the development of competences of students used a variety of methods. Teachers should organize the learning process taking into account different requirements. They actively implement approaches and use a variety of tools to solve key tasks.
The key moment in the modernization of the educational process is the introduction of modern information and communication technologies. In our time, they not only help in training, but also become a means of communication for millions of people around the world. Anyone faced with innovative technologies in the educational, professional and personal relationships, so in the process of training particular attention should be paid to this.
The computer makes it easy to simulate a situation, access a variety of educational materials, exercises and multimedia data. Because of this there is a formation of systemic thinking.
In studies of foreign language students are able to use educational programs and to perform various exercises. Teachers, in turn, have better control of learning.
At various stages of study the students will take advantage of the Internet and various multimedia tools. This makes it easier to use humane methods and cultural studies. Teachers will be able to model problem situations much faster and easier, and students become more involved in the learning process. With the help of modern technologies it is much easier to gather information, analyze and organize it.
Many institutions goes to a new level the use of multimedia capabilities for sending and receiving information. The use of computers and other devices determines the success of the whole educational process. Multimedia textbooks and teaching materials are available in digital format. The Internet opens up opportunities to communicate with native speakers virtually anywhere in the world. This was almost impossible even 10-15 years ago. Most teachers today are actively developing these technologies, because it concerns the issue of professionalism and career development.

Conclusion
It has been proven that traditional studies directed only to the transfer and maintenance of knowledge, skills and abilities, and do not demonstrate adequate performance. Modern language education aimed at the formation of a multicultural identity, with the skills of self-analysis and systematization of new knowledge. For this purpose, used competence and culturological approaches. Information and computer technology can improve efficiency and create the conditions for self-study.
An innovative method is an integral part of the modernization of the whole system. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the most progressive approaches and later combine them and use in work.
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THE EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE THROUGH WORDLES ON EFL LEARNERS’ WRITING ACCURACY IN COMPOSING DISCURSIVE TEXTS

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ABSTRACT
Technology has influenced the writing process and practices in many ways, offering a plethora of novel techniques for boosting meaningful practice among learners in general and foreign language learners in particular, helping them to tackle with the difficulty and boredom of learning to write in new ways. Among these, Wordles or word clouds, as data representation devices, have been receiving attention from scholars in the field of applied linguistics who have asserted their multiple application and uses in the EFL classes. Therefore, attempts were made in this study to investigate the effect of collaborative practice through these devices on learners’ writing fluency among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. To that end, a pretest, posttest quasi-experimental design was used in which 75 EFL students at Islamic Azad University, Hamedan Branch, Iran were conveniently sampled and then were assigned into three groups: a Wordle group, a no-Wordle group and a control group, 25 people each. To begin with, all the participants were taught the structure of a discursive essay and were then given a sample of Test of Writing English (TWE) as a pretest. This was followed by an 8-week treatment where the participants in the two experimental groups were first divided in 5 five-member groups who were instructed to write collaboratively on the topics assigned, with the difference that those in the first experimental (Wordle) group were required to do this inspired by the Wordles of similar texts generated by the instructor, while the participants in the second experimental group produced their texts using the italicized, boldfaced keywords from passages with similar content. However, in the control group the participants wrote individually based on the sample of texts or wordles they were given. After this treatment period, the posttest was administered. To compare the performance of the groups, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was run. The results indicated that collaborative practice in general and collaborative practice through Wordles in particular would have a significant positive effect on EFL learners’ writing performance in terms of writing accuracy.

Keywords: Collaborative practice, Wordles, writing accuracy, EFL learner

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Introduction
Over the last few decades the field of language studies has witnessed a great revolution due to so many insights we have been obtaining about the nature of language and mind. And parallel to this, the field of second language acquisition studies with all its disciplines is full-fledgedly expanding its wings to better explain processes and variables involved in successful mastery of a second language.

However, beyond this prospect, the situation seems to be getting more and more complicated because of the so many speculations, which are indeed sometimes conflicting, about the factors that mediate and may account for learning of a second language. One of such conflicting issues, hotly discussed in second-language-acquisition studies over the last 20 years, is the role and significance of input and input practice as opposed to output and output practice in second or foreign language learning.

From one hand, there are those who adhere to the idea that ample exposure to the input which is comprehensible for the learners is the key to the success (see Krashen’s comprehensible input hypothesis, 1985) although questions as to what is comprehensible input and how it is made comprehensible are hotly discussed even among advocates of this school (see Longs’ Interactionist hypothesis, 1996); on the other hand, there are those who believe that a language cannot be acquired through exposure to input unless the learners find chances of using and producing samples of language based on the inputs they have received (see Swain’s comprehensible output hypothesis, 1985, 2005).

The controversy is an ongoing one. For example, while Ellis (1992, 1993) and VanPatten (2004), VanPatten and Cadierno (1993); VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996) take the view that it is input practice that leads to acquisition, and that output practice merely serves to improve fluency, there are studies such as those by DeKeyser (2003), DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996), and Izumi (2002) which clearly show a lack of transfer between receptive and productive skills at the level of both proceduralized and automatized knowledge.

However, it seems that in the recent years those on the output side have gained momentum backed up by such ideas as the role of noticing and awareness (Schmidt, 1990, 2001), the significance of negotiation for meaning (Long, 1996), implicit vs. explicit and incidental vs. intentional learning of concepts and rules (Ellis, 1997).

In spite of all this, what both sides agree on is that some form of practice either with the input (Van Patten, 2004) or with the output (Dekeyser, 2007) plays a significant role in the move toward mastery of a second and/or a foreign language. Nevertheless, as Dekeyser (2007) puts it, despite its focal role “practice has received a raw deal in SLA studies” (P. 1), and in spite of the change of attitudes and practices, from the route exercises with mechanical drills of 1960s to more authentic, meaning focused, task-oriented activities of the decades following the Audiolingualism, which were motivated by our changing of perceptions about nature of human learning and the learning process in general, and learning a second or foreign language in specific, questions pertaining to its nature and its effects on subsequent learning still remain among issues to be investigated as empirical research on its role and nature has been quite limited in recent decades, the main findings in their support coming from relatively few studies mostly conducted in second rather than foreign language contexts, frequently with students representing diverse L1 backgrounds and interacting in laboratory conditions (Dekeyser, 2007).

In the recent years, however, motivated largely by Vygotsky’s sociocultural accounts of cognitive development, a new trend has started in education in general and language education in particular which can put the concepts of input, output and practice together. This new trend widely known as collaborative learning is a kind of instructional method in which students at various levels of performance work together interactively, sharing ideas and helping each other, in small groups towards a common goal. The students are responsible for one another’s learning as well as their own. This active exchange of ideas, according to Johnson and Johnson (1986), not only increases interest among participants but also promotes their critical thinking.

Therefore, the years that followed, witnessed a proliferation of studies investigating the possible roles of collaborative learning and collaborative activities in acquiring and learning of knowledge of different types. Simultaneous to this novel emphasis on the benefits of collaborative learning, in the later parts of 1980s, one sort of practice known as collaborative practice found widespread use among scholars especially in the field of language studies in which researchers attempted to investigate how such practice may result in language gains. This interest was also reflected in a very important aspect of language knowledge and performance, that is writing, since the ability to write effectively is becoming more and more significant in today’s
communication and academic settings (Matsuda & Hammill, 2014). This growing significance has resulted in the idea of collaborative writing in which students, in pairs or in small groups, write collaboratively. Indeed, research has indicated a positive effect of collaborative writing on L1, L2 and FL learners’ writing performance. For example, Storch (2005) studied the effectiveness of collaborative writing on L2 argumentative essays. In her study, Storch both analyzed the participants’ final products in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity, and the nature of interactions within pairs during the task. The results showed that collaboration would lead to many opportunities for idea exchanging and peer feedback among team members. Moreover, the results also indicated that the students who produced the text in pair wrote shorter but grammatically more accurate and more complex texts in comparison to those who produced the texts individually. However, her study did not show a statistically significant difference between the individual and group work.

Storch (2007), on the other hand, examined the possible effects of pair work by comparing texts produced by pairs versus those produced by individuals. The study was conducted in four ESL classes designated as A, B, C, and D. Students in class A completed their task in pairs; whereas, those in class B did the task individually. Both class C and Class D had to choose from either of these two conditions (e.g., working individually or collaboratively). All the data collected were audio-taped and transcribed for further investigation. The analysis of edited texts did not indicate a significant difference between tasks performed collaboratively and those written individually in terms of accuracy. Besides, the careful analysis of transcribed pair interactions revealed that most pairs engaged actively in the word choice. Thus the author concluded that although group work may not lead to greater levels of accuracy in doing written tasks, it can give L2 learners ample opportunity to use L2 language meaningfully to come to a compromise about which words and/or structures to use.

In the same line, Wiggleworth and Storch (2009) conducted a study to investigate the advantages of paired written in second language contexts. They compared and contrasted the writing scripts produced by 48 pairs of students as well as 48 individual learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity of the texts produced. Results showed that collaboration could have a positive effect on accuracy, but not on fluency or complexity.

More recently, Biria and Jafari (2013) carried out a study to examine the impact of practicing in pairs on the writing fluency of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, they selected 90 homogenous female learners at an intermediate level and randomly divided them into two groups including a control group of 30 students, each producing a written text individually, and an experimental group of 60 learners working in pairs. Since each pair produced a single text, the numbers of texts rather than the number of participants was considered. In order to compare the data collected from two groups, a t-test was used. The results obtained from the essays written in the first session of the writing phase revealed that pairs produced less fluent texts than the individual writers. More specifically, the average number of words, T-units, and clauses in their essays was less than those of individual. The essays written in the last session revealed that there was a considerable improvement in the use of T-units and clauses produced by pairs; however, the fluency of the written texts was not noticeably significant in comparison with the fluency of essays produced by the individuals. The findings also revealed that practicing in pairs did improve the overall quality of the learners' writing productions even though the fluency of written texts did not change significantly.

Lastly, Khatib and Meilhami (2015) conducted a study to explore the effect of using collaborative techniques and activities on EFL students’ writing performance. Their study included 35 low-intermediate EFL students ranging in age from 15 to 18. The participants were assigned into two groups: an experimental group (N=17) in which the students worked on their writing skill collaboratively and a control group (N=18) in which writing skill was exercised individually. Their study used a pretest and a post-test as well as a paragraph rating scale to measure students’ overall writing performance and their performance on different components of writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The findings of the study indicated that using collaborative techniques and activities had a positive effect on overall writing performance of EFL students, and on writing components such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Meanwhile, in the last two decades, with a tremendous growth of information communication technologies (ICT), a new line of studies has emerged which focuses on how new technologies may help improve students' learning. This coupled with the idea of collaborative learning has opened up a new educational paradigm within collaborative learning known as computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) which uses technology in a learning environment to help mediate and support group interactions in a
collaborative learning context. CSCL systems employ technology, especially a group of them known as Web 2.0 tools, to control and monitor interactions, to regulate tasks, rules and roles, and to mediate the acquisition of new knowledge.

Now, as Kessler (2009) maintains collaborative practices are being increasingly advocated in second language classrooms largely in response to the collaborative potential of Web 2.0 tools, and the literature reveals a noticeable increase in interest in collaborative writing (e.g., Arnold, Ducate, & Kost, 2009; Kessler, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Storch, 2005). And although Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) warn that “empirical research investigating the effects of technology on ESL writers’ processes, texts, and attitudes is scarce indeed” (p. 346), according to Bax (2003), learning technologies are becoming more “normalized” (p. 23) in language classrooms, and teachers, although reluctant at times, are beginning to ‘stop seeing them as technologies and start seeing them as tools which suit some purpose and not others’ (Pegrum, 2009). The reason is that using technology to enhance language learning, as Jewell (2006) mentions “allows for increased learner autonomy and control, providing a more student-centered pedagogy’ with learners at the centre of the learning process and ‘more actively engaged in their learning than in traditional direct instruction methods” (p.178).

In the last few years, with the emergence of Web 2.0 tools, educators have constantly sought new solutions to engage learners in dynamic, authentic learning activities. By engaging students with these motivating digital tools, researchers and teachers have often been able to observe huge gains in overall learning (Motteram & Stanley, 2011). Data visualization devices such as Wordles or Word Clouds are one example of such Web 2.0 tools. Word clouds, assist in accentuating the main points of text-based information. In a matter of a few seconds, a Word Cloud highlights the main ideas by presenting words used in a text in the shape of a cloud, with the biggest words being those that were most frequently employed in the text. While numerous ideas exist for the potential of word clouds (Anderson, 2007), there is relatively little research on whether and how they can facilitate the teaching and learning of different aspects of language. This lack is much gravely felt when it comes to application of such devices in promoting writing performance especially as far as collaborative practice through technology among EFL learners is concerned. Indeed the only study carried out so far to investigate the role Wordles might play in motivating foreign language writing comes from an action research by Baralt, Pennestri and Selvandin (2011) who used word clouds to facilitate the teaching of foreign language (FL) writing. Over the course of one semester, students in a third-semester university FL Spanish course submitted drafts of their compositions electronically to create Wordles (word clouds). The Wordles were then used as visual tools to discuss students' writing development, writing strategies, and lexical acquisition. Word frequency counts along with Wordles also contributed to student-centered discussions about writing. The study reported a positive effect of Wordles in facilitating the teaching of L2 writing, as well as promoting vocabulary development and communicative task-based teaching and learning.

Thus, a review of the literature reveals that collaborative writing in the L2 writing classroom is advocated though it is still in need of attention, and that there is a history of how technology has impacted the L2 collaborative writing process, and that technology provides many benefits to the L2 collaborative writing process. Yet, more research is needed on the nature and process of collaborative writing and learners’ perceptions of the collaborative writing process (Storch, 2005). Even less are works published on collaborative writing in Web-based word processing, and on the nature of Web-based collaborative writing within these environments.

Therefore the present study was designed to fill the needs addressed above and understand the collaborative writing process involving more than two non-native English speaking writers working within a shared Web-based document. In effect, the study aims at finding answers to the following questions:

Q1. Is there a significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ writing accuracy in writing expository texts?

Q2. Is there a significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ writing fluency in writing expository texts?

Q3. Is there a significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ writing complexity in writing expository texts?
Methodology
Design of the Study and the Participants
Quasi-Experimental design was used to carry out the study. In the present study, 75 students, both male (20) and female (55), within the age range of 18 to 27 were conveniently sampled from 4 intact classes at Islamic Azad University of Hamedan to take part in the study. All the participants had already passed their grammar and advanced writing courses as part of their general education, both of which are pre-requisites to the Essay-Writing Course they were taking in the second semester of the educational year 2013-2014. The homogeneity of the subjects was checked based on their performance on Oxford Quick Placement Test administered before the actual phase of the study through which 75 students whose scores fell between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were chosen as the participants to the study.

The participants were first pre-tested for their writing performance in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. Next they were assigned to one of the 3 groups: a Wordle group, a no-Wordle group, and a control group, with the first two working collaboratively to go through the assigned tasks with the use of Wordles or without them. After the treatment which lasted for 12 sessions all the participants were posttested to find out how they had been affected by the interventions.

Instruments
To collect the data for the present study, two samples of Test of Written English (TWE) were used: one as pre-test and the other as post-test. The TWE test requires candidates to produce an essay in response to a brief question or topic. The TWE is in the category of timed impromptu tests in that the test-takers are under a 30-minute time pressure to accomplish the task. This seemed of importance since one variable of concern in the study was participants’ writing fluency, which is a function of the number of words produced in a certain amount of time.

The first sample of TWE used as the pre-test asked the participants to write a 300-word essay on whether physical exercise should be a required part of every school day or not and the second one used as the post-test required them to write one to suggest solutions to the problem of unemployment in the society they are living in. These two topics were selected out of a list of 50 writing topics available on the TOEFL official website based on a survey of three faculty members at English department in Islamic Azad university of Hamedan who had taught these very students the Advanced Writing course the previous semester.

Materials
Two sets of materials were used in the present study. The first was adopted from “Successful Writing Proficiency” (Evans, 2000) because it provides ample examples of different types of discursive writing in an easy-to-grasp, accessible way. These were used to teach participants of the study the structure of discursive essays in the first three sessions of the treatment.

The second type of the materials used came from reading passages taken from such books as Passages 2 (Richards & Sandy, 2008), Reading and Writing (Mann & Taylor-Knowles, 2004), Ready for IELTS (McCarter, 2010) and Cambridge IELTS 7 (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL (Phillips, 2012).

These passages were used to provide an appropriate content and the necessary linguistic and contextual background to be used by the students in the groups to produce their own texts. These passages for the first experimental group (the Wordle group) were input to Tag-Crowd software, freely available at http://wordsift.com/ to create word clouds or Wordles of the texts. This generator allows the user to create a cloud from copy and pasted text, a URL (web address) or from an uploaded file (.txt only). The reason for choosing this generator was that it is free to try online, and it accepts all file types. The final cloud can be shared and it can also be embeded in a webpage, can be printed or can be saved as a PDF.

For the second experimental group (the no-Wordle group) the same passages were used with the difference that here the key words were italicized and/or bold-faced by the researcher to make them more prominent.

Procedure
After the participants were selected and their homogeneity was checked, they were assigned to two experimental groups and one control group, 25 people each. The actual phase of the study began by the researcher teacher teaching all the participants the structure of a discursive essay to make sure that all of them were familiar with the organization of the type of writing task they were supposed to produce during the
semesters. The content used for this introductory phase of the study, was adopted from “Successful Writing Proficiency” (Evans, 2000), which was described in 3.4 above. Students in the 3 groups all joined 3 one-and-a-half-hour class sessions during which the instructor introduced the elements of a discursive essay by giving them samples of such essays and asking them to write the introductory paragraph, the body paragraphs and the concluding paragraph.

Next, to capture the initial differences among the groups, all the participants were sit for a pre-test in which they had been asked to write a three-hundred-word essay on whether physical exercise should be a required part of every school day or not in 30 minutes time.

Afterwards, the treatment phase started by subdividing the subjects in each of the experimental groups into five five-member subgroups. This was done since a major aim of the study was to check the effect of collaborative practice on students’ writing performance.

This was followed with a session for briefing participants in the experimental groups on the principles and techniques of collaborative practice since the review of the literature showed that on reason for failure of some studies on collaborative writing tasks was participants’ lack of familiarity with the concept and practice of collaborative writing (Chisholm, 1990). This briefing was done based on the suggestion put forward by Chisholm (1990) in his article entitled “Coping with the Problems of Collaborative Writing”.

After all this, each of the subgroups in the first experimental group was given a Wordle the teacher had created of a similar content the group was supposed to write on. The Wordles revealed the frequencies of the words that appeared in the text, with more frequent words having larger font sizes and more colorful prominent forms. The subjects then tried to use all or some of those words or expressions to create their own writings, working collaboratively, negotiating about the best possible expressions, combinations and sequences. This provided for more enriched input and more practice on the output. This writing phase lasted about 75 minutes during which the instructor supervised their activities and gave them necessary support by scaffolding their performance. This included suggesting words and expressions from the Wordles that were important to their writings but had been overlooked by the group members. The participants were even allowed to run the text of their paper through the cloud generator and see if the main points displayed in the cloud matched the main points they hoped to cover or convey in their writing. This brought up even more interaction and collaboration among the participants in this group creating a sense of competition among the groups. Later, the instructor collected up the first draft of their products, commented on its content, structure and style, and gave it back to them to work on throughout the week and hand in the final draft in the following class meeting.

In the second experimental group, however, the subjects were not given the Wordles; rather, they had to cooperate, and negotiate on producing the final product, relying on the sample reading passages or essays they had been provided with by the instructor. Here, the students were given the same reading passage out of which a Wordle had been generated for the first experimental group. For example, if they were to write on different sides of living in a big city, they were given a reading passage on the same topic and they were asked to go through it rapidly and scan the text for the key words which were italicized and/or bold-faced to make them more prominent. They were then asked to write their own assignments collaboratively using the same key words or other useful expressions they might have come across in the reading passage. Here again, the writing phase lasted about 75 minutes during which the instructor would supervise their activities and would give them necessary support by scaffolding their performance. Later, the instructor collected up the first draft of their products, commented on its content, structure and style, and gave it back to them to work on throughout the week and hand in the final draft in the next class session.

In the control group, on the other hand, the subjects were assigned similar writing assignments drawing on the principles of a process approach to writing (considering the goals of the writing, having a model of the reader, gathering ideas, organizing ideas, turning ideas into written text, drafting and reviewing what has been written, and editing); however, this was done individually inspired by the same sample readings and/or essays given to the participants in the experimental groups. Here, there were no subgroups although the instructor did provide support to an individual whenever he was asked to do so. After the subjects had written their drafts, the instructor would collect them up, would comment on their content, form and style and would return them to the students to edit and to hand them in the following class session.

At the end of this treatment stage which lasted about 10 weeks and 10 class sessions, again, all the participants were given a topic to write on. This served as the post-test and asked the students to write a three-hundred-word discursive essay in 30 minutes to suggest solutions to the problem of unemployment in the society they were living in.
Scoring Procedure
As mentioned above, to test subjects’ performance before and after the treatment, two samples of Test of Written English (TWE) were used. As TWE is a standardized test of writing ability, the scoring procedures follow a pre-established routine for a holistic evaluation of an essay in which each point on the scoring system is defined by a set of statements that address topic, organization and development, supporting ideas, facility (fluency, naturalness, appropriateness) in writing, and grammatical and lexical correctness and choice. However for the sake of the present study, this scoring rubric was not followed since a holistic score of the type normally provided in TWE reports was not of concern. Rather, what concerned the present study was measures of grammatical accuracy which was measured in its own specific ways which is described below.

Measuring accuracy. Although in measuring accuracy, different methods are used such as the proportion of error-free clauses (e.g. Skehan & Foster, 1997) or the number of error-free T-units (e.g. Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991), in this study, following Chandler (2003), Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), and Michel, Kuiken and Vedder (2007), the total number of errors per 100 words minus 100 was used as a general measure of accuracy since it did not pose the problem of coding clauses or T-units.

The types of errors identified in the participants’ writings can be found in table 1 below. As shown in the table, these included 20 types of errors, 14 of which were suggested in Guide for Correcting Compositions by Azar (1985), four of which had been suggested in a study by Chandler (2003) in addition to those suggested by Azar, and two were introduced for the case of the present study to cover almost all types of the errors found in participants’ writings. These included errors on parallelism and prepositions which were found in almost all of the writings participants had produced in the pretest and the post-test. It is worth mentioning that the errors were not weighted against each other, and every occurrence was given a point.

Another point of concern here is that following Roberts (1999) who argues for the difficulty of achieving high indexes of inter-rater reliability on accuracy measures, the papers were just marked by the instructor to avoid inconsistencies in scoring of errors and to make comparisons between the pretest and the post-test results more authentic and logical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sentence Structure</td>
<td>I will explain you the reason</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>The problems are solving little by little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Meaning Unclear</td>
<td>But they do not plip with energy</td>
<td>Deletion</td>
<td>I want talk about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fragment</td>
<td>Since it is very important</td>
<td>Insertion</td>
<td>They will can use their money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Run-On Sentence</td>
<td>This important point that needs explanation.</td>
<td>Collocation</td>
<td>They become friends with everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Word Order</td>
<td>Routine daily</td>
<td>Parallelism</td>
<td>Making new factories and to give loans to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Redundant</td>
<td>A famous example which is very well known</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>It depends to officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Wrong Form</td>
<td>For to achieve</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>exercise is very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Subject-Verb</td>
<td>Everyone know this is not possible</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>A very crutial point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement</td>
<td>A lot of them live by them</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Many young people like the exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Verb tense</td>
<td>If you want to solve it, no one would help you</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>To receive to what they needing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis
As already described, the data for the present study came from two sources: a pre-test and a post-test, in both of which the participants papers in the three groups were scored for writing accuracy. However, as the study involved a pretest which could have affected participants’ performance on the posttest as a covariate, it was
decided to run Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the results. The data were input to SPSS and Significance levels (set at p<.05) were calculated and included in the statistical reporting.

Testing the Normality Assumptions for running ANCOVA

To check this assumption Kolmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk’s normality tests were run. Table 2 below reflects the results of this test.

Table 2
Kolmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk’s normality tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 shows, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov values obtained for all sets of scores except for the wordle group were larger than the significance value of .05. This would have caused a problem if the sample size for each group had been more than 30. However, as the sample size for each group in the study was less than 30 people, according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), Shapiro-Wilk’s estimate provides a more reliable measure of normality of scores than Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s does. Therefore, as the values obtained in the three groups in both the pretests and the posttests were all larger than the significance value of P=.05, it was implied that the test scores were all normally distributed.

Testing equality of variances. To test this assumption, Levene’s test was run the results of which are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.127</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Design: Intercept + Pretest + Groups

As Table 3 indicates, the results of Levene’s test were non-significant as far as accuracy (p=.881) was concerned. Therefore, this can be taken as a sign that there were not any significant differences between the variances of the groups, and that the underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance was also met.

Testing the research hypothesis. Now that all normality assumptions for ANCOVA have been met, we turn to testing the research hypothesis which was: H0. There is not any significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ accuracy in writing discursive texts.

The results of this test are summarized in tables 4 to 6 below:

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>76.5600</td>
<td>2.69382</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 displays the mean scores for the two experimental groups, and the control group on accuracy which were 76.56, 74.16 and 72.04 respectively. Tables 5 and 6 summarize the results of the ANCOVA test.

Table 5  
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects  
Dependent Variable: Posttest  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>656.143*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>218.714</td>
<td>69.93</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>24.062</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.062</td>
<td>7.694</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>400.436</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400.436</td>
<td>128.042</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>225.920</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>112.960</td>
<td>36.120</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>222.044</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>878.187</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results in the row for groups illustrate, the obtained main effect value for accuracy [F(2,69) = 36.12, P = 0.00, Partial η² = .504] indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest after removing the possible effects of their entry knowledge as tested through the pretest. This implied that collaborative practice in general and using Wordles for that purpose, in specific, could positively affect EFL participants’ writing performance as far as accuracy was concerned.

However, although the F-value obtained indicated significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest scores of accuracy after removing the possible effect of the pretest, the post-hoc comparison tests were run to compare the groups on the variable of concern and to answer the research question raised at the outset of the study. The results of these comparisons are displayed in Table 6 below.

Table 6  
Pairwise Comparisons  
Dependent Variable: Posttest  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Groups</th>
<th>(J) Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.*</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Differencea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>2.332*</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.106 - 3.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>4.249*</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.021 - 5.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>-2.332*</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-3.559 - -1.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>1.917*</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-1.106 - 3.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordle</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-4.249*</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-5.477 - -3.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-wordle</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-1.917*</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-3.144 - -0.690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Based on estimated marginal means

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.
Now based on the results of pair wise comparisons, we turn to answering the research question and to investigate its respective hypothesis.

Testing the hypothesis. The research question posed was:
- Is there a significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ accuracy in writing discursive texts?

For this question the following null hypothesis was suggested:
- There is not any significant difference between the effects of collaborative practice through Wordles and without Wordles on EFL learners’ accuracy in writing discursive texts.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni correction, summarized in Table 6 indicated that the mean difference score for the Wordle condition was significantly different from the no Wordle condition (MD = 2.33, P< .01), and also the control condition (MD = 4.24, P <.01). Furthermore, there was a significant mean difference between the no-Wordle group and the control group (MD = 1.91, P< .01). Taken together, these results suggest that collaborative writing using Wordles can affect EFL learners’ grammatical accuracy in writing discursive texts more than doing similar tasks without Wordles.

Discussion

The social cognitive perspective of language learning grounded in Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural account of learning has been receiving increasing attention in the recent years. According to this perspective the key to language learning is meaningful social interaction since there has been increasing attention in recent years towards a social cognitive perspective, which views language learning as a process of co-constructing one’s knowledge of language through interaction with others within a social-cultural context (Oldfather et al., 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Based on Vygotsky’s (1978) conception of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) learning mostly takes place through social interaction in which a more knowledgeable adult or peer, while completing a meaningful task, provides scaffolding to a less knowledgeable adult or peer among learners. Therefore, it seems that in L2 classrooms, collaborative tasks can engage learners in meaningful interactions where they may provide scaffolding on each other’s use of language since it is through this collaborative scaffolding that learners improve their linguistic and cognitive capacities (Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Meanwhile, in recent years much attention has been focused on the use of technology in classes. Computers and technology have brought with them huge advances which are applicable to language teaching such as specialized websites, blogs, wikis, discussion boards, and so on. These new technologies offer opportunities for taking account of individual aptitude and interest. Studies such as those undertaken by Jonassen and Reeves (1996) or Means (1994) in the area indicate that effective use of education technology can help education system work better and more effectively. According to Tsou, Wang and Li (2002), using technology in the classroom can result in faster and more permanent learning. Technology is used for teaching primarily the same knowledge and skills that teachers teach in the classroom. What is special about technology is that it provides opportunities to supplement familiar teaching strategies in important ways (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). However, as Tsou, Wang and Li (2002) maintain, for whatever reason, there still seems to be a kind of fear on the part of the teachers to bring technology into their classes, which implies that more research is needed to provide more convincing evidence to the classroom teachers as to the usefulness and efficiency of using such technological advancements in their classes.

In fact, it was the emphasis on fundamental role of collaborative, meaningful interaction along with the prospects of using modern technologies in the classroom and teachers’ reluctance to employ them in their classes without fear that motivated the present study.

The results obtained seem to be in line with findings by other scholars while they differ from some others. For instance, as far as the effect of collaborative writing on learners’ accuracy is concerned, the results obtained support the results of studies by Fernandez Dobao (2012), Elola (2012), Jafari and Ansari (2011), and Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) all of whom reported a positive effect of collaborative writing, be it in groups or pairs, on writing accuracy. Perhaps this positive effect can be justified in Wigglesworth and Storch’s (2009) terms who propose that the knowledge the learners share acts as an enabler in collaborative writing activities, which allows them to produce more accurate texts as a result of pooled knowledge. However, there are also studies the findings of which are in contrast with those of the present study. For example, Shehadeh (2011), Storch (2007, 2005), and Franken and Haslett (2002) all reported that their studies did not show a significant effect for collaborative writing on learners’ accuracy.
In spite of such controversies in the results, one thing that all the studies mentioned above have in common is that collaborative activities result in knowledge gains although such gains may not be statistically significant at times.

The last part of the discussion concerns the use of Wordles, which can be assumed to have been responsible for the superior performance of the first experimental group over the second experimental group and the control group. As far as the review of the literature shows, despite the fact that in recent years much attention has been focused on the use of technology in classes, education has been slow in incorporating it in the teaching-learning process, in general, and in collaborative writing, in particular. And although today such terms as computer-based collaborative writing are used a lot, the prospects have not been examined much. Therefore, there are not any studies in the literature which have specifically investigated the facilitative or debilitative effects of one type of data visualization software such as Wordles on learners’ writing performance in terms of accuracy except a pioneering action research about the application of Wordles in EFL classes by Bralt, Pennestri and Selvandi (2011), or a study by Dugan (2012) investigating the possibility of using Wordles to make literary texts come alive or a third study by Talang (2012) which examines their applications for teaching vocabulary to EFL students. However, as the findings of the present study show, the Wordle can positively affect learners’ writing performance perhaps since these devices may facilitate their understandings of complex events or phenomena because they present data in a multimodal way, incorporating visual, phonological, textual, and even animated input (Bralt, Pennestri & Selvandi, 2011). In fact, Wordles provide for engaging learners in class-based discussion about the meaning of words while they are simultaneously able to look at them in a Wordle, and in this way they present learners with visual and auditory input concurrently which may help them to process and to retain vocabulary and content more effectively.

Conclusion

The results of data analysis presented in chapter four pointed to a significant effect of such practice on writing accuracy of the participants in the first experimental group (the Wordle group), who outperformed both the participants in the second experimental group (no-Wordle group), and those in the control group in all the measures of concern. It was also found that the participants in the second experimental group showed a better performance than those in the control group in terms of writing accuracy. Based on these findings it can be concluded that engaging EFL learners in collaborative practice will result in their better performance as far as writing accuracy is concerned, and that this collaboration motivated by a data visualization device like Wordle can even yield better results.

Therefore the case can be made for involving students in collaborative writing practices since such practices could be beneficial to both students and teachers (Seong, 2006) as they can help reduce the workload of writing teachers because the students in the collaborative classrooms get feedback from their peers and thus they do not have to solely rely on their teachers. Through collaborative writing the students could learn about the writing process and practice their writing skills through cooperation to produce better writings. The collaborative writing classroom could also provide students a more comfortable and interactive atmosphere so that they could get more opportunities for negotiating. Students can also learn how to work with peers, how to compromise effectively, and how to value differences through their experiences of working together (Speck, 2002). Many researchers have reported that students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is being taught. Moreover, they retain the information longer and also appear more satisfied with their classes (Beckman, 1990; Chickering & Gamson, 1991; Goodsell, et al, 1992).

At the meantime, this prospect coupled with the adoption of educational technology in collaborative writing classes can create an environment which can trespass the boundaries of traditional classroom setting to facilitate learners’ writing processes and motivate more meaningful interactions among learners (Ortega, 2007; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2008). The use of one type of such technology, that is Wordles, in the present study could account for participants’ better performance in a setting of a collaborative writing classroom. This implies that such tools need to be incorporated in the writing classrooms more since such undertaking can create a learning community beyond the two-person limit that is less teacher-dependent. With newer technologies available learners can more easily work in groups of three or more simultaneously. This will provide researchers with deeper insight into the L2 collaborative writing process and how such process can be better facilitated to promote deeper understanding of the knowledge of language one needs to possess.
Suggestions for Further Research
The results of the study as well as the limitations the study suffered from highlight several points worthy of further investigation:

1. This study investigated the effect of collaborative practice through Wordles and without them on writing accuracy of foreign language learners’ writing. Further studies can be done to investigate the effect of collaborative writing trough wordles on other aspects of writing such as writing fluency and complexity.

2. This study investigated the effect of collaborative practice through Wordles and without them on writing accuracy, fluency and complexity of foreign language learners’ writing. Further studies can be done to investigate the effect of collaborative writing through other technology tools such as discussion panels or online slide shows and so on.

3. The present study did not consider the possible effect of learners’ proficiency level on their performance; thus worthy of investigation is the study of the effect of collaboration across different proficiency levels to see whether learners of different proficiency perform differently on the tasks.

4. This study did not make any attempts to video record or type record the interactions among group members when doing the tasks. Another line of the study which can add valuable knowledge to the literature is recording student interaction to examine the types and nature of such interactions and how they are dictated in the students’ final product.

5. This study investigated the possible effect of Wordles on EFL learner’s writing performance. Other studies can be designed to investigate the application of Wordles across other subject areas such as learning of grammar and vocabulary or other skill areas such as speaking and listening.

6. The present study did not consider the possible role of students’ gender in their collaborative writing performance through Wordles; therefore, the same study can be replicated while adding gender as another design feature.

7. As already mentioned, the participants of the present study were all Iranian EFL students who were conveniently sampled from four intact classes at Hamedan Branch of Islamic Azad University. It is suggested that the same study be replicated by recruiting students from other nationalities sampled through random sampling procedures so that the findings can be generalized over larger populations of learners.

8. REFERENCES


REPRESENTATION VOCABULARY IN IRANIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK: A SURVEY STUDY AMONG IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the vocabulary presentation of the English textbook, Prospect 1, currently in practice in Iranian junior high school program. A questionnaire was used to extract the perspectives of 30 Iranian high school English teachers about the capability of the textbook in presenting vocabulary, meeting students’ needs, and upholding communicative principles within the textbook in question. The questionnaire consisted of 27 items with responses ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. The data were subjected to analysis through descriptive statistics. The results of analyses revealed that most of the participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards the ability of this textbook in teaching vocabulary to primary high school students and deemed it as a worthy textbook in that regard. The participants also believed that Prospect 1 presents vocabulary learning strategies that meet both students’ needs and teachers’ expectations from at a primary high school level. In addition, most of the teachers approved the communicative approach adopted by the textbook in teaching vocabulary to their respective students.

Keywords: textbook evaluation, vocabulary presentation, junior high school

1. Introduction
Presenting vocabulary inside the school textbooks is one of the most important components in learning English and has a great influence on successful L2 communication by students. Schmitt (2008) maintains that “One thing that students, teachers, materials writers, and researchers can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language” (p. 329). This fact has been repeated by many experts in the area too. Because of the increasing need to vocabulary instruction, it has become one of the important components of language at the primary stage of second language learning. Additionally, vocabulary plays a crucial role in the development of all language skills.

Due to the methodological grounds and educational advances, the curriculum of teaching English in pre-university and high school educational system has been called into question and revised several times. The current textbooks for Iranian high school and pre-university English teaching were intended to develop student’s communicative competence, but they are far from meeting this aim. According to Ghorbani (2011), part of the problems with English teaching in Iran results from the inadequacies in the design of the prescribed English textbooks used at high school levels. Even the newly revised English textbooks in Iranian high school English program are still accused of being the grammar translation-based textbooks which do not provide adequate communicative listening and speaking activities for students. In addition, the writing activities are limited to boring grammatical exercises such as substitution drills; fill in the blanks, and putting the scrambled words and phrases in order.

The impact of textbook is particularly more prominent in Iranian high schools where English is taught as a foreign language and is practiced within a context-restricted environment, in which the textbook and teacher
play the main roles. The difference between English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) is that in an ESL context, English is taught as a partial or general medium of instruction for other subjects, while in an EFL context, instruction in other subjects is not usually in English. According to data gathered from Iranian junior high school classes and based on validated criteria and careful analysis of Iranian high school English textbooks, Golpour (2012) argues that the textbooks lack appropriate design and physical characteristics, materials are not recyclable, not all skills have been included equally, the focus has been on grammatical points which are practiced through speaking and listening. Moreover, recordings are artificial, and topics are out of date and boring.

These statements pose a major challenge to the whole process of teaching English in Iranian high schools and urge a need for a thorough investigation of the textbook from every angle and point of view. This study aims at evaluating Iranian primary high school English textbook in terms of its vocabulary representation and its capability in meeting students’ needs. Vocabulary is an important element in any language learning program because of its great influence on meaningful communication. Although vocabulary teaching and learning style preferences can have another important role in vocabulary learning, but investigating the role of Iranian junior high school English textbook in teaching and learning vocabulary can be a good area of research. If students have a textbook that represents vocabulary according to their need and learning preferences, they can learn and recall vocabulary for longer periods and the teachers can definitely instruct more efficiently.

As a matter of fact, Textbook is the most important tool, a major source and a supplementary for teachers’ instructions. Nunan (1999, p. 98) states that “a textbook is the main component of any instructional program and it is difficult to imagine a class without it...”. Textbooks might even play multiple roles in English language classes. They can help to present the written and spoken materials, stimulate interaction, present activities, provide a reference of vocabulary and grammar, serve as a syllabus, and offer self-assessment or self-directed learning to the students. The outcomes of this study can benefit researchers, teachers, and students. If it is needed, researchers can revise the textbook in order to present vocabulary more successfully depending on teachers’ positive or negative view in that regard. On the other hand, they can find if the represented vocabularies in the textbook have the compatibility to meet the Iranian high school students’ needs or not.

1.1 Literature Review

Today, both researchers and policy makers are showing a greater interest in textbook evaluation in order to improve the quality of second language teaching in high schools. Several textbook evaluation systems have been proposed in the literature. Ellis (1997) proposed two types of materials evaluation: a predictive evaluation designed to make a decision with regard to determining what materials to use, and a retrospective evaluation designed to evaluate materials that have really been used. This kind of evaluation is appropriate for teacher to determine whether it is valuable to use materials again. Grant (1987) advanced a three-stage process for the evaluation of material. Initial evaluation is detailed evaluation and in-use evaluation. Initial evaluation is related to the appearance of the book without considering details, but detailed evaluation is related to the congruency between the course and students, teachers and syllabus. McDonough and Shaw (1993) also designed an evaluation model with three stages: External evaluation, internal evaluation and overall evaluation. This three-stage evaluation model focuses on material evaluation with the aim of selection and adaptation precedent to classroom use.

There are many empirical studies carried out on textbook and materials evaluation. In a study by Kayapinar (2009) two foreign course book packages used in 25 high schools in Mersin City Center were evaluated. The results of this study showed that the course book packages do not represent the teachers’ expectations and they do not meet the needs of learners in the teaching process. Alamri (2008) evaluated the six grade English language textbook for Saudi Boys’ school. According to the results, the teaching material was not up-to-date, not student-centered, did not allow students to talk more than teachers, and did not allow various classroom activities. Aytug (2007) investigated English teachers’ perceptions regarding ELT textbook “New Bridge to Success” used at 9th classes in Anatolian High Schools, Ankara. In this study, questionnaire and interviews were used for obtaining qualitative and quantitative data. According to results of the study, teachers stated that the cover is not appealing for students. The majority of the teachers indicated that the textbook is ineffective in terms of reflecting the representations of the target language culture. Furthermore, the participants evaluated the textbook as deficient in terms of presenting sufficient and useful speaking materials so the spoken aspect of communication becomes difficult as a result of using the textbook.
Frederickson and Olsson (2006) conducted a study in which they investigated criteria for selecting English textbooks. In the study, qualitative interviews were used. According to the teachers that were interviewed, the most important criterion is that the texts in the textbook should be interesting and relevant. The results of their interviews also illustrated that the school has improved its textbook selection strategies.

In Iran several projects have been carried out to evaluate English textbooks. In a study conducted by Karamouzian (2010) the checklist method of textbook evaluation was selected for evaluating reading comprehension textbooks. The findings of the study suggested that the total average scores-including overall impression, organization, content, and overall considerations are close and the overall quality of all books is convenient. Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) evaluated the three English language textbooks currently taught at high schools throughout the country. The findings of this study provided convincing evidence that the English language textbooks that are currently taught at high schools in Iran do not seem to meet the teachers' expectations. They recommended that in order to be able to make more sound judgments about different characteristics of these textbooks, more research of this kind needs to be conducted. Nemati (2009) conducted a study in which she evaluated second Pre-University English. The results of data from questionnaire revealed that the book is acceptable from the viewpoint of the majority of English teachers who are familiar with the book. However, the findings of vocabulary analysis showed that it is better to change and do some modification in the sequence of presenting the text.

Razmjoo (2007) investigated the extent to which high school and EFL institute textbooks represent CLT principles. The two series of textbooks (high school and institutes' English textbooks) utilized in the public and private institutes were evaluated based on a hybrid of available textbook evaluation schemes considering the CLT features in mind. After analyzing the results, he concluded that in contrast to high school textbooks, private institute textbooks highly represent the CLT principles. Zohrabi and Sabouri (2012) evaluated the merits and demerits of Iranian first year high school English textbook. In this study, data were obtained by quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (interviews). The findings of this study showed that English book 1 is structure based and it cannot meet the curriculum goals and students' needs.

Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011) examined the validity of anti-textbook views in EAP courses. Results of their study indicate that current textbooks prepared for EAP classes are not very satisfactory and fail to meet students' needs and interests. In another study carried out by Jahangard (2007), revealed that the evaluation of EFL materials currently taught at public high school requires a deeper and more exhaustive analysis and scrutiny by a group of experienced teachers and that the viewpoints and the ideas of a single researcher might not be adequately reliable because however hard one tries, it is almost impossible to be unbiased and impartial in ones judgments. Hashemnezhad and Maftoon (2011) evaluated the textbook “English Grammar for college Students” 1 and 2. Both the questionnaire and the checklist were used in this study. The questionnaire included five different aspects of subject matter, vocabulary and structure, exercises, illustrations, and physical makeup of the book the results of this study revealed that, less attention has been paid to exercises and illustrations of the book. They recommended that the syllabus designers and the author of the book should consider these two important aspects. The findings also showed that there is only correlation between subject matter and physical makeup of the book and there is no correlation between the other aspects.

1.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses
This study investigates Iranian English teachers’ perspective on primary high school English textbook (Prospect 1) with regard to representation of vocabulary. The researcher advanced the following research questions for this investigation:
Q1- Do teachers have a positive view regarding Iranian junior high school English textbook (prospect 1).?
Q2- Do the vocabulary strategies in English textbooks meet the teachers’ expectations and the students’ needs?
Q3- To what extent does the vocabulary representation in this textbook follow communicative principal?

As a result of the above research questions, the following null hypotheses were investigated during this research.

H01: Teachers have negative views about representing vocabulary regarding Iranian junior high school English textbook (prospect 1).
H02: The vocabulary teaching strategies in Iranian junior high school English textbook does not help students meet all their needs.
H03: The vocabulary representation in this text book does not follow communicative principals.
2. Methodology
The present study followed a qualitative design method. The rationale behind using qualitative research was to reveal teachers’ attitudes toward EFL primary high school English textbook “Prospect 1” and the perceptions that drive it with reference to the specific topic that was vocabulary representation in the textbook. It used in-depth investigation of 30 Iranian English teachers who teach “Prospect 1” to examine the initial research questions. The design of the current research was descriptive rather than predictive.

2.1. Participants
The participants consisted of thirty male and female Iranian Junior high school EFL teachers who participated in a questionnaire. They were selected randomly from both private and public schools in Guilan Providence of Iran. In order to homogenize the sample population, the teachers were selected according to the textbook which they were teaching. All of them were Iranian primary high school English teachers and the book which was investigated in the survey was Prospect 1. These English teachers were teaching their respective classes of boys or girls at high schools in Guilan, Iran while they participated in filling the questionnaire. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling strategy from junior high schools, and had been practicing teaching English for at least three years.

All of the participants were within the age group of 25-40 years and came from a range of different social and language proficiency backgrounds. The textbooks which they taught in both female and male classes were the same according to national curriculum adopted by the Iranian Ministry of Education. They actively and willingly participated in the questionnaire of this research in order to improve the quality of their classes as well as the textbook which they were teaching during their career in Iranian high schools.

2.2. Instruments
The material which was explored in this research was Prospect 1, a textbook which is currently instructed in Iranian junior high schools to teach English to the students. A researcher-made questionnaire which included 27 questions in two printed pages was developed in order to evaluate the textbook’s vocabulary presentation and instructional merits. In the following parts, each of the aforementioned materials will be discussed.

2.2.1. The Instructional Material
All of the teachers who participated in this study were teaching the same textbook to their junior high school classes. The textbook evaluated by the present investigation was the book entitled Prospect 1 (Alavi, et al., 2013), an English textbook for primary high school Students published by Iranian Ministry of Education. The book contains eight chapters four of which are covered for a single semester. Each chapter follows the same pattern: a pre-reading part, a reading passage and a post reading section which presents various activities and exercise associated with the main text both orally and in written format. Each lesson ends with a Focus on Grammar section. This textbook, which was recently introduced to replace the previous textbook for Iranian Junior high school program, was designed to help the students to learn English for communicative purposes and includes exercises intended for teaching all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The framework of the course is based on communicative teaching approach. Before the introduction of this new textbook, many language teachers along with experts in second language teaching had repeatedly expressed their concerns that the previous textbook failed to include communicative skills, and the students were not instructed to use language in real life situations. (Azizfar, 2009).

Although the communicative aspect of Prospect 1 as a textbook for junior high school students have been subject of some studies, it is quite necessary to investigate the effectiveness of this new textbook in teaching individual language skills such as students’ vocabulary knowledge. Since the previous studies have not specifically explored the efficiency of Prospect1 in promoting vocabulary acquisition in Iranian students, this study aimed to discover to what extent the textbook Prospect 1 which is currently practiced in Iranian junior high schools is valuable in terms of vocabulary instruction, and to what extent Iranian English teachers consider this textbook as an appropriate means to the vocabulary learning process in their English classes.

The reasons behind choosing the first grade English textbook was that it was newly adopted by the Iranian Ministry of Education in 2013 for Iranian junior high schools and therefore, high school teachers are more likely to be involved in the instruction of the first book in Prospect textbook series in comparison to higher levels of it. The researchers also believed that the process of the evaluation of an elementary level would be
easier for participants and would better help to discover the weak points and liabilities of a new series of textbooks in a second language course. After choosing the textbook for the study, the researcher began to prepare the appropriate questionnaire to investigate its merits.

2.2.2. The Questionnaire
After a preliminary consultation with some Iranian high school teachers as well as experts in the area of second language teaching, an initial questionnaire consisting of items each of which exploring one aspect of vocabulary instruction in Prospect1 was prepared by the researcher for this study. Due to the comparative nature of this investigation, and because of the statistical analysis chosen for this study, 27 closed-response items corresponding to the 27 aspects of vocabulary instruction were prepared for the questionnaire. The responses to these questions were in the form of a four-point Likert scale response ranging from ‘agreed’ to ‘strongly disagreed’ for each question. In order to gain additional insights and comments regarding the textbook which might have been overlooked by the researcher, a few lines at the end of the questionnaire was provided for teachers’ comments.

Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire and to discover any problematic items on the initial draft. Fifteen Iranian high school teachers participated in this pilot study. The results of the pilot study revealed that all 27 items in the initial draft of the questionnaire were appropriate to be included in the main study and no items were excluded from the final draft of the questionnaire which was distributed among the participants.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis
Thirty Iranian high school English teachers who were experienced at teaching both male and female classes participated in this questionnaire. To elicit teachers’ views on vocabularies and adequacy of the EFL textbook for Iranian primary high school students, the questionnaires were handed out to the participants available and those not in reach received the questionnaire through email during February 2015, since the best time to evaluate a textbook is when the whole or most of book is covered and the researcher believed that up to this time of school year, most participants must have developed a comprehensive view regarding the assets and liabilities of the textbook under investigation. All of the participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the investigation and the items on the questionnaire beforehand in order to avoid any misunderstanding which was likely to severely affect the outcome of this study, and contact information were provided for those who were participating through email in this study for asking any possible question about the items on the questionnaire. Within a month the questionnaires were returned for analysis. All of the responses were scrutinized and checked for any anomalous behavior and all of them were deemed as worth of inclusion in the final analysis. The data collected through the questionnaires was later organized and ready to be statistically analyzed to find answers to the initial research questions.

When data collection was completed, the data was coded and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to discover teachers’ view regarding the presentation of vocabulary in Prospect 1. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, descriptive statistics in the form of comparing means, standard deviations and frequency charts and tables were applied to analyze the participants’ responses to the items on the questionnaire to figure out participants’ attitude towards different aspects of the textbook. In addition, each item of the questionnaire was separately scrutinized to find the percentage of teachers who selected each option of the Likert-scale in response to the related question. Additionally, the answers to different items on the questionnaire were compared to identify which aspect of the vocabulary presentation were regarded as more effective by the high school teachers who participated in this study. The results were also analyzed to find answers to research questions which were initially put forward by the researcher. The reason for this choice of descriptive statistics was that the data gathered through the questionnaire were of ordinal type, and there was one group of participants. SPSS software was used for obtaining the descriptive statistics for each of the 27 questions on the questionnaire in order to find out teachers attitude towards Prospect 1 as a textbook for teaching English vocabulary to Iranian junior high school students. All of the data collected through questionnaires were precisely checked in terms of any irregularity or atypical behavior, and no single response was spotted as outlier within the 27 questionnaires rated by the participants. Therefore, all participants’ responses were included in the final descriptive statistics provided by SPSS software in this study.
3. Results

The first item of the questionnaire looked at the usefulness of visuals included in the textbook for teaching vocabulary items. 53.3% of the teachers agreed that the visuals were reasonably produced and were interesting for teaching vocabularies.

Table 1.
Frequency table for item one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second item of the questionnaire tested the respondents’ perspectives with respect to the authenticity and novelty of the vocabularies included in the textbook. The majority of the EFL teachers agreed (N= 20) or strongly agreed (N=3) that Vocabularies used in the book were authentic and up-to-date to an acceptable degree.

Table 2.
Frequency table for item two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third item of the questionnaire examined the respondents’ perspectives with respect to the applicability of the vocabularies included in the textbook in daily life. The greater part of the EFL teachers agreed (N= 22) or strongly agreed (N=4) that the students could use the vocabulary in real life. This was equal to (86.6%) of the total responses.

Table 3.
Frequency table for item three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as the fourth item is concerned, more than half of the EFL teachers agreed that vocabularies used in the book identified areas of the students need. The sixth item of the questionnaire showed that less than half of the EFL teachers agreed that the book used word cards for learning vocabulary. Item 7 of the questionnaire indicated that less than half of the EFL teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the book used word formation for learning vocabulary. The eighth item of the questionnaire evaluated the respondents’ attitude towards vocabulary exercises and activities in the textbook. More than half of the EFL teachers agreed (N= 19) or strongly agreed (N=3) that the vocabulary exercises and activities in the textbook promoted learners’ language development. The ninth item of the questionnaire demonstrated that eleven EFL teachers agreed and two strongly agreed that the vocabulary exercises and activities reinforced what students had already learned.

The tenth item of the questionnaire was also related to another aspect of vocabulary exercises and activities in the textbook. Twelve EFL teachers agreed (40%) and four strongly agreed (13.3%) that the vocabulary exercises and activities varied in format so that the students would continually motivate and challenge the students in learning vocabulary. The eleventh item of the questionnaire appraised the
respondents’ attitude towards the recognition and production works for individual sounds for vocabulary pronunciation practice. Ten EFL teachers agreed (33.3%) and three of them strongly agreed (6.7%) with the statement. The twelfth item of the questionnaire investigated the respondents’ attitude towards the ability of the book to encourage students to use vocabulary for making sentences creatively. Fourteen EFL teachers agreed (46.7%) and three of them strongly agreed (10%) that the vocabulary presentation in the textbook promotes students to make sentences in a creative way. The thirteenth item of the questionnaire estimated the respondents’ positions towards the summary of new and reviewed vocabulary. Ten EFL teachers agreed (33.3%) and two of them strongly agreed (6.7%) that there was a summary of new and reviewed vocabulary. The fourteenth item of the questionnaire tested the respondents’ perspectives with respect to the opportunities available in the textbook for learning vocabulary through communicating. The high proportion of the EFL teachers agreed (N= 17) or strongly agreed (N=3) that the book used authentic communicative materials at an appropriate level of learning. With regard to the fifteenth item of the questionnaire, less than half of the EFL teachers agreed that the book used authentic listening material at an appropriate level of learning. This was equal to (36.7%) of the total responses. However, regarding the sixteenth item of the questionnaire, fifteen EFL teachers agreed and six strongly agreed that the book used authentic reading material at an appropriate level for understanding words in the context. Item 17 of the questionnaire revealed that more than half of the EFL teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the meaning of new vocabulary was presented in context and its pictures. This was equal to (63.4%) of the total responses. As far as item 18 was concerned, 43% of the participants agreed that the textbook has short and motivating units for teaching English. The nineteenth item of the questionnaire investigated the respondents’ intuitions of the efficiency of the materials for presenting vocabulary in a way that were suitable for use in a self-study mode. Thirteen EFL teachers agreed (43.3%) and three of them strongly agreed. The twentieth item of the questionnaire scrutinized the respondents’ opinion of the efficiency of key to vocabulary exercise appropriate for use in a self-study mode. Ten EFL teachers agreed (33.3%) and four of them strongly agreed (13.3%) that there was a key to vocabulary exercise which was suitable for use in a self-study mode (10%) that the materials for presenting vocabulary were suitable.

With respect to the twenty-first item, the great proportion of the respondents agreed (73.3%) that the textbook included Concept or comprehension questions rather than display questions. However, regarding the twenty-second item of the questionnaire, fifteen EFL teachers agreed (50%) and five of them strongly agreed (16.7%) that Iranian cultural bias of the book was restricted to an acceptable degree. The twenty-third item of the questionnaire inspected the respondents’ attitude with respect to the usefulness of the techniques that were used in the textbook for recycling and reinforcement. Great number of EFL teachers agreed (70%) and two of them strongly agreed (6.7%) that Useful techniques were used for recycling and reinforcement. Furthermore, simply seven EFL teachers (23.4%) were not satisfied with the Usefulness of the techniques. The twenty-fourth item of the questionnaire revealed that the majority of EFL teachers agreed (73.3%) and three of them strongly agreed (10%) that There were mechanisms (reviews / revision tasks) for giving regular feedback to Learners for learning vocabulary. The twenty-fifth item of the questionnaire determined the respondents’ opinion with regard to the deductive approach taken to learning vocabularies in the textbook. The large number of EFL teachers agreed (60%) and five of them strongly agreed (16.7%) that the book encouraged deductive approach to learning vocabularies. The twenty-sixth item of the questionnaire demonstrated that nineteen EFL teachers agreed (63.3%) and five of them strongly agreed (16.7%) that the book also encouraged deductive approach to learning vocabularies. The twenty-seventh item of the questionnaire determined that half of EFL teachers agreed (50%) and five of them strongly agreed (16.7%) that the book encouraged a balance of both deductive and inductive to learning vocabularies.

4. Discussion
4.1. Teachers’ View toward Iranian Junior High School English Textbook
The first research question of this asked if teachers have a positive view regarding Iranian junior high school English textbook. By looking at the responses of the teachers to each of the questions, it can be observed that teachers have expressed a positive view towards Prospect 1 as a textbook for Iranian junior high school English curriculum. This finding is supported by the fact that in 74 % of the items, over 50% of the participants either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the positive statement expressed in those items. There were only seven items (number 6, 7 9, 11, 13, 15, 20) in which less than 50% of participants either strongly agreed or just agreed with the statement of that item. This finding is in line with the results of the previous
It was observed that 53.3% of the teachers had a positive view towards the use of visuals in the text book and either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the visuals in the book were used as an integral part of teaching and they have been well produced and attractive for presenting vocabulary. They also expressed a negative view towards the use of word formation for learning the vocabulary in the textbook. This might be due to unfamiliarity of Iranian high school teachers with the word formation exercises which have recently gained a lot of support in the literature. Although it is likely that this technique might not have produced the expected outcomes in their classrooms and therefore they did not advocate its application in their high school English classes.

As far as vocabulary exercises and activities in Prospect 1 are concerned, teachers believed that these exercises promote learner language development (73.3%), and they are varied enough to continuously motivate and challenge the students (53.3%). However, just 43.3% of teachers expressed a positive view towards the capability of these exercises to reinforce what students have already learned and represent a progression from simple to more complex words. This fact should be taken into account in future revisions of the textbook because it might pose an obstacle to learning new vocabulary in Iranian primary high school classes.

Item eleven also gained little support (33.3%) on the part of teachers indicating that there is not sufficient work on recognition and production of individual sounds for vocabulary pronunciation practice. This might seriously damage students’ pronunciation of the learned vocabulary and result in long lasting mispronunciation on the part of students. Teachers also did not express strong approval of the summary of new and reviewed vocabulary in the book (40%), but the agreed that the textbook encourages students to use vocabularies for making new sentences creatively (56.7%). Although the support for the latter statement was marginal, but if teachers have a positive view towards this creativity-promoting aspect of the textbook, an important aim of the writers have been achieved by the textbook and can turn this new textbook into a worthy productive investment.

The participants expressed little approval for the use of authentic listening material at an appropriate level of learning vocabulary by the textbook (36.7%), but their view towards the application of authentic reading material at an appropriate level for understanding words in the context was marginally positive. This difference in opinion is due to use of non-native speakers in the listening parts of the book, though we cannot deem authenticity as a matter of native speaker pronunciation in listening activities.

Teachers also approved (63.4%) the textbook’s approach in presenting the meaning of new vocabulary in context by pictures and through guessing the word meaning inside the texts. They also supported the comprehension questions presented by the book (73.3%) and they believed that Iranian cultural bias of the book is restricted to an acceptable degree (66.7%). However, as the percentage suggests, the positive view towards the unbiased nature of the textbook towards Iranian culture was not strong and this might provide a good reason for the authors of the book to include elements of other cultures and especially the culture of the native speakers in the later revisions of Prospect 1.

Teachers expressed favorable views on useful techniques of the textbook for recycling and reinforcement (76.7%), and its mechanisms for giving regular feedback to Learners for learning vocabulary (83. %). This demonstrates the authors have been aware of the importance of providing constant recycling of previous vocabulary and feedback to students especially in a foreign language setting like Iran where students usually do not have direct the access to native speakers of English and rely more on the textbook for learning new words. Teachers also believed that the textbook encourages a balance of both deductive and inductive approach to learning vocabulary (66.7%). This diversity of approaches can be deemed as an asset for this textbook because it provides opportunities for students with different learning styles.

4.2. Vocabulary Strategies vs. Students’ Needs
The second research question was if the vocabulary strategies in the textbook meet the teachers’ expectations and the students’ needs. Items 4, 19 and 20 explored teachers’ perspective on this question. Teachers did not agree (46.6%) to the provision of a key section to vocabulary exercise within the book as a good vocabulary learning strategy for meeting students’ needs outside the classroom. This disagreement might have several reasons behind it. One of them is that students may just copy the answers to the exercises and do not take time to provide answers of their own. Another possible reason is that students usually rely on these fixed answers of the key and therefore lose the creativity to produce alternative responses to the same exercises in
the textbook. Having mentioned the responses to these three items on the questionnaire, we can see that two out of three items which explored the issue met positive views on the part of teachers and therefore, we can generally deduce that teachers who participated in this study had favorable views on the ability of the book to meet students' needs both in and outside the classroom.

4.3. Vocabulary Representation vs. Communicative Principals
Items 3 and 14 investigated the third research question which was if vocabulary representation in this textbook follows communicative principals of language teaching and learning. Item 3 on the questionnaire which explored the participants' viewpoint with respect to the promotion of the use of vocabulary in real life by the textbook received the highest mean (M= 3.00), and 86.6% of the teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed with the ability of the textbook to encourage real life vocabulary use in students which is one of the key principles of communicative language teaching. In addition, item 14 which asked if the book uses authentic communicative materials at an appropriate level of learning (learning vocabulary through communicating) produced favorable responses (66.7%). These two items on the questionnaire clearly suggest that the new book is in harmony with modern communicative approaches towards teaching English, however further investigations in that regard are a must. This finding is in line with the findings of Ahmadi & Derakhshan (2015) according to which teachers believed that Prospect1 was based on communicative language teaching approach.

5. Conclusions
5.1. Summary
According to the results, most of the participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards the ability of this textbook in teaching vocabulary to high school students and deemed it as a worthy textbook in that regard. The participants also believed that Prospect 1 presents vocabulary learning strategies that meet both students’ needs and teachers’ expectations from at a primary high school level. In addition, most of the teachers approved the communicative approach adopted by the textbook in teaching vocabulary to their students and maintained that the exercises in the book were in line with the communicative principles which are currently practiced in most foreign and second language courses around the world. Considering that this textbook have been newly introduced to Iranian high school English curriculum, it is quite safe to conclude that Prospect 1 is a promising new textbook that possesses high potentials for success and achievements in Iranian high school foreign language program, although there are still areas in which teachers have expressed a desire for improvement during this study such as the use of word formation techniques, the insufficiency of the book in moving from simple to more complex vocabulary items and the lack of authentic listening materials in this textbook. It is necessary for the authors of this new book to consider these views as well as the results of other investigations in future revisions in order to improve the educational value of the textbook.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications
This study revealed that Prospect 1 was perceived by teachers as a moderately adequate textbook for Iranian primary high school students as an English textbook. The finding of this study will be beneficial for Iranian English textbook writers as well as curriculum developers since it will inform them to take into account teachers and experts’ views before and during any attempts to write textbooks for high school students, and to make necessary modifications and editions based on their comments and feedback.

By reviewing the results of this study, Iranian high school teachers can better anticipate the strength sand insufficiencies of Prospect 1 in teaching vocabulary to their students before beginning to instruct it in their classrooms and be well equipped to deal with possible vocabulary-related problems in advance. Once teachers become familiar with these strengths and weaknesses of the textbook in terms of vocabulary teaching, they can come up with better lesson plans to reinforce the assets of the textbook and reduce its liabilities. This awareness is especially crucial in EFL settings like Iran where teachers are used to deal with vocabulary problems during class time and usually do not plan much vocabulary related activities in advance.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research
In this section, some research topics which are related to the subject of this research and can shed more light on its findings are presented. In this study, the researcher investigated the efficiency of Iranian primary high school English textbook in teaching vocabulary from teachers’ perspective. However, studying the same issue
through students’ point of view and its possible differences with teachers’ perspective remains to be conducted in further researches. For further research, another study could be carried out regarding teachers’ views on the efficiency of the same textbook in teaching language skills such as reading, writing, etc. along with conducting interviews with them to gain more insights and comments. In-class observations can also be carried out, during which the researchers would observe the possible shortcomings of the textbook and the way teachers deal with them in their classes. A content analysis study for the same textbook evaluated in this study might be necessary which it may produce more valuable results and reveal assets and liabilities of this textbook in more detail.

REFERENCES


EFFECTS OF TEACHING STRATEGIES AND TOPIC FAMILIARITY ON PERSIAN SPEAKING IELTS CANDIDATES’ SPEAKING SCORES

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ABSTRACT
The present study was intended to scrutinize the impact of strategy training and topic familiarity on IELTS speaking test scores among Persian-speaking EFL learners who were going to take Academic or General Training IELTS exams. A group of 45 EFL learners participated in the treatment, presenting speaking strategies and making participants familiar with the most frequent topics in the IELTS exams. Participants of the study were divided in three groups of 15, namely Strategy Training and Topic Familiarity groups, which constitute the experimental groups, and the Control group. In the experimental groups, participants were given strategies they required to answer IELTS speaking questions, for both experimental groups, and the most frequent topics talked about in such exams, for the Topic Familiarity group. Participants took part in the nine-session treatment, with the first interview as the pretest and the last one as the posttest. Results of one-way ANOVAs and t-tests showed that whereas strategy training did make a difference in participants’ performances in the posttest, topic familiarity did not. Results indicate that if EFL learners are familiar with strategies used in speaking, they can manage any speaking situation irrespective of the topic.

KEY WORDS: strategy training, speaking strategies, topic familiarity, IELTS speaking test

1. Introduction
A plethora of studies over the 1970s (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975) scrutinized EFL learners’ strategy use, the time when successful English language learners were called ‘good language learners’. Such research encouraged further research investigating the different effects of strategy use by language learners. Thus, the question of strategy training (Nation & Newton, 2009) has been a significant issue. The application of different types of strategies and whether they are to be taught explicitly has always been an interesting question for EFL teachers and SLA researchers. Strategy training has been studied in all language skills, i.e., listening (Ridgway, 2000a; Watts, 1986), speaking (Sayer, 2005), reading (Baker, 2002; Block & Pressley, 2007; Grabe, 2009), and writing (Ameri-Golestan, 2012; Ferris, 2011), as well as other areas in language learning and teaching, such as negotiation strategies (Anderson & Lynch, 1988), vocabulary strategies (Nation, 2008), among others.

However, speaking strategies, relevant to this study in particular, have been considered as an essential part of language learning strategy training. Sometimes called with certain other labels, such as communication strategies, conversation skills, and oral communication strategies (Mendez, 2011), speaking strategies are especially important because they assist English language “in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.43).

As Hedge (2000) put it, successful language learners are those who are able to benefit from speaking strategies. This is the ultimate goal of a competent EFL learner and user. Speaking strategies are needed when language learners are not able to handle a speaking situation appropriately or they cannot communicate meaning “because they lack the resources to do so successfully” (Hedge, 2000, p. 52).

Foreign language learners are engaged in speaking or conversations in a variety of situations, ranging from classroom interaction with the teacher and peers to possible face-to-face communication with native speakers.
In many of these situations, they have to resort to speaking strategies because they lack the resources to communicate what they intend meaningfully. One such situation is oral exams in which language learners face plenty of breakdowns in communicating their message, which can be due to anxiety as well as the inability to retrieve information from memory. Whatever the reason for the breakdown, speaking strategies seem to be quite beneficial for these learners. However, there has been quite a bit of controversy over this issue: should strategies be taught? One of the opponents of strategy training is Kellerman (1991) who indicated that language learners resort to strategies in their first language when they face a breakdown in communication. In other words, Kellerman maintained that since language learners transfer communication strategies from their L1, there is no point in teaching them, explicitly, what such strategies are.

There are many researchers who disagree with Kellerman. Canale (1983), for example, supported strategy training in speaking. Canale indicated that language learners can benefit from such training and language teachers are required to explicitly present these strategies and how they are implemented in a foreign language context. There has been some research to support this position. Mendez (2011), for example, pointed out that since language learners do not transfer communication strategies from their L1, they must be taught. She believed that if this training is not done, learners become dependent on their teachers (Mendez, 2007).

Similarly, Nakatani (2005) showed how participants who were trained for strategies improved in their speaking tests (see also Field, 2000; Goh, 2000; Issitt, 2008; Mugford, 2007; Ridgway, 2000 b for similar results). IELTS speaking test has been considered to be one of the most stressful situations, as many of the candidates put it, and is one of the situations in which language learners face breakdowns in their communication and the message they want to communicate. Therefore, it is essential that speaking strategies be taught to these candidates in IELTS preparatory classes. The present study is mainly concerned with the question of the impact of strategy training on Persian-speaking EFL learners who were going to take the IELTS speaking test. In addition to strategy training, the question of making students familiar with the most frequent topics of the interview was investigated. Therefore, the study is aimed to provide answer for the following research questions:

1. Does strategy training affect Persian-speaking prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?
2. Does topic familiarity affect Persian-speaking prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?
3. Is there any difference between strategy training and topic familiarity in terms of their effect on IELTS speaking score?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants of the study were 45 Iranian EFL learners (20 male and 25 female) who were going to participate in IELTS exams. These participants, who were upper-intermediate and advanced, were taking General or Academic IELTS preparatory classes in Gooyesh Language Institute in Isfahan. They were placed in the relevant groups after taking Oxford Placement Test (Allen, 2004). In addition, the oral placement test conducted by experienced language teachers at the beginning of the treatment double checked the placement. All the participants were college students or graduates, majoring in a variety of subjects, such as engineering, medicine, art, and humanities, with ages ranging from 20 to 35. It should be noted that they were highly motivated to take the classes, as they mentioned in the placement interviews. In addition, they pointed out that they had had more than two years of English language learning experience in different language institutes in Isfahan and other cities in Iran.

In order to control for gender effects, both male and female students participated in classes. Although the number of male and female students was not equal, attempts were made to include as equal number of male and female students in each group as possible. It is crucial to mention that elementary and intermediate EFL learners were not permitted in the experiment because these learners were not able to participate in the experiment. The reason for such exclusion was that such EFL learners would not have the required level of proficiency to benefit from such classes in general and strategy training in particular.

After the placement procedure, participants were randomly assigned to three groups (two experimental and one control, each with 15 participants). One of the experimental groups, Strategy Training (ST), was given the strategies required to answer speaking questions. In this group, there were six male and nine female participants. The other experimental group, Topic Familiarity (TF), was familiarized with the topics that are the most frequent in IELTS interviews. This group contained eight male and seven female participants. Finally, the control group underwent the usual and traditional methods of teaching speaking skills used for
IELTS interviews, without any particular and explicit mentioning of any strategies. Six male and nine female formed this group. Table 1 presents the information related to the participants.

Table 1  
Participants of the Study  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Familiarity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Procedures  
First of all, the placement procedures were conducted in order to place participants in relevant groups. To do so, all the participants took the placement test and based on the results of the tests, they were placed in one of the two experimental (ST and TF) and one control group, each with 15 IELTS candidates. In order to make sure that the participants were homogeneous, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results show that there was no statistically significant difference at $p > .05$ level among the three groups: $F(44, 2) = .145, p = .866$. In other words, the participants of the Strategy Training group ($M = 118.87, S = 2.97$), the Topic Familiarity group ($M = 119.40, S = 2.92$), and the Control group ($M = 119.38, S = 3.48$) were completely homogeneous in terms of the level of proficiency.

Participants of the Strategy Training group were, explicitly, familiarized with the most important strategies required for IELTS interviews and speaking questions. These strategies included using synonyms when they do not know how to say a word, using the L1 equivalent of words they do not know in English, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, using gap fillers, such as well, you know, and others to gain time to think, repeating a part of the question to gain time to think, and structuring ideas before starting to talk. Likewise, participants of the Topic Familiarity group, in addition to strategies, were given the most frequently talked about topics in IELTS interviews, such as personal information, family, education, jobs, customs and traditions in different countries, and other frequent topics. Finally, for control group participants, none of the above-mentioned techniques and procedures was followed. This group underwent the traditional methodology used in IELTS speaking classes. It should be mention that although this group received some forms of strategies and topics, this was not done explicitly and was not an essential component of the treatment.

At the beginning of the course, all participants became familiar with the IELTS exam, in general and the speaking test in particular. It is imperative to mention that, of the 40 sessions of the IELTS course, 9 sessions were devoted to the speaking test in which both the General Training and Academic Modules candidates participated, considering the fact that there is no difference between the two modules as far as the speaking test is concerned.

In addition, participants took part in weekly interviews done to make candidates more familiar with test. Because the classes were held every Friday, participants could have 7-8 weekly interviews. Since the study used a pretest-posttest design, the first interview was used as the pretest and the last one as the posttest. It is imperative to mention that the structure of the interviews was similar to what is conducted in an IELTS interview (the procedure can be found in IELTS booklets available at www.ielts.org).

It should be noted that, in order to consider the ethical issues, all the participants of the Control group and Topic Familiarity were offered some extra session after the experiment. In these sessions, which were not a part of the main experiment, participants were familiarized with the same strategies participants of the experimental group experienced.

2.3. Data Analysis  
In order to answer the research questions of the study, the data were analyzed using SPSS 19. To address the first two research questions, two one-way ANOVAs were conducted. In addition, to have a better picture of the results, three matched t-tests were run. This helped the researcher answer the third research question.
3. Results

3.1. Results of the Pretest

After participants were placed in the relevant groups, they took part in an oral interview that was similar to an IELTS speaking test. The results of the pretest were to be considered as the base to compare with the posttest to see if there were any changes as the result of the treatment. To see if there was any significant difference among the 45 participants of the study, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted with the group as the independent variable and the pretest speaking test scores at the dependent variable. Table 2 presents the results of the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>31.43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31.58</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The results show that there was no statistically significant difference at \( p > .05 \) level among the three groups: \( F_{(44, 2)} = .10, \ p = .91 \). In other words, there was no statistically significant difference among the participants of the Strategy Training group \( (M = 3.40, S = .93) \), the Topic Familiarity group \( (M = 3.30, S = .82) \), and the Control group \( (M = 3.27, S = .84) \) in the pretest. The results ensured that any possible effect that happened during the experiment would be the result of the treatment.

3.2. Results of the Posttest

After participants took the pretest, they attended the course and at the end of the ninth session, they all took the posttest, which was another interview similar to the IELTS speaking test. In order to see if the treatment, strategy training, made any difference in the performances of the participants, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted, with the group as the independent variable and speaking scores as the dependent variable. Table 3 presents the results of the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23.07</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34.70</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results indicate, there was a highly statistically significant difference at \( p > .05 \) level in the performance of the participants of the Strategy Training group \( (M = 7.03, S = .55) \), the Topic Familiarity group \( (M = 6.57, S = .42) \), and the Control group \( (M = 5.80, S = 1.08) \) in the posttest. Although the results clearly show that there was a statistically significant difference in the performances of the three groups, to identify the exact location of the difference, it was essential to run a post hoc comparison to see the difference. Table 4 presents the results of post hoc Scheffe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Participants</th>
<th>(J) Participants</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheffe ST</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.22 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.23*</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.55 1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF</td>
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<td>.77*</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08 1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results clearly show that presenting strategies to the students did make a difference in their performances in the posttest. As can be seen, both participants of the Strategy Training and Topic Familiarity groups outperformed those of the Control group. This helped the researcher answer the first (Does strategy training affect Iranian prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?) and second research questions (Does topic familiarity affect Iranian prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?).

However, in order to have a better picture of the treatment and participants’ performances and also answer the third research question, two paired-samples t-tests were run, comparing the two experimental groups’ pretest and posttest mean scores. Table 5 presents the results of paired-samples t-test for the Strategy Training group in the pretest and the posttest.

Table 5
Paired Samples T-Test for the ST Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error of Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T(df)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1: STpre-STpost</td>
<td>-3.63</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-4.11 to -3.16</td>
<td>-16.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that there was a highly significant increase in speaking scores from the pretest ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .93$) to posttest ($M = 7.03$, $SD = .55$), $t_{(14)} = 16.46$, $p < .000$ (two-tailed). This increase, as the mean scores indicate, was a highly significant increase in the speaking scores of participants in the posttest. Similarly, a paired-samples t-test was run to see the differences in the performances of the participants of the Topic Familiarity group in the pre- and posttests. Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6
Paired Samples T-Test for the TF Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error of Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T(df)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1: TFpre-TFpost</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-3.77 to -2.77</td>
<td>-14.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that there was a highly significant increase in speaking scores from the pretest ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .82$) to posttest ($M = 6.57$, $SD = .42$), $t_{(14)} = 14$, $p < .000$ (two-tailed). This increase, as the mean scores indicate, was a highly significant increase in the speaking scores of the participants in the posttest. The results of the paired samples t-tests for the Strategy Training and Topic Familiarity groups helped the researcher answer the third research question (Is there any difference between strategy training and topic familiarity in terms of their effect on IELTS speaking score?). As can be seen, from a statistical point of view there was no significant difference between the performances of the groups in the two groups. Nevertheless, comparing the posttest mean score of the Strategy Training group ($M = 7.03$, $SD = .55$) with that of the Topic Familiarity group ($M = 6.57$, $SD = .42$), it can be seen that there was a marginal difference between their performances. However, the difference between the two means (.46) is hardly noticeable and can easily be ignored. In other words, it can be said that there was no difference between making students familiar with the topics of IELTS or not.

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
4. Discussion: Research questions revisited
The study was mainly intended to answer the following four research questions.
1. Does strategy training affect Iranian prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?
2. Does topic familiarity affect Iranian prospective IELTS candidates’ speaking score?
3. Is there any difference between strategy training and topic familiarity in terms of their effect on IELTS speaking score?
The treatment, that is, strategy training and making students familiar with the most frequent topics in the IELTS exam made a significant difference in the performance of the participants of the experimental groups compared with that of the control group. The results gave a positive answer to the first and second questions. In other words, strategy training did have a positive effect on participants’ performances in the posttest. The results are compatible with Canale (1983), Hedge (2000), Méndez (2007; 2011), Mugford (2007), and Nakatani (2005), among others, who showed that strategy training enhances learners’ speaking abilities.
Comparing the two experimental groups, that is, the strategy training and topic familiarity groups, the results found no significant difference. In other words, it seems that the addition of topic familiarity variable to that of strategy training made no significant difference in the performances of the participants in the posttest. The fact that there was no study to date to investigate the question of topic familiarity makes it essential to do more research to clarify the issue and arrive at better conclusion.

5. Conclusion
Based on the results of the study, certain conclusions can be drawn in terms of the pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research. The pedagogical implications of the study are quite noticeable. As the results showed, strategy training has a positive effect on EFL learners’ performance in speaking. It is essential for language teachers to pay attention to this important fact and include strategy training techniques in their teaching methods. This is particularly important as a plethora of studies have shown and emphasized this positive effect. Teachers are encouraged to present speaking strategies explicitly and convince their learners to employ them while they are speaking with their interlocutors.
The study can be followed with plenty of other studies to confirm and strengthen the results and investigate the findings from different perspectives. One of the areas of study that can be encouraged is that of the inclusion of gender as another variable. That is, researchers can examine the efficacy of strategy training and gender on speaking scores. In addition to the effects of strategy training on speaking, the effects can be studied on other skills, such as listening and reading. Researchers are invited to continue this line of research on the impact of strategy training on EFL/ESL learners’ listening comprehension, pronunciation, and reading comprehension, especially among IELTS candidates. This is particularly interesting because very few studies have investigated the teaching aspects of IELTS exam; therefore, examining the effects of strategy training on other skills and micro-skills among IELTS candidates can be a promising area of research.

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THE EFFECT OF ONLINE DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ WRITING ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIOS ON MICRO-COMPONENTIAL WRITING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT  
Online and electronic learning has been attended to increasingly for years (Romero & Ventura, 2007), and it has been approached from various aspects. In Iran, due to economical expenses, administrators are willing to develop such systems and decrease the expenses while improving the quality of learning. Based on such a gap in Iran, an Online Dynamic Assessment (Hereafter, ODA) was conducted on university students’ writings’ of electronic portfolios (e-portfolio) to investigate if administering ODA improved students’ overall and micro-componental writing performance. An in-depth interview based on Grounded Theory (Hereafter, GT) codification was conducted on 34 participants to explore students’ attitudes towards the use of ODA. The findings of this study proved that there is a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.02$) between using ODA and the students overall writing ability. In addition, among the eight micro-components which have been studied in this research five micro-components indicated a significant increase in students’ scores. And the findings from interview revealed that students have affirmative attitudes towards ODA and the advantages outweigh disadvantages. The findings of this study bear some implications for policy makers and those who teach writing and highlight the effective role of ODA in students’ writing performance.

Key words: E-Portfolio, Micro-Components of Writing, Online Dynamic Assessment (ODA), Overall Writing Performance, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

1. Introduction  
Despite its shorter history than oral skills, teaching writing has been extensively researched in recent years. Furthermore, Ur (2012) believes that in recent years with the arrival of new forms of rapid written communication, teaching writing is of more importance. However, being tough, writing courses are of no interest among students of English, let alone students of other fields! (Marefat, 2004). She believes that “the limitations inherent in traditional ‘one-shot’ form of evaluation” (p. 79) cause such lack of interest among students.

Referring to the importance of writing, Gallagher (2011) in his book, complained about school policies and asserted that despite its importance for students, it “seems to have gotten lost in many of our schools” (p. 5). He believes that writing ability “is not only a ‘predictor of academic success’ but also a ‘basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy’” (p. 5) which is “buried in an avalanche of standards, curricular pacing guides, huge class sizes, worksheets, over-the-top testing” (p. 5). The above complains among all other gaps in writing skill have inspired the researchers to conduct this study. This study places three major matters under investigation, namely, online assessment, dynamic assessment (Hereafter, DA), and writing e-portfolio. The researchers have tried to build a bridge among the three.
The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of the ODA of university students’ writing e-portfolios on students’ overall and micro-componential writing ability. Then, through an interview, the students’ attitudes towards this platform will be explored. In order to fulfill the above objectives, the following research questions are formed:

1. Does the ODA of university students’ writing e-portfolios enhance students’ overall and micro-componential writing ability?
2. What are students’ attitudes towards using such platform at universities?

2. Background

DA has been defined differently by different scholars. Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2006) believe that DA is the teacher’s ability to dynamically assess students’ present ability level through asking questions. They claimed that, though it seems straightforward, it is not so easy in practice. Generally, as a broad definition of the term, we can define it as a new approach to assessment which is based on dynamic interaction between the examiner and the examinee.

This newly-established view of assessment is different from the traditional views advocating static or non-dynamic assessment. The core issue for DA would be the “emergent” feature of it. This means that the mediations are not to be predetermined and standardized beforehand. These terms, static and dynamic assessment, do not exclusively pertain to assessment, but rather relate to the way in which an assessment is administered (Poehner, 2008). Sternberg & Grigorenko (2002) define static assessment as an exam in which test items are submitted to examinees either one at a time or all at once, and each examinee is asked to answer these items successively, without feedback or intervention of any kind.

Lantolf & Poehner (2004) were the first who distinguished between interactionist and interventionist mediations as another dichotomy in DA (Poehner, 2008, p. 18). This dichotomy refers to the type of mediations provided to the learner which may range “from standardized hints to dialogic interaction” (Poehner, 2008, p. 18). However, Vygotsky (1998) referred to the mediator-learner relationship as “cooperation” which reveals some sort of “dialogic interaction in which both participants share the responsibility for development” (Poehner, 2008, p. 18).

DA is primarily informed by Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD was first proposed for children who are learning their first language and in Vygotsky’s sociocultural psychology, this was defined as “the difference between a child’s actual level of ability and the level of ability that he or she can achieve when assisted by, or working in cooperation with, older or more experienced partners” (VandenBos, 2015, p. 1170). However, later, it was generalized to language learners which in this way it is defined as “the distance between what a learner can do by himself or herself and what he or she can do with guidance from a teacher or a more capable peer.” (Richards & Schmit, 2010, p. 644). The following figure demonstrates the ZPD as the distance between what a learner can learn without the help of others and what he can do with the help of another more competent partner.

![Zone of proximal development](image-url)

*Figure 1. The Middle Circle Represents the ZPD Where Students Cannot Complete Tasks Unaided, but Can Complete Them with Guidance.*
Portfolio is another key term in this study and it is based on constructivist theory (Marefat, 2004). As a general definition for portfolio, we can define this platform as “a purposeful compilation and reflection of one’s work, efforts, and progress” (Dowling, 2006, p. 375) which suggests that portfolios should be gathered purposefully, rather than haphazardly.

The electronic version of portfolio (e-portfolio) is defined as “the product, created by the learner, a collection of digital artefacts articulating experiences, achievements and learning” (Diegel, Reay, & Withell, 2010). Putting it another way, Kahtani (1999) provides a definition for e-portfolio as “a purposeful collection of a student’s work that is made available on the World Wide Web or a recordable CD-ROM” (p. 262).

Computer Assisted Language learning (CALL) as another key term of the study, refers to “the use of computers specifically for the purposes of [language] learning” (Desai, 2014, p. 129). Using this mediation to communicate, we can distinguish between synchronous and asynchronous communication. This dichotomy is made for virtual communications between people. As Dorneich (2002) asserted “Synchronous communication refers to simultaneous, “real-time” interaction (e.g., talking on the phone), while asynchronous communication does not happen at the same time (e.g., communicating via e-mail over the course of a day)” (p. 201).

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants
40 university students were randomly selected for this study (however some students were taken out due to their poor performance, unwillingness, etc.). The students (N = 34) were randomly grouped into two homogeneous experimental (N = 17) and control (N = 17) groups. They were aged between 20 and 26.

3.2. Instruments and Materials
To ensure the homogeneity of the groups, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered and based on the results interpreted by referring to the test guide, the majority of the scores ranged from 18 to 35 out of 40, which indicated that they were intermediate level learners.

In order to test students’ writing ability in the beginning and the end of the project to check students’ writing ability improvement some writing tasks were administered to the students. They had to write a 5-paragraph essay in both pre-test and post-test. Then, their writing essays were scored based on the scoring theme extracted from He & Shi (2012) depicted in the appendix of this article (See Appendix). The book which was used during the project was Real Writing with Reading Paragraph written by Anker (2010). This book was quite a bulky book containing 798 pages and the teacher was not to teach all the book. The final goal of this book in this semester was to teach students how to write a five-paragraph essay.

3.3. Research Design
To answer the research questions mentioned above, this study employs a mixed method design. In this pre-test post-test design the independent variable is the ODA of university students’ writing electronic portfolio which was carried out during the project and dependent variable is the students’ writing scores. Students were randomly assigned to the experimental and control group. The experimental group received an ODA of their writing portfolios; however, the students in the control group did not receive this and they just have been assessed through a one-shot assessment theme and orally in the classroom as well as manually written corrections on their papers.

3.4. Procedures
3.4.1. Treatment
In the experimental group, an ODA was conducted on the students’ writing e-portfolios; so that the students had to type their writings in Microsoft Office Word, Then, sent them to the researchers’ E-mail address. After that, the researchers’ job started and they started to leave some comments on their writings electronic documents. Following this method, the first writing document used to be composed and submitted within two days after the teaching session. Following that, within one or two days, the researchers could send the comments back to the students. The students tried their bests to solve the problems raised by the researchers. This process continued to the next session that the teacher taught the students a new form of writing. The students were presented with their errors usually two times for each writing task. A welcome letter in the beginning and
then a thank you letter at the end of the project as well as some encouraging letters while doing the tasks were sent to the students.

While correcting the writing documents, the students’ writings were not modified. The researchers just left some comments using Review tab in Microsoft Office Word 2013. Doing so, the comments look as if a teacher is talking to the student and the students themselves solve their problems. This rewriting process involves the students with their correcting process.

In the control group, the students had to bring their writing tasks in the session after the teaching session and for the other next session the teacher left some comments on their writing tasks manually and the students were not asked to correct their essays as a task and it was optional. In addition to written corrections, some students read their writings orally in the classroom or wrote on the board and the teacher as well as the students raised some points while reading the writing task.

3.4.2. Interview

After the project was finished, an interview tried to explore students’ attitudes towards the use of ODA on their writing performance. In this vein, interviewees were asked some questions about its pros and cons, challenges, suggestions, and the most effective part of the project. Following Glaser (2001), the researchers tried to listen to the interviewees in a passive way. Then, the data from audio-recorded interviews was coded based on GT. By definition, coding refers to the process of assigning codes or labels for the raw data including words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs which is done through these three steps: open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in a natural setting. It is worth mentioning that GT is usually employed to integrate the concepts and develop a theory out of the ideas, however, in this study only the codification process is hired to have an in-depth interview.

3.4.3. Data Collection Procedures

As the study follows a mixed method we have two sets of data, namely qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data which was used in data analysis had been gathered through pre-test and post-test scores. Both groups took part in both tests and all the papers were scored by two raters. And for qualitative data, the researchers held a semi-structured interview based on GT codification and the students revealed their ideas about the course.

3.4.4. Data Analysis Procedures

Through the use of SPSS 21, the descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations, etc.) for both groups were computed. After eliciting the required data and confirming normality of data, to compare the mean scores of post-tests for both groups, an independent samples t-test was implemented. The significance of the difference between the mean scores of both the experimental and control groups was tested at probability value of 0.05. To compare the development in pre-test and post-test in each group, a paired-samples t-test was used. The effect size (Cohen’s d) was also measured and taken into account to see how significant the difference was.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Data

Before analyzing the students’ essays in the pre-test and post-test, Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was conducted to calculate the inter-rater reliability. The result of this test indicated a high inter-rater reliability between the two raters (r = 0.82).

Then, some tests were run on the data in order to test if the data gathered in this way were normal and we could use parametric tests on them. The first test which was conducted on the data to see if they were normal was Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test which was conducted in SPSS 21. In this test the null hypothesis is that the data we have is not normal and the p-value is determined to be 0.05. The results show that the significant level equals 0.25 which is above the determined p-value (α = 0.253 ≥ 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and we can claim that the data is normal.

Another normality test which was used in this study is Q-Q plot which is a comparison between this study data and the normal distribution. The closer the dots to the line, the more normal the data are (See Figure 1).

As it is understood from the plot, the data in this study are close to the line which means that this data is normal. Moreover, the Skewness value (Skewness = 0.805) shows a normality among the data. Therefore, the data is normal and we can use parametric test on the data.
4.1.1. The Results of the Placement Test

Although the 34 participants had been chosen from a population of 5th semester university students and they were purportedly homogeneous in terms of common experience in English, in order to assure that the students who were willing to participate in this study were homogeneous, a proficiency test was administered among all participants. The researchers decided to use Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Then, to ensure that the groups were at the same level of proficiency an independent sample t-test was conducted on the data in SPSS 21. The test revealed that the significant level is 0.70 and as it is above the p-value = 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected and we can conclude that the two groups are homogeneous. Now, when it is confirmed that the two groups are homogeneous, we can start our research on the two groups.

4.1.2. Overall Writing Ability

4.1.2.1. The Results of the Pre-Test for Both Groups (Homogeneity)

In this statistical phase, the pre-test scores in experimental (M = 22.41, SD = 8.76) and control (M = 22.64, SD = 7.83) groups have been compared to check the homogeneity of the participants in writing ability in the beginning of the project. In the following table the results for independent sample test is depicted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table, since the p-value is 0.23, more than α = 0.05, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group (p-value = 0.23 ≥ 0.05, 2-tailed). Therefore, the final change between the two groups may show the efficiency of the treatment on the experimental group.

4.1.2.2. The Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test in the Experimental Group

At the end of the project, a writing test was administered to the participants to check their final proficiency level in writing. To see the change in the participants’ performance, a paired-samples t-test was administered to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. The following table represents the results.
Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test of the Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group Post-test pre-test</td>
<td>-16.76471</td>
<td>9.60162</td>
<td>2.32874</td>
<td>-7.199</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, the $p$-value is 0.00 which is below $\alpha = 0.05$ ($t(16) = -7.19$) and we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between scores from pre-test ($M = 22.41$, $SD = 8.76$) to post-test ($M = 39.17$, $SD = 12.93$), ($t(16) = -7.19$, $p = 0.000 \leq 0.05$) which indicates the efficiency of the treatment on students’ scores.

Up to here, it is proved that there is a significant level of confidence to claim that the treatment has been effective, however, to deepen the inference Cohen’s $d$ statistics will show how significant the influence is (Cohen, 1988). This descriptive statistic is a continuum between 0.00 and 20.00 which shows the effect size. He believes that around 0.2 the effect is small, around 0.5 it is medium, and above 0.8 the effect is large. And the calculated Cohen’s $d$ for this test is 1.51 which is quite large.

4.1.2.3. The Results of the Post-Test for Both Groups

To compare the post-test scores of both groups, an independent sample $t$-test was conducted on the data to see if the difference were significant. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the mean score of the two groups.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-Test of the Post-Test Scores for Experimental and Control Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>9.68235</td>
<td>3.79628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As inferred from the table above, the significant level is below $\alpha = 0.05$ ($t(32) = 2.340$, $p$-value = 0.026, 2-tailed) which rejects the null hypothesis. This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Moreover, the calculated Cohen’s $d = 0.80$ shows a large effect size.

Based on the previous tables and results, it could be claimed that the experimental group outperformed the control group since there was a significant statistical difference between the post-test scores of both groups and also a significant statistical difference between the experimental group’s pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, it might be claimed that these statistically significant differences were due to the treatment and the first null hypothesis of the study can safely be rejected claiming that there is no statistically significant difference between learners’ performance on writing performance when they are assessed based on the online dynamic platform. Therefore, the answer to the first question is positive and based on the above reports we can claim that the ODA of university students’ writing e-portfolios does affect students’ writing ability.

4.1.3. Micro-Componential Writing Ability

In this study, as mentioned in the appendix, three components, namely content, organization, and language, and nine micro-components of writing, namely idea quality, exposition, idea development, idea wrap-up, coherence, cohesion, length, and accuracy, have been measured. After checking the homogeneity of the groups (as mentioned above) the following table represents the independent sample $t$-test of micro-components. The $p$-value was set at 0.05.

Table 4. Independent Sample T-Test of the Micro-Components of Writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Micro-components</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Idea quality</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea development</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea Wrap-up</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>34 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exploring the significant levels depicted in the table, the findings indicate that the mean score differences between the experimental and control group for the ‘idea quality’ and the ‘exposition’ are not statistically significant (p = 0.09 and p = 0.07, respectively) since the significant level for them was above α = 0.05. However, the mean score differences in the two other micro-components of content, namely, the ‘idea development’ and the ‘idea wrap up’ are statistically significant (p = 0.03, and p = 0.00, respectively) because they are below α = 0.05. The organization micro-components, i.e. the ‘coherence’ and ‘cohesion’, are statistically significant (p = 0.04, p = 0.04, respectively). They are both in the same level of significance. Table 4 also shows that the mean score differences of language micro-components as the ‘length’ and ‘accuracy’ are 0.01, and 0.03 which means that for ‘length’ micro-component the mean difference was not significant but for ‘accuracy’ micro-component we can claim that the difference was statistically significant.

### 4.2. Qualitative Data

#### 4.2.1. The Results of Interview

In this study five questions concerning ODA have been asked of the participants. The questions were about its pros and cons, challenges, suggestions and the most effective part of it. The interview was recorded and the researchers tried to mention the most frequent answers in the following. It is worth mentioning that in this study just the first question was about the advantages of this project and students pointed to the following issues: Solving grammatical problems (100%), commenting not correcting (75%), correct use of words (62.5%), being involved during the week (50%), referring to books to solve the problems (50%), better concentration on grammar (37.5%), better recall of the grammatical points (37.5%), typing speed (37.5%), and self-confidence (25%). Most interesting was that all the participants believed that it has improved their English grammar even more than writing procedures.

The next question concerns the disadvantages of this platform and they mainly mentioned three disadvantages as follow: over-concentration on grammar (50%), the need for a personal computer (37.5%), and demotivation of too many comments (25%). The over-concentration on grammar was because they had many grammatical problems which needed to be solved and the researchers could not neglect them. About the last disadvantage, one of the participants put it in this way: *In the beginning days of the project I wrote an essay for you [researchers] which had 12 lines and the number of comments were more than 12 which meant that in each line I had more than one mistake. That was terrible for me as the first writing experience.*

As the third concern of the interview, the interviewer asked about the challenges and the students talked mainly about Internet access (75%), not having a PC (37.5%) and Challenges with Word software (12.5). There was no answer for the first two challenges. The third problem which was not that much frequent was about working with Microsoft Office Word software which requires the students to attend more to this software. 

The next concern was about the suggestions they made to this project which are as follow: Being compulsory (62.5%), Determining deadline for delivery (25%), and Bonus scores by the teacher (12.5%). Most of the participants believed that ODA should be compulsory and put it in this way: *Some of the students do not take part in this project because they are lazy and do not want to be involved with the difficulties of this project. But if the teacher or the department obligates the project they will take part and learn many things.*

The last but not the least question was about the most effective part for them. To this question they answered mainly about two items as follows: grammar (87.5%) and punctuation (37.5%). About grammar, the comments were interesting. One of them thankfully claimed that: *This project for me was greatly fruitful. I even learned grammar in your [researchers’] project more than writing structures in university course which was wonderful for me!*

As mentioned above, one of them claimed that they had learned grammar more than writing procedures.
5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research was meant to answer two main research questions through qualitative and quantitative procedures. The first one was about the overall and micro-componential writing performance while the second question was to investigate the participants’ attitudes towards this platform which was the qualitative phase of this investigation.

Motivation has always been considered as an important factor in the teaching and learning process in the literature. Ellis (1994), in an overview of research on motivation, states that motivation affects language learning, learners’ behaviors, and their achievement. In the interactions between the mediators (the researchers) and the participants, the mediator in fact aimed at motivating the partners and keeping them involved in the task actively and in this case it was in line with what Marefat (2004) claimed about her investigation setting. Praise or encouragement is another behavior in Lidz’s (1991) scale that was utilized frequently in different stages of the interactions. Another strategy that was employed in this treatment was Krashen’s (1982, p. 57) i+1 in which the clues during interactions were presented a little above the participants’ current level on order to avoid overloading.

One point worth mentioning is that the students used to be involved with their writings’ comments and feedbacks within one week after the teaching session. And when the week finished, they had to write about the newly taught form of writing. That helps students to track their process in writing learning (Bhattacharya & Hartnett, 2007). It is worth mentioning that the use of L1 facilitated the interactions between the mediator and the participants, helped the learners achieve their goal, reduced the complexity of the task, and let learners share their ideas without trouble and fear of being corrected. Although there are some scholars such as Antón & DiCamilla (1998) who believe that the use of L1 not only is not facilitative but also is an obstacle to learning, the present researchers preferred to take Wells’ (1998) idea that the value of using L1 in L2 interactive setting should be judged in light of the nature of the collaborative task involved.

The findings of the present study support Saeedi & Meihami (2015) who did the same treatment and found that the overall writing performance of the students who received ODA improved significantly which was in line with what the researchers found in this study. It is worth mentioning that the context of this study involved university students like the participants in the current study. Another research which seems to be in line with the present study was the study carried out by Marefat (2004) in Allameh Tabatabei University located in Tehran, Iran. As in this study, it is revealed that most of the corrections were about grammar and punctuation, she found that the corrections were “mainly obsessed with their grammar and spelling.” (p. 93) she called this level of correction, “surface-level correction”. (p. 93) Anderson & DeMeulle (1998) were two other experts who investigated portfolios on teacher educators and arrived at the conclusion that portfolio assessment has a positive impact on preservice teachers. The purposes in the two studies were a little different, however, the results in both researches show a positive effect for portfolio assessment.

Regarding the second research question that asked ‘What are students’ attitudes towards using such platform in universities?’ the findings of this research revealed a positive attitude of almost all the participants towards the overall existence of ODA in their writing classroom. The results showed that the students’ awareness about online assessment was quite high. Consequently, the improvement in the experimental group’s writing performance can be traced to the students’ high awareness about online assessment. As Schmidt (1994) states, there will be very little induction of knowledge without awareness. Hence, it shows that the students’ ability in utilizing the feedbacks they received depends on their understanding of the corrective feedback platform. A proof for this token is when teachers provide their students with very implicit sort of corrective feedback. Due to the fact that the students do not realize the input provided by the teacher as kind of feedback they ignore it most of the time (Ellis, 2008).

Moreover, the students indicated positive attitudes towards ODA work/activities that can be considered as a reason for their writing performance improvement. This can be explained by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980). The essence of this theory states that actions can be influenced by attitudes of doers. Hence, attitudes can shape the way people perform their activities in different situations. The inventory of meditational strategies outlined in this study extends our understanding of how to enter ODA procedures into classroom assessment and how to offer ODA mediation, with regard to writing performance. This platform was able to identify not only those areas where learners had problems, but also to bring to surface those abilities that were in the process of developing.
The results of this study also provided some new perspectives for teaching and testing. As DA integrates assessment and teaching with the goal of learners’ development, these two procedures should be conducted simultaneously. Since hint-based instruction is unfamiliar to many teachers and scholars, the results of the present study could confirm the efficiency of this approach in comparison to traditional methods. The results also proved that teaching is not a unidirectional process in which the teacher is the only transmitter of knowledge, but that is a mutual or multi-directional process in which the teacher, the learner, and even the peers could take the roles of information providers.

5.1. Suggestions for Further Studies

One of the aspects which was not measured in this project was peer correction and comments. During this study, the researchers were the only persons who left comments on students’ writings and were in contact with the learners. In addition to the peer-correction aspect, some other intervening variables should be considered in the future investigations such as age, level of proficiency, field of study, etc. in order to put ODA efficiency and practicability under investigation. Moreover, in the present study, the time devoted to the treatment was not considerably long, but investigating this vast project needs a longitudinal study. Further studies are required to investigate the long-term effects of hint-based instruction on learners and devoting more time to mediate them.

As some of the interviewees suggested in the interview phase of the study, this platform was so fruitful for students’ competency in grammar. In this way, some participants believed that they learnt grammar more than writing style in this platform. Therefore, it can be investigated whether this platform can be used as a grammar course or not. It means to check if ODA can be used to pop up students’ grammatical problems and solve them according to their proficiency level in grammar and solve them so that the rules becomes internalized.

REFERENCES


**Appendix**

Six-point analytic rating scale (Extracted from He & Shi, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components and Scoring</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Definitions/focuses</th>
<th>Rating*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idea quality</td>
<td>Relevance, originality and depth of ideas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Thesis statement and position taken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idea development</td>
<td>Topic sentence and supporting details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idea wrap-up</td>
<td>Summary of main ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Logical thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Transitions within and between sentences/ paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Total number of words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Percentage of error-free T-units of the total number of T-unit in each essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: 1 = cannot be evaluated; 2 = No proficiency; 3 = Minimal; 4 = Developing; 5 = Adequate; 6 = Effective; 7 = Advanced.*
THE EFFECTS OF FLOOR-LEVEL SCORES AND CEILING-LEVEL SCORES ON RESEARCH FINDINGS IN SECOND LANGUAGE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT  
This study investigated the possibility that, in pretest/posttest research designs in second language studies, all scores may not contribute to the overall results of the study equally due to floor-level effect and ceiling-level effect. In order to test this hypothesis, 6 M.A. theses results which had already been submitted and approved were reinvestigated by the researcher. The researcher categorizes the participants scores into two main groups labeled A and B for floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores respectively. After comparing A and B scores in the pretest with their counterpart scores in the posttest, it was revealed that ceiling level scores had not affected the overall increase in the posttest mean score as much as floor-level scores.

Key Words: Floor-level scores; ceiling-level scores; sampling procedure; parametric statistics; non-parametric statistics; normal distribution; treatment effect

Introduction  
Research plays a crucial role in success of any academic discipline. A brief look at the number of articles, books, encyclopedic dictionaries etc. authored with regard to research reveals how important this issue in academes is. Only in the United States, there are more than 6000 competitive quality journals publishing scholars’ research work in miscellaneous subject areas (2015,June12th). Retrieved from www.scimagojr.com/journal rank. In addition, many post-graduate courses require students to carry out an original research before they can graduate from their schools. Moreover, research is a broad concept. It is hardly feasible to write a comprehensive book covering all aspects of research in different areas. This has led scholars to focus on their particular fields and try to enhance the quality of research only in a specific area. The book ‘Second Language Research’ authored by Mackey and Gass (2005) could be named as an example. In this book, different issues with regard to second language research are named, discussed and explained, but the book does not particularly deal with research in other areas of humanities.

Given the field of applied linguistics, accurate research requires extra attention. First of all, applied linguistics is a hybrid discipline (Krzeszowski,1990, p.234) which is under the influence of psychology, linguistics, and sociology; meaning that applying the findings of these areas to applied linguistics should be considered from the perspective of other mentioned areas. For example, findings in the field of cognitive psychology have already proved that problem-based learning is a more suitable approach than lecturing to teach medical students (Lee & Kwan, 1997, p.151). The same finding may not be easily applicable in applied linguistics since what is used as a tool for communication in medical education e.g. language, is a purpose in second language
teaching and learning; making the situation complicated and requiring further elaborations on this issue (Larsson, 2001, p.4).

Another aspect of accuracy for research in second language studies which was the purpose of this study was participants’ sampling procedure. Participants constitute a very important component of research. Wrong participants just as wrong tests, teaching material etc. can easily lead the findings of research astray. This can be with regard to participants’ proficiency level, age, gender, educational and psychological background, and even social and economic status. A study that aims at investigating the effect of content-based approach to teaching vocabulary at advance level should make use of advanced participants. The findings of such as study without proper group of participants (intermediate participants, for example) are meaningless.

A problem with many current research projects with regard to the random sampling procedure in parametric studies is that possible unequal effect of floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores are not considered on the accuracy of final results of the study. It might in turn mean that some of the participants that researchers choose for a study may cause less effect on the results of the research or in some certain situation might even have a negative effect on the results although their scores follows the same trend as all other participants. Thus, the study investigated the possibility that floor-level scores (the scores below the mean in the pretest) and ceiling level scores (scores above the mean in the pretest) may not have equal effect on the posttest results.

Research Questions

The answer to the following research questions was sought in this study.

1. Do floor-level scores and ceiling level scores have equal effect on the overall results of a study?
2. Which group of scores in the pretest and posttest has more effect on the overall result of a study, floor-level scores or ceiling-level scores?

Background of the Study

Mackey and Gass(2005, pp.119,124) argue that the sample population the researchers select is the basis of generalizations, that is why many researchers draw participants randomly from the population they hope to generalize by considering an equal chance for all members of the population to be selected as a participants. Two common ways of random sampling, as mentioned by Mackey and Gass are simple random and stratified random sampling procedures. In the former procedure, the participants are selected just the way we put all the names in a hat and draw from that pool. In the latter approach participants are chosen based on categories.

Mackey and Gass(2005) continue that non-random sampling methods, however, include systematic, convenience, and purposive sampling. Systematic sampling is the choice of every nth individual in the population. Convenience sampling is selection of participants who happen to be available for the study and purposive sampling in when the population is chosen based on prior knowledge about the population.

Regardless of the sampling method, all researchers in empirical second language studies try to measure the treatment effect on the participants knowledge. There are a number of different ways for measuring the treatment effect: pretest/posttest design, posttest-only design, repeated measures design, factorial design, time-series design and one-shot design (Mackey, Gass, 2005, pp.248-258) among which pretest/posttest design is the preferred design for many experimental studies (Suttleworth, 2015) retrieved from https://explorable.com/pretest-posttest-designs. Dimitrov and Rumrill (2003, pp.159-160) state that there are two different general categories of pretest/posttest designs; namely, randomized and non-randomized.

Considering the data (scores) collected from the population, the researchers face two different situations: normal distribution of scores or any other type of distribution. Since second language research is to a great extent concerned with homogeneity of the participants, many researchers seek for normal distribution of results. On the other hand the type of statistical measures used to analyze the data varies based on the assumed distribution of data. Pearson correlation test, t-test, ANOVA are common measures used in parametric studies (normal distribution), and Spearman correlation test, Mann-Whitney test, Kruskal Wallis measures are used in non-parametric situations (2015, July 11th). Retrieved from http://changingminds.org/explanations/research/analysis/parametric_non-parametric.htm

Floor Level Scores and Ceiling Level Scores

Mousavi (2012, p.72) discusses two very important effects in assessment called the ceiling effect and floor effect. He uses the term ceiling for the maximum score on a test. He also refers the floor effect as the
minimum scores gained on test. The normal distribution diagram below can show what is meant by the concepts of floor and ceiling in scores.

![Figure 1. Normal Distribution](image)

In the above normal distribution diagram, around -2SD and +2SD can be considered as floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores respectively if the horizontal axis shows the distribution of scores (for example from 0 to 20) and the vertical life the number of participants.

A floor-level score in the above diagram is the entry level and the ceiling-level scores is the test-terminating score.

Mousavi (2012, p.72) also states that the ceiling-level scores may not have as much effect on test results as floor-effect scores, as ceiling level scores are closer to the termination point of a test, and occurrence of progress in such points is less likely. This issue has not already been investigated with regard to pretest/posttest designs in empirical studies. Thus, the current study investigated the possibility that floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores have unequal effect on the study results in a pretest/posttest design with regard to second language studies.

**Methodology**

In order to seek the answer to the research questions, the researcher reinvestigated the findings of 6 M.A. theses already submitted by the students and approved by the supervisors in Iran between 2007 and 2014. The theses had some common features. (1) they were all parametric studies and there was a normal distribution in the pretest results; (2) in all studies, there had been an increase in the posttest mean score compared to the pretest mean score.

In the process of writing the report for original studies, the researchers (M.A. students) had considered 1 SD above and below the mean score as the possible participants’ score range for the study (in the pretest). The mean score for participants’ pretest and posttest in all these studies was compared and considered as a valid proof of the treatment effect. The researcher collected the participants’ pretest and posttest scores from these studies, and analyzed the scores to find out whether or not the floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores had the same effect on the overall result of the study.

**Research design**

In order to understand which group of scores; namely, floor-level and ceiling-level scores had more effect on posttest mean scores, the researcher categorized the scores in the pretest and posttest into 4 groups. Group A1 for pretest-under -mean scores, group A2 for counterparts of A1 scores in the posttest, B1 for pretest-above-mean scores and B2 for their counterparts in the posttest. According to these 4 categories, if A2 minus A1 (A2-A1) is calculated for all scores is above B2-B1 then the scores below the mean in the pretest had more effect in increasing the mean of the posttest. Similarly, if B2-B1 scores prove to be more than A2-A1 it indicated that the score above the mean in the pretest had more effect on the posttest, considering that in all of the 6 thesis studies selected, there was a rise in the pretest/posttest mean.
Data Analysis
The table below shows the comparison of A2-A1 and B2-B1 for 6 sets of scores accumulated from 6 M.A. theses.

Table 1. Comparing Floor-Level and Ceiling-Level Mean Scores

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis 6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, A2-A1 mean score in all of the studies carried out is above B2-B1 mean scores; meaning that ceiling-level scores had less effect on the overall results of the studies than floor-level scores. The maximum difference between the floor-level and ceiling-level scores is about 50% and the minimum difference is approximately 25%. It means that in these sets of scores floor-level scores had between 25% and 50% more effect on the results of the studies.

Discussion/Conclusion
The answer to the first research question is that in case of parametric studies where there is normal distribution of scores, floor-level scores and ceiling-level scores do not affect the overall results of a study equally. With regard to the second research question, the findings of the study revealed that floor-level scores have more effect on the results of the study than ceiling-level scores (between 25% and 50%).

The situation represented in this study may also be an indication of a boundary effect; when the results of a score tend to be accumulated at the top of the distribution (Henning, 1987). It in turn, means that the test might have been either too easy or too difficult. In fact after applying a particular treatment between the pretest and the posttest, the researchers expect to see a tendency in the results, for example, showing that the participants’ scores have increased. This anticipated increase means that there might be a negative skewedness in the posttest results (as seen in all 6 sets of scores in this study). Therefore, researchers should consider a meaningful range for progress in the posttest and check their posttest against issues such as item facility(IF) and item discrimination(ID) to make sure the increase in the results is solely due to the treatment effect and not the assessment problems such either too easy or too difficult tests. On the other hand, the findings of this study are congruent with what (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Reber 1985, as cited in Mousavi 2012) state about ceiling scores, believing that maximum scores have relatively small opportunity to have impact on results. In fact, this study proved that much of the change seen between pretest’s and posttest’s mean score is due to the floor-level scores than the ceiling-level scores.

A few issues should be considered. First of all, many second language studies use pretest/posttest designs in which the treatment effect is gauged by comparing the pretest results and mean score to the posttest’s results. Meaning that what was noticed in these 6 sets of data might be noticed in other studies and researchers should be aware of the fact that sampling procedures need to be as accurate as possible so that all participants can make contributions to the research results. Probably, the sampling procedure in a study that show some participants’ scores had about 50% more effect on the overall results of the study than the others, should be reconsidered by the researcher.

Secondly, the sets of scores studied for this article had an increase in posttest results from the pretest; meaning that the treatment effect was positive. In a situation where the treatment effect is not positive or even negative, the might be a positive skewedness or no skewedness at all. Thus, making sure that the phenomenon noticed in this study is observable in other situations requires other researchers to carry out the same study in situations where pretest scores were higher than posttest scores or equal.

Thirdly, the researchers cannot omit the participants whose scores do not contribute equally to the overall findings of the study. Omitting participants can simply affect the required number of participants for a study. Instead researchers ought to consider the following issues while sampling the participants.

1. Accurate tests should be used as pretest;
2. The boundaries of the scores should be considered meticulously. If the ceiling-level scores are close to the maximum boundary of the scores, they cannot reveal progress.

3. A justified range between the floor-level and the ceiling-level should be considered. Many researchers consider a wide range to include enough participants for their study. It can result in unequal treatment effect. Considering 0.5 SD above and below the mean score in normal distribution of the scores instead of 1SD above and below the mean may decrease the unequal effect of floor-level and ceiling level scores. To account for the reduction in scores range, the researchers may want to consider a larger population for the pretest.

REFERENCES


THE EFFECT OF LISTENING TO COMIC STRIP STORIES ON INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
The effect of listening to comic strip stories on incidental vocabulary learning is the aim of this study. To this end, two groups including twenty pre-intermediate students as an experimental group and twenty students as a control group were selected. A vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) was given to all participants as a pre-test and post-test to measure learners’ knowledge rest on 18 unknown target vocabularies. An experimental group listened to comic strip stories with watching photos of stories since the control group just listened to comic strip stories without watching any photos of stories. The results showed that both groups improved after treatment, and listening to stories had an effect on vocabulary learning. In addition, to compare both groups’ performance on post-test, an Independent Sample t-test was administered to indicate that there was a significant difference between experimental group and control group whilst, experimental group learners almost performed better than control group learners which it conveys watching stories’ comic photos can affect on incidental vocabulary learning remarkably.

KEY WORDS: incidental vocabulary learning, comic strip stories, vocabulary knowledge scale, listening

1. Introduction
Vocabulary Learning is a very important section of learning a language. Vocabulary learning is an essential part of language learning (Yoshii, 2002). There are many definitions of vocabulary learning importance in other studies, and the vocabulary learning enthusiasts revealed the vocabulary significance in their researches. As Shoebottom (2014) ascertains as you know more words, you will be able to understand well, what you hear and read, and the better you will be able to declare your intention when speaking or writing. Words are the currency of communication; speakers will not be able to communicate with each other without words (Alexander, 2014). Ahmad (2011) in his study quotes that vocabulary learning is a crucial process for second language learners to acquire skill and competence in the target language.

Having studied vocabulary learning instructions, many techniques are revealed. Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1973) conveyed many techniques for teaching vocabulary; they talked about that we give our students an understanding of the meaning in different ways: we dramatize; we illustrate using ourselves and our students; we show pictures or objects; we paraphrase; we give the examples if necessary; we use any convenient techniques. On the other hand, Claudia Pesce (2012) in her article describes five best ways to instruct new words to learners: show students illustrations, flash cards, posters, synonyms and antonyms, setting a scene or situation and the substitute it with a new word or phrase, miming and total physical response (TPR) which many teachers believe learners who learn best by moving their bodies, actions and imperative mood and the last one is the realia (real-life objects in the ESL classroom) which can help to present new words.

Many scholars in their studies divide the vocabulary learning into two instructional techniques: incidental learning and intentional learning. Many definitions about these techniques are given by many scholars although Yali (2010) points out the incidental learning is defined as the type of learning that is a by-product of doing or learning something else; though, intentional learning is described as being designed, planned for, or
intended by teacher or students. He describes that incidental learning defines the approach of learning vocabulary through texts, working on tasks or doing other activities that are not precisely related to vocabulary, whereas the intentional learning always focuses on vocabulary itself, and link with all kinds of conscious vocabulary learning strategies and means of memorizing words. As stated in Krashen (2013), a large portion of the second language (L2) vocabulary knowledge is acquired incidentally because words are learned as a natural by-product of children/learners performing everyday linguistics activities and tasks. Incidental learning is the procedure of learning something without the intention of doing so; It is also learning one thing while intending to learn another (van Zeeland, 2013; Ahmad, 2011).

To acquire vocabulary in the incidental mood, many kinds of methods are introduced. Listening as another way of incidental vocabulary acquisition is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages” (Brownell, 2002). Listening is important for adequate communication because 50 percent or more of the time we spend communicating is spent listening. The excellent goal of L2 listening development is to allow for the L2 to be achieved through listening. Vocabulary is precisely one of the language components that can be acquired through training in listening skills (MonteroPerez & Desmet, 2012).

There is a trend toward using media to aid and supplement educational objectives in recent times. At real-life English, it is believed that language learning should be fun so the better way to enjoy learning the English language through comic strips. The most frequently mentioned asset of comics as an educational tool is its ability to motivate students. A comic strip is defined as a sequence of drawings arranged in interrelated panels to display brief humor or form a narrative, often serialized, and usually arranged horizontally, with text in balloons and captions (Haines, 2012; Liu, 2004; Merc, 2013). Based on Liu (2004), a comic strip is described as a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Among visual genres, comic strips attract many researchers’ attention because they are communicative, popular, accessible, and readable; Comic strips communicate using two major media—words and images—a somewhat arbitrary separation because comic strips’ suggestive potential lies in skilfully employing words and images together.

Comics can teach children to infer meaning from the visual first. Comics must include pictures; you can even tell a story without words. The benefits of using comics in the classroom in agreement with Hanies (2012) are certainly great, both in developing literacy and in addressing the educational needs of differentiated learners, so the teacher chooses and uses world with particular care to keep the students and the other space for growth in vocabulary and language development (Khoiriyah, 2011).

2. Literature Review
2.1 Using Comic Strip Books to Teach English Vocabulary

The graphic novels usage in language classrooms has a short history; therefore, its literature is rather limited. Although there are not many extensive studies assessing their impact as teaching tools, the feedback from educators and scholars as the application of these kinds of novels in language classrooms is a clear indication of their worth as a pedagogical tool (Yildirim, 2013). Comic Book Classroom was founded in Denver, Colorado in 2010. Comic Book Classroom is a standard-based curriculum that checks and scrutinizes age-appropriate comic literature with the intent of furthering literacy and introducing students to book culture in the larger scope. As Baker (2011) defines graphic novels are a subset of the comic genre. Comics and graphic novels both need graphics and text to tell a story. In addition, the ends is to teach students not just reading and art experiences, but engage them in discussions about the texts that may help them overcome problems in their own lives and communities. The use of comics in education is based on the concept of creating engagement and motivation for students.

Wright (2001) claims the effectiveness of comics as medium for effective learning and development has been the subject of debate since the origin modern comic book in the 1930s. The use of comics in education would later attract the attention of Fredric Wertham who wrote down the usage of comics in education represented “an all-time low in American science. The use of cartoons in your instruction has several advantages: they give life to classrooms, they promote students engagement, they improve students’ learning, they prolong student’s attention span, and they also enhance student’s communicative and linguistic skills.

Liu (2004) in his article talked about the role of comic strips on ESL learners’ reading comprehension. He has two different students’ levels of proficiency (low & high) with and without a comic strip. This study claims that the reading comprehension of the low-level students was greatly facilitated when the comic strip repeated the information presented in the text. He noted that the effect of comic strips on reading
comprehension largely depends on the quality of the repetition effect. The study’s results also imply that the advantage of providing comic strips with reading text declines when the student has difficulty comprehending the text. After analyzing the results, it was said that low-level students receiving the high-level text with the comic strip scored significantly higher than their counterparts receiving the high-level text only.

Lang (2009) evaluates comic strip has the very consequential role in the English classroom, he defines comics are the most generally read media throughout the world – especially in Japan. As he describes the problem of language teachers: continually searching for new innovative and motivating authentic material to enhance learning in the formal classroom. A textbook is formed by the material that has been developed and simplified for the learner. He notes some characteristics that make comics thus attractive as an educational tool: a built-in desire to learn through comics, easy accessibility in daily newspapers, innovative way in which this authentic medium depicts real-life language, people and society, linguistic elements or codes that attract to students with different learning styles. Furthermore, he suggests comics can be used: a) to practice describing characters using adjectives (e.g., Garfield is a very troublesome cat), b) to learn synonyms and antonyms to expand vocabulary, c) to practice writing direct speech (e.g., ‘Hey, move your car!’) and reported speech (The man told him to move his car.), d) to practice formation of different verb tenses (i.e., changing the present tense of the action in the strip to the past tense), e) to practice telling the story of a sequentially ordered comic strip that has been scrambled up and finally, f) to reinforce the use of time-sequence transition words to maintain the unity of a paragraph or story (e.g., First, the boy left for school. Next, he . . .).

Based on Bowkett’s (2011) book, he uses children’s interest in pictures, comics and graphic novels as a way of developing their creative writing abilities, reading skills. The book’s strategy is the use of comic art images as a visual analogue to help children generate, organize and refine their ideas when writing and talking about text. In reading comic books children are involving with extremely complex and structured narrative forms. Whether they realize it or not, their emergent visual literacy advances thinking skills and develops wider Meta-cognitive abilities. Baker (2011) tried to examine the profits of using comics with English language learners (ELLs). With their bright colors and familiar characters, comics are more attractive than traditional text. For these reasons and many more, comics might also play an important role in ELL acquisition of literacy. She expresses many graphic novels are high interest with low reading levels, cover diverse genes such as biographies, and cover current events and social issues. Baker (2011) concurs with comics can be used to teach parts of speech, social situations, historical events, and more. She admits that incorporating text and visuals causes readers to check the relationship between the two and encourages deep thinking and critical thinking.

According to Bowen (2011), comic strips can be very motivating for learners as the story-line is reinforced by the visual element, which can make them easier to understand. He designed many activities for teaching vocabularies through using comic strips in class: for example he used the comic strip stories in one activity that is cutting up the strip into separated boxes and getting the students to rearrange them into an appropriate order. Another activity is to blank out alternate boxes, so the story-line is given continuity and the students have to fill in the speech bubbles in the blank boxes correspondingly what precedes them and what follows them.

Khoiriyah (2011) in his thesis used comic stories to improve the students’ level of vocabulary. He believes the students determine and study words from the context on the comic reading. Story from comic offers a whole imaginary world, created by language which students can learn and enjoy; this story is designed to entertain. Khoiriyah (2011) endeavors to reveal whether there is a significant difference in vocabulary score of student taught using comic stories and those taught using non-comic stories or not. The instrument to collect the data were; observation and test. The Observation was only applied to support the data of students’ imagination on reflected on their engagement in learning processes. The researcher specified two times teaching to both classes, after the treatment the researcher analyzed the obtained data and concluded that the performance of the experimental group that used the comic stories for learning vocabulary is better than the control group.

Karukas and Saricoban (2012) in their study considered the impact of subtitled animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning and found out that the target words were contextualized and it became easy for participants to elicit the meanings of the words. For the aim of this study, the researchers selected 42 first grade teaching students in Turkey. To collect data from the subjects, a 5-point vocabulary knowledge scale was used and 18 target words were integrated into the scale. After subjects had been randomly assigned into two groups (one subtitle group and one no-subtitle group), they took the same pre- and post-tests. The general findings of this study supported the common expectation that subtitles and captions are impressive
instructional tools in learning vocabulary and improving reading and listening comprehension skills of language learners.

Merc (2013) considered the effects of comic strips on reading comprehension of Turkish EFL learners. In his study, students read the texts given and wrote what they remembered about the text on a separate answer sheet. The results of the quantitative analyses show that all students with a comic strip impact, regardless of proficiency and text level, performed better than the ones without the comic strips. Yildirim (2013) in his research applies graphic novels in the classroom as a teaching tool and provides the necessary background knowledge, the historical evolution of graphic novels. He confesses that in language classrooms graphic novels can be used to boost many different skills. The researcher talks about the historical overview of using the graphic novels in different cultures and compares its use in various literatures.

Cimermanova (2014) believes the appearance of the graphic stories in foreign language teaching, too. Using pictures, storytelling, and creative writing are the activities used more or less faithfully in foreign language teaching. She admits that in language teaching picture books present an authentic material. Her article discussed the possibilities of using picture books in language teaching and presents the qualitative case study results focused on the effectiveness of using wordless picture books. Cimermanova (2014) conveys reading these graphics bring authentic material to the EFL class and encourages students’ critical thinking. She agrees that the use of picture books contributed to a recognition that it is important to “read” the illustrations that may affect our concept, that details are important for understanding the complexity of the whole.

2.2. Statement of the problem
To learn vocabulary incidentally, the learners may encounter many obstacles and restriction or problems, all researchers that studied these issues proposed to work out these problems. They used many techniques to learn vocabulary through four skills, this study tries to focus the listening techniques for learning vocabulary (the receptive learning) and as you read many articles, there are many ways for learning incidental vocabulary. As Mousavi and Gholami (2014) state new methods of English language teaching should use new materials to draw learners’ attention for acquisition of English language. Besides, nowadays there is a tendency toward using media to aid and supplement educational objectives. This study used the listening to comic strip books and their funny pictures and checked the role of listening skill on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

After studying the many studies, we understood that many researchers studied large issues about incidental vocabulary learning through many ways, the present study attempts to examine the effect of incidental vocabulary learning on listening through comic strip stories which it is an attractive technique to learn vocabulary. To investigate the role of listening to comic strip books on incidental vocabulary learning, the research question aimed to discover whether listening to the comic strip books affect the incidental vocabulary learning.

3. Methodology
3.1 Participants
The participants of this study were 40 pre-intermediate level EFL learners from Rahyan_Danesh Institute of Ahvaz. All of them are female and the range of their age was between 10 to 16 years old. They were selected based on non-random judgment sampling from 86 students at private language institute through their performance on proficiency test designed based on Interchange Placement Test (Lesly, Hansen & Zukowski, 2005). For running this study the participants were randomly pigeonholed into two groups, 20 students as experimental group (Group A), and 20 students as control group (Group B). The participants shared the same linguistic and background knowledge and they were unaware of the purpose of study as vocabulary acquisition.

3.2 Materials
3.2.1 Comic Strip Book
The researcher for teaching the incidental vocabulary through listening have selected the seven comic strip stories from The Brain comic strip series books (Bang , 1957), which retrieved from the website named www.comicbookplus.com. This comic story book has the big hero whose nickname is Brain with several interesting adventures. The words which used in this series books are so simple which are adequate to pre-intermediate readers absolutely.
3.2.2 Research Tests
The Interchange Placement Test (Lesly, Hansen & Zukowski, 2005), which includes 70 items (20 listening items, 20 reading items and 30 language use items) was used to determine participants’ proficiency level. According to Cronbach’s Alpha formula, the reliability of the proficiency test was estimated to be ($r=.905$). In order to choose target words, fifty words from the comic strip stories were selected and placed in vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996). This test was piloted with 10 learners at pre-intermediate level and those words which learners know their meaning was deleted because the aim of this study is to show that learners incidentally acquired the words which they have not already known them. Finally, the eighteen unknown target words were chosen for the current study based on the results of the pilot group.

The researcher has applied the same pre-test and post-test for both experimental and control groups, based on the unknown selected words. This test is five-point self-reported scale of vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) was adopted to measure the vocabulary development of the learners before the treatment and after the fulfillment of treatment. This scale which was applied by some scholars (e.g., Rieder, 2003; Mahdavy, 2011; Karakas & Sariçoiban, 2012; Mousavi & Cholami, 2014) in previous studies should focus on evaluating the target vocabularies or idioms during the treatment. It composed of 5 levels as follows and this scale is scored according the following table (scores apply to each individual target words):

1: I don't remember having seen this word before. (0 point)
2: I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (1 point)
3: I have seen this word before and I think it means ________ (synonym or translation). (2 points)
4: I know this word. It means ________ (synonym or translation). (3 points)
5: I can use this word in a sentence. e.g.: ___________________ (if you do this section, please also do section 4). (4 points)

The reliability coefficient of the pretest and post-test were ($r=.976$ & $r=.947$) respectively, which estimated by using Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula.

3.3 Procedure
The study has lasted for 21 days, 3 sessions a week during of one semester (3 weeks, 9 sessions). The teacher chose seven simple stories from *The Brain series books*. He selected just last 30 minutes of each session. The researcher gave proficiency test to all participants for determining their levels in first session. In second session the participants were taken the pre-test VKS and their data were calculated. This treatment has begun from third session to eighth session in third week. In the treatment sessions, the teacher has provided slides for each short story before each session.

Both groups listened to the same stories which were included same vocabularies but in different mediums. For experimental group, researcher provided the power point slides for each story to teach it audio-visually. He has explained the stories by providing them with some more expressions or comic pictures to draw their attention to the target vocabularies. This group listened to the teacher who told the story by help of showing the pictures of comic stories on the scope of video projector in front of the classroom. Afterwards, for control group, he utilized his voice which recorded in experimental group sessions formerly. He explained all the stories in this group without showing any slides to them. The control group has just listened to the recorded voice of teacher who retelling the story, without observing the slides of pictures of comic strip books on video projector. They had to visualize the story in their mind and just listened to the voice of the teacher. The post-test was administered in ninth session in third week of semester after passing the 6 sessions of treatment. The questions of post-test were similar to pre-test (VKS). The post-test was given to both groups on similar condition and time for answering them.

4. Result
The statistical calculations and results of the study obtained from analyzing the learners’ performance on *Interchange Placement Test* as homogeneity test and also vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) as pre-test and post-test are presented. Next, the analysis went further to find out if there is any difference between both groups (groups A & B) on pre-test and post-test. The analysis on the pre-test was conducted to find any significant differences between two groups’ performance on the pre-test through the Independent Samples *t*-test in Table 1.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test(Experimental Group)</td>
<td>12.05</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.66312</td>
<td>.81910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test(Control Group)</td>
<td>11.95</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.87264</td>
<td>.86595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents both groups' descriptive statistics on pre-test, the means of two groups. The means of both groups are close; however, the Independent Samples t-test may show any significant difference between the groups in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test on the Pre-test of the Groups' Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental vs. Control Groups</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.10000</td>
<td>.85224</td>
<td>.19057</td>
<td>-.29886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the difference between the mean scores of both groups is not significant since the observed t (.525) is less than the critical t (2.090) with df=19. Thus the two groups' performance in the pre-test is showed no significant difference. The result of the post-test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test(Experimental Group)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.35</td>
<td>12.85250</td>
<td>2.87391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test(Control Group)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>5.49066</td>
<td>1.22775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics of both groups on the post-test. The means with standard deviations of the two groups reveals that the difference between the post-test means. Thus the significance difference can be got in the Table 4.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test on the Pre-test of the Groups' (Post-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental vs. Control Groups</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the difference between the mean scores of both groups' post-test is significant since the observed t (2.224) is greater than the critical t (2.090) with df=19. Thus the two groups' performance in the post-test is showed a significant difference.
5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The results of the study suggest that the mean scores of pre-test of both groups were very close to each other. It is assumed from this finding that both groups had comparable knowledge about the target words before they were exposed to the treatment. The improvement in each group was measured through t-test which demonstrated that there was an improvement in each group and the scores of all participants in two groups on post-test had been progressed. It is clear that high differences in mean score of each group show that both groups after passing the treatment accompanied by using listening to comic strip stories have promoted on post-test scores. Results indicated the differences in the mean scores of both groups were significant, (p < 0.05). To answer the research question and rejecting the null hypothesis, Independent Samples t-test was run among all participants’ scores on post-test. Regarding the comparison of mean differences in groups A and B, it might be concluded that there were significant differences between two groups while progress in group A is slightly more than group B. Thus, it might be concluded that what facilitated the improvement in vocabulary knowledge was listening to comic strip stories while using comic pictures can have more impact on acquiring incidental vocabulary with only listening to these stories. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected and it is concluded that listening to comic strip stories can affect on incidental vocabulary learning. However, by comparing the results of two groups by using the Independent t-test, the difference between two groups was significant, so the experimental group which used watching pictures of the stories could perform better than other group.

The present study confirms the findings of Lang’s (2009) study, who evaluates comic strip has the very consequential role in the English classroom, he defines comics are the most widely read media throughout the world. Lang (2009) describes the problems of language teachers: constantly searching for new innovative and motivating authentic material to enhance learning in the formal classroom. A textbook is made of the material that has been altered and simplified for the learner. He agreed by using comic books, the learners can learn different types of topics in the classroom. Like this current study, Liu (2004) in his article talked about the role of comic strips on ESL learners’ reading comprehension. He has two different students’ levels of proficiency (low & high) with and without a comic strip. The outcome of the present study is compatible with Bowckett’s (2011) book, which in his book the author uses children’s interest in pictures, comics and graphic novels as a procedure for improving their creative writing abilities, reading skills. The book’s strategy is the employment of comic art images as a visual analogue to help children generate, organize and refine their ideas when writing and talking about text. He agrees in reading comic books children are engaging with highly complex and structured narrative forms.

Bowen (2011) describes that comic strips can be very motivating for learners as the story-line is reinforced by the visual element, which can make them obvious to comprehend. There are a number of different ways to use comic strips. He designed many actions for teaching vocabularies through using comic strips in class: he used the comic strip stories in one activity that is cutting up the strip into individual boxes and getting the students to rearrange them into an order. In another study, Khoiriyah (2011) uses comic stories to improve the students’ level of vocabulary. He suggests the students identify and study words from the context on the comic reading. His findings infer the experimental group that used the comic stories for learning vocabulary outperformed the control group.

Karakas and Sariçoban (2012) in their study considered the impact of subtitled animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning and found out that the target words were contextualized and it became easy for participants to elicit the meanings of the words. Their results were in related to the current study which the general findings of this study supported the common assumption that subtitles and captions are powerful instructional tools in learning vocabulary and developing reading and listening accomplishment of language learners. Moreover, Merc (2013) considered how the comic strips can affect reading comprehension of Turkish EFL learners. In his study, students read the texts which were given and then wrote what they remembered about the text on a separate answer sheet. The results of the quantitative analyses probe that all students with a comic strip effect, regardless of proficiency and text level, performed better than the ones without the comic strips.

5.2 Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of listening to comic strip stories on incidental vocabulary learning of a pre-intermediate Iranian EFL learners group. This study showed Iranian EFL learners picking up
the meaning of unfamiliar vocabularies faced incidentally in task materials as they listened to comic strip books. The results of the study showed that listening to comic strip stories had statistically meaningful effect on the performance of language learners on acquiring incidental vocabulary. Findings from the study show that after treatment both experimental group and control group have improved in their results on post-test. In addition, independent sample t-test between two groups indicates that the results of the experimental group in comparison of the results of the control group were better and their performance was more excellent too. As a whole, it seems that listening instruction affected the L2 learners’ performance on the incidental vocabulary learning. It can be concluded from the findings of the current study that comic pictures of such strip books can influence on better vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, the low acquisition rate of word meaning found here, as well as in other incidental learning studies, emphasizes once more the importance of combining incidental learning with some sort of explicit focus. Subsequently, the findings of this study reveal that incidental vocabulary acquisition in listening modes by using various methods can indeed occur and that comic strip story might be an effective tool to support vocabulary learning. The findings of this study also present that vocabulary development is a long lasting progress that requires to be supported by contextual clues.

Finally, as the research interest of this study, comic strip use had a consequential effect on students’ recall of both pre-intermediate EFL learner groups who used the listening method to acquire the new words. This study found that comic strip usage noticeably facilitated the listening comprehension of students at pre-intermediate level. Once again, it was proved that students be provided texts with a visual material, the comic strips in particular, in their reading and listening comprehension classrooms.

REFERENCES


A STUDY OF TECHNOLOGICAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE (TPK) AMONG UNIVERSITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS: A CASE STUDY OF GUILAN UNIVERSITIES INSTRUCTORS

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ABSTRACT
Technology plays a critical role for teachers' teaching practice. To be successful in their career, teachers need to develop themselves in pedagogy and technology. The present research investigated university English language instructors' technological and pedagogical knowledge in Guilan Azad and State Universities. A researcher-developed questionnaire was utilized. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were achieved through expert opinion and Cronbach Alpha, respectively. Having collected the data, a detailed descriptive and inferential statistics of the findings were presented. The two constructs of the research instruments, namely technology and pedagogy were separately analyzed through independent samples t test and a one-way ANOVA for hypotheses testing that generally revealed a difference between the instructors' use of the constructs regarding their age, gender, major, and field of study. However, it was found that the instructors' use of the two constructs was the same in some cases.

KEY WORDS: Technology, Pedagogy, English Language Instructor, Guilan universities

1.0. Introduction
By using information and communication technologies, teachers can follow developments in their areas, transfer the contemporary approaches and applications regarding teaching methods into their instruction, and keep themselves up-to-date. For these reasons, technology plays a critical role for teacher knowledge improvement.

When teachers integrate technology into instruction, their students become more interested in the subject (Schrum, Thompson, Maddux, Sprague, Bull, & Bell, 2007; Sweeder & Bednar, 2001). In the literature, it is stated that teachers with more experience in educational computer maintain higher expectations for student learning (Hicks, 2006). In addition, the use of computers and educational technologies may help increase student performance. According to Kember (2008), digital pedagogies can refer to personalized and authentic learning, learning in the global context, and broader experiences and deeper learning. Yaniv and Crichton
(2008) suggest that the main initiative for the adoption of new technologies should be the need created by pedagogical concepts that could not be applied without technology. Developing digital pedagogies as a way of reframing pedagogies to better meet the needs of current and future students is an imperative in a digital world (Kember, 2008).

Computer and instructional technologies also bring significant novelties to teachers and their classroom instruction. In recent years, computer and instructional technologies have become an important part of our lives by affecting our learning and communication. Uses of these technologies in our daily lives become widespread since these technologies provide individuals with many benefits and opportunities.

According to Kember (2008), digital pedagogies can refer to personalized and authentic learning, learning in the global context, and broader experiences and deeper learning. Yaniv and Crichton (2008) suggest that the main initiative for the adoption of new technologies should be the need created by pedagogical concepts that could not be applied without technology. Developing digital pedagogies as a way of reframing pedagogies to better meet the needs of current and future students is an imperative in a digital world (Kember, 2008).

The TPK framework is built on Shulman's (1986, 1987) descriptions of Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) that describes how teachers’ understanding of technologies and pedagogical content knowledge interact with one another to produce effective teaching with technology. TPK is a framework for teacher knowledge for technology integration (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). They developed TPK in response to the absence of theory to guide the integration of technology into education. Since its introduction, “the notion of TPK has been rapidly extended across the fields of professional development and technology integration” (Voogt, Fisser, Roblin, Tondeur, & Van Braak, 2010, p. 110).

Understanding the impact of technology on the practices and knowledge of a given discipline is critical if we are to develop appropriate technological tools for educational purposes. The choice of technologies affords and constrains the types of content ideas that can be taught. Based on the issues mentioned, the present research intends to investigate technological knowledge of teachers and technological pedagogy the teachers make use of.

1.1. Statement of problem

Despite the emergence of TPK as a critical attribute of modern teachers, there exists a limited understanding of the applications and conceptual grounding of theoretical frameworks in the educational technology literature that aim to inform the pragmatics of teaching and learning with technology (Graham, 2011; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Angeli, 2005; Niess, 2005).

Because technological pedagogical content knowledge is becoming an increasingly important construct in the field of teacher education, there is a need for assessment mechanisms that capture teachers’ development of this portion of the knowledge base for teaching. Social and contextual factors also complicate the relationships between teaching and technology. Social and institutional contexts are often unsupportive of teachers’ efforts to integrate technology use into their work. Teachers often have inadequate (or inappropriate) experience with using digital technologies for teaching and learning. Likewise, isolating learning about curriculum content (C), or general pedagogical skills (P), will not necessarily help teachers develop an understanding of how to put this knowledge to good use.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Pedagogical knowledge requires an understanding of cognitive, social, and developmental theories of learning and how they apply to students in the classroom. True technology integration is understanding and negotiating the relationships between the three components of technology, pedagogy, and content in specific contexts. A teacher who is capable of negotiating these relationships can represent a form of expertise that is different from the knowledge of a disciplinary expert (an educationalist), a technology expert (a computer scientist) and a pedagogical expert (an experienced educator). Effective technology integration for pedagogy around specific subject matter leads to developing sensitivity to the dynamic relationship among these three components (Abbitt, 2011).
Understanding the impact of technology on the practices and knowledge of a given discipline is critical if we are to develop appropriate technological tools for educational purposes. The choice of technologies affords and constrains the types of content ideas that can be taught.

1.3. Research Question
In line with the issues regarding the problem, objective, and significance of the study, the following research question was proposed:

Is there any statistically significant difference among the components technological pedagogical knowledge with respect to EFL University English language instructors’ age, fields of study, degree, gender?

1.4. Research Hypothesis
Based on the research question proposed, the following null hypothesis are given:

$H_0$: There is no any statistically significant difference between technological pedagogical content knowledge components with respect to EFL University English language instructors’ age, fields of study, degree, gender?

2. Review of Literature
Technological pedagogical knowledge emerges from the knowledge that entails an interaction of all three components of pedagogy, and technology. TPK is the basis of effective teaching with technology and requires an understanding of the representation of concepts using technologies; pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content; knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress some problems that students face; knowledge of students’ prior knowledge and theories of epistemology; and knowledge of how technologies can be used to build on existing knowledge and to develop new epistemologies or strengthen old ones.

Technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) is an understanding of how teaching and learning changes when particular technologies are used. This includes knowing the pedagogical affordances and constraints of a range of technological tools as they relate to disciplinarily and developmental appropriate pedagogical designs and strategies. This requires getting a deeper understanding of the constraints and affordances of technologies and the disciplinary contexts within which they function.

Graham, Burgoyne, and Borup (2010) examined pre-service teachers’ planning and decision making by presenting participants with three instructional scenarios that were randomly selected and unique to the content area and grade level that the participants indicated they would be teaching. They asked the participants to describe two instructional strategies that would address the content/grade-level scenario, including one instructional strategy that used technology and one strategy that did not use technology. Using data collected from 133 participants in an instructional technology course who responded to multiple scenarios throughout the semester, the researchers developed a coding scheme for the data that included the domains of TPK. They also identified additional category codes and themes within each of these three domains to further classify responses within the domains from the TPCK framework. In selecting data to analyze using the coding scheme, the researchers randomly selected 25 pre-post responses from four content areas (math, science, social studies, and language arts).

Among the findings, Graham et al. (2010) found that instances of instructional strategies based on various aspects of TPK increased over time. Further, the students generally provided a more complex rationale for using technology in the later responses. In many ways, this study by Graham, et al (2010) is similar in purpose to the discourse analysis discussed by Koehler, Mishra, and Yahya (2007), in that it focused on the changes in thinking about TPCK over time as students are engaged in design-based activities. The researchers have also created a well-formed method for assessing student thinking about TPK. Although the authors acknowledged the need for further refinement of the coding scheme and research process to increase the inter-rater reliability, the findings of this study provide a solid foundation for future research and evaluation using the coding scheme and research method. Also similar to the prior example that used discourse analysis, however, this method for assessing TPACK is time intensive and requires multiple analyses of individual planning artifacts. As such, this approach may be best suited for research efforts aimed at further studying and refining the TPACK framework.
Harris, Grandgenett, and Hofer (2010) also focused on examining student work as evidence of TPACK and sought to develop a measure by which to triangulate students’ TPACK knowledge with additional measures. In achieving this goal, Harris et al. (2010) described the process and results of developing a rubric to assess TPACK using student-created lesson plans. The authors explain the reason for a focus on lesson plans by stating that the study sought to “analyze teaching artifacts that both demonstrate the results of teachers’ decision-making, while also providing a pragmatic window into their pedagogical reasoning: their instructional plans” (p. 334).

Through research efforts that employ these multiple methods for assessing TPK, it will be possible to begin to differentiate between models of introducing technology integration in teacher preparation programs and to better understand how pre-service teachers develop their knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content and their abilities to use this knowledge for instructional planning. As the methods and instruments for assessing TPK are further developed and refined, there is an overarching need for the establishment of meaningful norms for the various instruments to provide additional indices to which these changes can be compared. At this point, it is possible to determine whether significant changes have occurred as well as to compare different instructional strategies using the measures of TPK.

3.0. Method of Research
3.1. The Design of the Study
A mixed method design in that there is no cause-effect relationship and no treatment was employed for the purpose of the present research. There is no control over the selection and the manipulation of the variables. Moreover, the design of the present study is descriptive-analytic, since the researcher presents descriptions concerning naturally occurring phenomena connected with language development and processing.

3.2. Participants
The participants were 40 university English language instructors out of total number of 55 instructors availabley practicing teaching in Guilan State and Azad universities. The participants were chosen based on convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling method. The participants were of both genders with a 28-55 age range. The participant's fields of study consisted of translation, teaching, literature, and linguistics with three different degrees, namely Masters of Arts, PhD candidates, and PhD holders.

3.3. Materials
In order to operationalize the present study and fulfill the purposes highlighted in chapter one, the following questionnaire which was localized and reformulated was utilized as the instrument of the present study.

3.3.1. Questionnaire
The purpose for which the researcher used the questionnaire was to know the degree of Guilan university English language instructors' knowledge of technology, pedagogy. The questionnaire used in this study was a Likert-scale type of 5 point scales, namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. It is a standardized one already developed and used by Schmidt, Baran, Thompson, Mishra, Koehler, Tae, and Shin (2009) for measuring teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge in all fields such as mathematics, sociology, science, and literature with seven constructs and 47 items. However, the questionnaire used for the present study is the localized version of the questionnaire developed by Schmidt et al. (2009) with 2 constructs and 33 items measuring English language instructors' Technology Knowledge (TK) and Pedagogical Knowledge (PK).

3.3.1.1. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire
Although the questionnaire was already standardized (e.g., Schmidt et al., 2009), its validity and reliability were estimated again for the purpose of the present study. In order to save the validity, the researcher first tried to gain experts' opinion through distributing the questionnaire among 6 instructors practicing TEFL at Islamic Azad University at Rasht and Lahijan Branches. The questionnaire was, then, administered to a group of long-standing experienced English instructors for piloting purpose. The reliability of the questionnaire was achieved through a pilot study that was conducted among a sample representatives (20 instructors) of the total population at Rasht Azad and state universities, and Lahijan Azad University due to the ease of access.
The final version of the research instrument was developed based on feedback on this draft. The researcher distributed and administered 55 questionnaires at teachers’ gatherings at 5 universities in 4 cities including Rasht (Azad and State), Lahijan, Roudbar, and Astara in the educational year of 2015. The total number of questionnaire the researcher could collect finally and was able to run the study with was 40 since 15 questionnaires were not correctly answered by the participants.

4.0. Results

4.1. Descriptive analysis of the data
According to the data gathered in the demographic section of the TPK instrument, the male (65%) participants outnumbered the female (35%) one. Regarding the age range of the participants, 5% of participants (2) comprised the smallest group, and 37.5% of the participants were over 46. The teaching field enjoyed the highest rank among others with 67.5%. However, translation enjoyed the least with 7.5%. With regard to degree, PhD candidates and PhD holders were competitively the same with 2 difference for PhD holders. The detailed information can be looked up in table 4.1.

4.2. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire
Regarding the validity of the questionnaire it can be said that the questionnaire proved to be qualified for the purpose since five out six instructors qualified it as having very good items supporting the factors, and the other one qualified the questionnaire as good supporting the factors and the items, generally. With regard to the reliability, the questionnaire reliability was achieved through a pilot study that was conducted among a sample representatives (20 instructors) of the total population. The reliability, the internal consistency of the questionnaire, was estimated by Cronbach’s alpha that proved to be .92 indicating that the questionnaire was highly reliable for the conduct of the present study.

4.3. Inferential analysis of the data
The analysis depicts the status of the factors in terms of the characteristics mentioned. The following are the calculations of the critical value. An Independent Sample t Test and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine whether there were any significant differences between the means of different groups.

4.3.1. Technological knowledge and gender
There is no difference between instructors’ gender and the use of TK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean of square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>0.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26.724</td>
<td>0.703</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 1.540 which is bigger than the probability value of 0.222. Since the probability value is lower than F, there is no reason that the hypothesis at a significant level \( \alpha = 0.05 \) to be confirmed. This means that there is a difference between men and women in TK factor.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2. Technological knowledge and age

There is no difference between instructors' age and the use of TK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

Table 4.3
Variance analysis of TK and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean of square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.634</td>
<td>1.909</td>
<td>3.311</td>
<td>*0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20.173</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 3.311 with the probability value of 0.021. Since the probability value is smaller than F, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ to be confirmed. This means that TK factor is different in different ages.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:
4.3.3. Technological knowledge and major

There is no difference between instructors’ majors and the use of TK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.056</td>
<td>4.019</td>
<td>9.184</td>
<td>*0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.751</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 9.184. This statistics is larger than the probability value which is 0.000. Since the probability value is lower than F, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ to be confirmed. This means that TK factor is different in different majors.

The mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.3. TK and major](image-url)
4.3.4. Technological knowledge and degree

There is no difference between instructors' degrees and the use of TK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

Table 4.7
Variance analysis of TK and degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.625</td>
<td>2.812</td>
<td>4.691</td>
<td>*0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22.182</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 4.691, and the probability value is 0.015. Since the probability value is smaller than the F, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 0.05$ to be confirmed. This means that TK factor is different in different degrees.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

Table 4.8
The mean and the standard deviation of the groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Candidates</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.5. Pedagogical knowledge and gender

There is no difference between instructors' gender and the use of PK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:
According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 2.216 that is bigger than the probability value, 0.145. Since the F statistics is greater than the probability value, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ is being confirmed. This means that there is a difference between men and women in PK factor.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

Table 4.10. The mean and the standard deviation of the groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no difference between instructors' age and the use of PK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

Table 4.11. Variance analysis of PK and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean of square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.596</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>1.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7.515</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>9.111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.6. Pedagogical knowledge and age

There is no difference between instructors' age and the use of PK.
According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 1.859 with the probability value of 0.140. Since the F statistics is greater than the probability value, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ to be confirmed. This means that PK factor is different in different ages.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+46</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6. PK and age

4.3.7. Pedagogical knowledge and major

There is no difference between instructors’ majors and the use of PK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean of square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.283</td>
<td>1.428</td>
<td>10.648</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.828</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.111</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.648</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 10.648 that is larger than the probability value. Since the F statistics is greater than the probability value, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ is being confirmed. This means that PK factor is different in different majors.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:
### Table 4.14. The mean and the standard deviation of the groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.7. PK and major](image)

#### 4.3.8. Pedagogical knowledge and degree

There is no difference between instructors’ degrees and the use of PK. To investigate this hypothesis, we used variance analysis table. The results are as follows:

### Table 4.15. Variance analysis of PK and degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Mean of square</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Probability value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.575</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>1.150</td>
<td>0.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table observed above, the F statistics is equal to 1.150 with the probability value that is 0.328. Since the F statistics is greater than the probability value, there is no reason that the hypothesis in a significant level $\alpha = 5\%$ to be confirmed. This means that PK factor is different in different degrees.

The Mean and the standard deviation of the groups can be observed in the following table:

### Table 4.16. The mean and the standard deviation of the groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4. Results of Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1. TK and gender, age, major, and degree

The first hypothesis in this domain was rejected since the probability value was lower than F. This means that there was a difference between men and women in TK factor. Similarly, the second hypothesis was rejected meaning that TK factor was different in different ages because the probability value of 0.021 was smaller than the F statistics of 3.311. Similarly, the third hypothesis in this domain was also rejected indicating that PK factor was different in different majors since the probability value was lower than F statistics. Moreover, the fourth hypothesis was rejected since the F statistics reached to be 4.691 that was larger than the probability value of 0.015.

4.4.2. PK and gender, age, major, and degree

The first hypothesis in this domain was rejected indicating that there was a difference between men and women in PK factor since the F statistics was equal to 2.216 that was larger than the probability value was 0.145. The second hypothesis was also rejected meaning that PK factor was different at different ages with the F statistics of 1.859, larger than that of the probability value which was 0.140. In addition, the third hypothesis was rejected since the F statistics of 10.648 was very much greater than the probability value. It indicated that PK factor was different in different majors. The fourth hypothesis was also rejected since the F statistics was equal to 1.150 and the probability value was 0.328 indicating that PK factor was different in different degrees.

5. General Discussion

The current TPK research about the theoretical conceptualization of TPK includes efforts that seek to enrich and deepen the existing theoretical TPK models in order to better address the complexity of technology integration. The research was conducted with 40 university English language instructors out of total number of 55 instructors practicing teaching in Guilan State and Azad universities. The participants were chosen based on convenient sampling as one of the main types of non-probability sampling methods.

According to the results in the hypothesis testing, it was found that the hypotheses regarding the difference between TPK and the instructors’ gender, major, and degree were confirmed and the difference between TPK and age was refuted. Regarding the TPK factor, it was found that it is not different in gender, but it is different in age, major, and degree of the university instructors. With regard to TPK factor, all four hypotheses were rejected implying that the gender, age, major and degree of the instructors were different. It was totally the same with the fourth factor, PK. The hypothesis testing revealed that the university instructors were different PK in terms of their gender, age, major and degree.
The findings are somewhat consistent to Mishra and Koehler's (2006) proposition that the key sources of technology integration knowledge can be found in the inter-connected sources of knowledge such as TPK. These teachers did not appear to be able to perceive direct connections between TPK and the basic knowledge sources of PK. It appears that the intermediary sources of knowledge such as TPK are perceived as stronger building blocks towards TPK. These findings stand in contrast to Koh, Chai, and Tsai's (2012) model of Singapore practicing teachers' TPK perceptions. For these teachers, TPK are perceived to have positive direct influences on their TPK. It could be that as teachers' degree with curriculum and teaching practices grow, it better enables them to make direct connections between basic TPK knowledge sources.

6. Conclusion

When teacher educators draw upon the various factors of TPK resources to create ICT lessons for meaningful learning, they should make explicit the decision path and the rationale involved to the preservice teachers. This is especially so for decisions involving the basic knowledge components. Creativity, flexibility and fluency in connecting the knowledge factors as represented by the TPK framework would require that teachers have rich repertoire of the knowledge, and they are able to synthesize them for a specific group of learners with specific learning needs. Thus, the results of the present research can shed some light over the assessment mechanism of teacher recruitment and teacher on going professional teaching. Moreover, Pragmatic issues like program accreditation and grant evaluation also highlight the need for TPK assessment. Hence, the development of TPK assessment mechanisms is vital for helping build the infrastructure for current and future teacher education efforts.

REFERENCES


AUTHORIAL IDENTITY PRESENCE: THE CASE OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND LIFE SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT
The process of learning to write at university often involves the process of creating new identity which fits the expectations of the subject teachers who represent a student’s new discipline. However, creating such an identity is difficult for language learners. If we simply think that academic writing is dry and impersonal, we deny variability and this may have the effect of preventing students from coming to terms with the specific demands of their disciplines. The present study investigated if all disciplines follow the same conventions of identity in academic writing. To this aim, a quantitative analysis was done on the corpus of thirty journal articles from two different categories based on classification proposed by Science Direct. Also, the researcher benefited the taxonomy of functions developed by Hyland (2002a) to show the degree of authorial presence through the use of first person pronoun. The results revealed that although self-mention constitutes a central pragmatic feature of academic discourse, the writers significantly underused authorial pronouns and determiners, downplayed their role in the research, and adopted a less clearly independent stance. Also, there was a difference in the use of identity markers in academic writing across disciplines.

KEY WORDS: Writing, Academic Writing, Identity, Discipline

1. Introduction
Academic writing has traditionally been perceived as impersonal and objective prose. This conventional interpretation is partly based on positivist view that science rests on empirical results that are disassociated from personal beliefs and objective perceptions of the individuals (Harwood, 2005a). Style guides and textbooks for academic writing are also a factor which has contributed to this generalized perception, since they often advise authors to avoid a personal style of writing and to conceal one’s personal views under conventions of impersonality and anonymity. Despite the fact that almost everything that writer writes says something about him, and the source of relationship that he wants to set up with his readers (Hyland, 2005a), authors often aim at being objective in the expression of ideas and thus try to avoid specific reference to personal opinions. Students often approach university writing assignments with the idea that academic writing is dry and impersonal. They have been taught that this kind of writing involves an objective exploration of ideas that transcends the individual. In fact, they learn to leave their personalities at the door and subordinate their views, actions and personalities to its rigid conventions of anonymity (Hyland, 2002a). In this case, students cannot construct a credible representation of themselves and cannot align themselves with the social identities; therefore, those new to an academic community are likely to find the discipline very different from those they bring with them (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). This social identity is accomplished through a range of rhetorical features, but most visibly in the use of first person pronouns and corresponding determiners. While the use of first person pronoun is the powerful rhetorical strategy for emphasizing a contribution, many second language writers feel uncomfortable using them because of their connotations of authority. To investigate how the identities of writers are revealed through uses of first person pronoun, and to show writers of which disciplines try more to be invisible, the present study addressed the issue of disciplinary
variation in the use of self-mention resources by analyzing a corpus of research articles from two different fields of knowledge. Additionally, the researcher elaborated on the previous works to suggest a refined categorization of the major discourse functions of self-mention strategies in academic texts and provided statistical data on the distribution of these functions across disciplines.

2. Review of Literature

Studies on writer identity and first person pronoun use focus on texts produced by student writers (Tang and John, 1999), on the comparison of texts produced by expert writers with those written by student ones (Hyland, 2002c) or on texts produced by native and non-native writers of English (Martínez, 2005). Tang and John’s (1999) study of authorial pronouns focused on the texts of student writers. They examined the use of first person pronouns in the essays of 27 first-year students of an English in Context course in a university of Singapore. In a comparative study, Hyland (2002c) interviewed expert writers and examined 240 published journal articles, 30 from each of eight disciplines, to examine the use of first person pronouns. Petch-Tyson (1998) examined the presence of features signaling writer/ reader visibility most accessible by computer software, including first and second personal pronouns and references to the situation of writing or reading, in argument essays written by American native English speakers as well as French, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish English learners. More recently, a Canadian researcher’s study of English essays written by Quebec French learners partly supported Petch-Tyson’s findings (Cobb 2003). Despite the number of studies into the use of personal pronouns and other writer visibility features in published and unpublished academic writing, investigations into the actual use of these features by non-native speakers remain incomplete. Similarly, more work needs to be done to compare unpublished academic essays written by native and non-native English speakers.

3. Methodology

To find out how academic writers can use first person pronouns in their writings, this research used text analysis methodology. The corpus in the current study consists thirty journal articles from two different disciplines based on classification proposed by Science Direct; namely, Health Sciences and Life Sciences. Each of the two sub-corpora consists of fifteen articles that had been randomly chosen from recent issues of one journal in each group. Also, in the current study, the researcher benefited the taxonomy developed by Hyland (2002a) to show the degree of authorial presence through the use of first person pronoun.

Table 1. Hyland (2002a) Taxonomy of the Functions Projected by First Person Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyland (2002a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stating a purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explaining a procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stating results/claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressing self-benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elaborating an argument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To avoid diversity, one discipline was selected from each category, and for each discipline one journal was chosen. In order to provide a typical sample of articles from each of the disciplines, random selection was adopted. Therefore, from each of the journals 15 articles were extracted randomly and were numbered from 1 to 15. Moreover, to form a corpus of almost (210000) words, tables, abstracts, and reference sections were deleted. The sampling procedure considered an imbalance in terms of the number of single-authored and multiple-authored articles. Also, this research emphasizes that all examples of identity markers were examined in the context to assure that they refer to the authors not to anyone else. Then, the quantitative analysis was carried out in two steps. First, all the texts were analyzed and all instances of authorial markers were extracted. The corpus was analyzed by the use of Word Pilot 2000 software in order to calculate the frequency of each authorial indicator. Percentages were calculated in relation to various authorial markers, different functions and various kinds of articles (single-authored and multiple-authored) and were tabulated for the purpose of comparison. Finally the results were described and explained.

Table 2. Number of Single-Authored and Multiple-Authored Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Based on what the table illustrates, this sampling procedure entailed an imbalance in terms of the number of single-authored (S) and multiple-authored (M) articles. The latter is clearly predominant. The paucity of single-authored articles is because of the fact that research in some areas requires the joint effort of a team of researchers, which makes it difficult for individual researchers to stake claims individually.

4. Results and Discussion

As can be seen in the following table, first person pronouns and possessive adjectives were quite recurrent in the category of Health Sciences, but Life Sciences showed a very low occurrence of these features.

Table 3. Frequency of Personal Markers in Two Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Life Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results also revealed that the category of Health Sciences received higher occurrence of first person plural pronouns. For the use of first mention singular pronouns it can be said that it was the same in two categories. These preliminary results are discussed in detail in the following sections.

As can be seen from the above table, the patterns of use of first person singular pronouns and possessive adjectives in the corpus were very different from the ones of plural pronouns, which was not surprising given that only five of the thirty articles were single-authored. As mentioned before, this paucity of single-authored articles could ultimately be explained by the fact that research in some areas is expected to be the result of the joint effort of a team of researchers, which makes it difficult for individual researchers to stake claims individually. Based on what Becher (1989) points out, team work is more common in “urban” disciplines, where the number of hot issues for research is limited and there is a higher competition and more intense interaction among disciplinary members. Interestingly, researchers in their disciplines actually do write some articles on their own, although in some cases it seems to be a common practice to compose them and publish them as if they had been created by the whole group of specialists.

While the personal pronouns “I” “my” and “me” were non-existent in the disciplines analyzed, the pronouns “we” “our” and “us” were frequent. A number of single authors in two disciplines decided to avoid using exclusive first person pronouns altogether or, perhaps more surprisingly, opted for the use of exclusive plural pronouns and possessive adjectives rather than singular ones when referring to themselves in their text. In sum, there seems to exist a degree of variation among individual authors as to the ways in which singular pronouns and possessives were used in single-author articles in the disciplines studied. However, a deeper investigation of this aspect of pronoun use would require a fully comparable corpus of single-author and multiple-author research articles in each discipline, such analysis is beyond the scope of the present study.

According to the results (Table 3), there was also a difference in the incidence of the two plural first person pronouns analyzed in the corpus, namely “we” and “us”. The exclusive subject pronoun “we” was used very frequently in the category of Health Sciences. The results for the use of personal markers in research articles were in apparent conflict with the traditionally accepted view that articles are descriptive and impersonal. This finding might suggest that authors tend to be aware of the importance of using first person pronouns so
as to project a strong authorial voice and to take credit for one’s findings. Moreover, the researchers’ decision
to use personal markers in order to clearly stand behind their research findings and conclusions might also be
affected by factors like the journals’ status, inasmuch as self-mention resources may be perceived as a
necessary marketing strategy in order to get their research published in prestigious international journals.
Unlike the pronoun “we”, the object pronoun “us” seems to be very rare in articles, as it was used only seven
times in the overall corpus. Despite its low occurrence, it should be noted that this personal pronoun was
used more in Health Sciences, while it was used just twice in Life Sciences. According to the data, in these two
disciplines the pronoun “us” mostly appeared following verbs such as “allow”, “enable”, “help” or “provide”
in the explanation of the benefits or limitations of particular methodological decisions (example 1). In doing
this, the authors seemed to attempt to reveal the sound logic underlying their decisions and to stress their
competency as researchers.

Example 1
We thank our partners, especially the scientists and field technicians of the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility
Institute of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (TSBF-CIAT, Kenya), Kenya Agricultural
Research Institute (KARI), … who agreed to work with us and have allowed us to use their experimental sites
and facilities for this study. (Life Sciences)
The first person plural marker “our” was overall a very frequent indicator of the writer presence in research
articles in the corpus, only second to the pronoun “we” (See Table 3). However, there were some notable
differences in the incidence and use of these two self-mention features. The use of the possessive adjective
“our” was comparatively more frequent in Health Sciences than in Life Sciences. In order to investigate this
cross disciplinary variation in the use of the exclusive possessive adjective we need to consider the uses and
collocations of this word in articles. In the disciplines studied, the word “our” was often used to express the
authors’ ownership of the research being reported or the data or results obtained from this research in
expressions such as “our results”, “our data”, “our findings”, etc. These noun phrases tend to function in the
sentence as the inanimate subjects of epistemic lexical verbs such as “suggest”, “indicate”, “imply”, and also
more emphatic verbs such as “show” or “demonstrate” (See example 2).

Example 2
Our findings suggest that government, education, and healthcare systems have to work together to chang
the environmental factors that cause myopia in the first place. (Health Sciences)
To summarize, the use of the possessive adjective “our” seems to be comparatively more frequent in the
articles of Health Sciences than in those of Life Sciences. A possible explanation for this difference may lie in
the lower degree of writer commitment conveyed by the use of the first person plural possessive compared to
the first person pronoun “we”. Writers in the first category tended to favor this self-mention resource because
they seemed to be aware that the use of “our” followed by “results”, “data”, “findings”, among others, allows
them to reduce responsibility for their statements and, therefore, protects them from the potential negative
consequences of having their claims refuted. Moreover, in the category of Life Sciences the small incidence of
the personal pronoun “we” may also be related to the authors’ desire to gain “persuasive authority” (Hyland,
2001) and credibility by highlighting the objective and impersonal nature of the research process.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Different Kinds of Authorial Identity in Category 1(Health Sciences)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article No.</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>My</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>Our</th>
<th>Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from this table, first-person singular pronouns and possessive adjectives were non-existent in this discipline. It is clear that the occurrence of first-person plural pronouns was more frequent. Also, it can be concluded that in this discipline the writers of single-authored articles preferred to adopt a quite impersonal and objective writing style (See example 3). The analysis of this table indicated that among multiple-authored articles, plural markers were mostly used in introduction and body subsections of Methodology and Discussion sections (See example 4).

Example 3

One may test if the time trend bias is stable by using it to predict the summary estimate of effect when new studies are added. In Section 4 of the paper, the analysis is updated by adding new studies to test the persistence of the time trend.

Example 4

Our results showed that the RT at dusk (control: 4.1 s, PD: 4.2 s) was significantly longer than at midday (control: 3.4 s, PD: 3.6 s; P < 0.01). However, we did not find significant differences in the RT between PD and control subjects for either traffic condition. We also did not find significant differences between patients with different stages of PD with respect to RT.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Different Kinds of Authorial Identity in Category 2 (Life Sciences)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article No.</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>My</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>Our</th>
<th>Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The distribution of authorial markers in the first and second categories was the same; there wasn’t any use of first-person pronouns in single-authored articles (See example 5). Also the same as the first category, in multiple-authored writings most markers occurred in introduction and body subsections of Discussion and Methodology sections of research articles (See example 6). But it should be mentioned that in comparison with Health Sciences, the use of personal plural pronouns was less frequent in this category.

Example 5
The author regrets that the printed version of the above article contained some errors relating to the content.

Example 6
We attributed lower taxonomic richness among the sites in Eastern Africa to less favorable conditions arising from high rainfall and low temperatures at higher altitudes. These observations were consistent with those of Collins (1980) and Gathorne-Hardy et al. (2001), who noted that high altitudes harbour less termite taxa, especially of the subfamily Macrotermitinae.

While frequency of occurrence is important in determining the scale of underuse, we can learn a lot more about authorial identity by exploring the rhetorical functions of the first person that is used to perform. The points at which writers choose to make themselves visible in their texts through self-reference have considerable rhetorical importance, indicating the kinds of commitments writers are willing to make and the information they are prepared to give about their beliefs as individuals. The following table illustrates some information about discourse functions of first person pronouns in selected papers of these two disciplines.
Table 6. Frequency and Percentage of Discourse Functions of Self-mention in 30 Research Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Life Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stating a purpose</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining a procedure</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating Results/claims</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing self-benefits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborating an argument</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stating a purpose
In some of the cases writers use authorial pronouns to state their discoursal purposes in order to signal their intentions and provide an overt structure for their texts. This kind of framing help clarify both the direction of the research and the schematic structure of the argument, but it also foreground a fairly low risk writer role, simply signposting readers through the text. The use of this function was higher in the category of Health Sciences.

Explaining a procedure
There is a similar meta-textual dimension to describe the research procedures used and this also reflects a similarly low degree of personal exposure. In the selected papers, many of the writers were willing to detail their approach as a first-person account. Comparing the percentages, it is observable that the category of Health Sciences received higher use of this function.

Stating results/claims
This is the most self-assertive, and consequently potentially the most face-threatening use of self-reference and it contrasts baldly with professional uses. In expert discourses, the explicitly persuasive use of self-mention is most clearly displayed by the fact that writers choose to announce their presence where they make a knowledge claim. At these points they are best able to explicitly foreground their distinctive contribution and commitment to a position. Comparing the percentages, writers of Life Sciences used this function more than writers of Health Science.

Expressing self-benefits
A number of writers include comments on what they had personally gained from the project and this category represents the least threatening function of authorial self-mention. This requires a personal statement, usually in the conclusion, where the writer can adopt a less threatening role than the originator of ideas or interpreter of results, presenting him or herself in a way which does not step beyond a familiar student identity. As the table illustrates, just three times in thirty articles, writers used this function, and these belong to the first category (Health Sciences).

Elaborating an argument
This is a high-risk function where results contrast starkly between the two genres. Setting out a line of reasoning would seem to be a key purpose of academic writing but generally only the professional academics choose to stake their commitments to their arguments with the use of first person. Comparing the percentages, writers of Life Sciences used this function more than writers of Health Science.

Based on what the above tables illustrated, first person singular pronouns and possessive adjectives were non-existent in Health Sciences and Life Sciences. In other words, the writers of single-authored articles preferred an objective writing style. In these two disciplines most markers occurred in Discussion and Methodology sections of research articles.
5. Conclusion
Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that self-mention constitutes a central pragmatic feature of academic discourse since it contributes not only to the writer’s construction of a text, but also to a rhetorical self. The authorial pronoun is a significant means of promoting a competent scholarly identity and gaining acceptance for one’s ideas, and while some writers were sensitive to its rhetorical effects, they were reluctant to accept its clear connotations of authority and personal commitment. As a result, they significantly underused authorial pronouns and determiners, downplayed their role in the research, and adopted a less clearly independent stance. It should be noted that there was a difference in the use of identity markers in academic writing across disciplines. The ways that writers chose to report their research and expressed their ideas obviously result from a variety of social and psychological factors. Most crucially, however, rhetorical identity is influenced by the writer’s background and this becomes more intricate for writers familiar with intellectual traditions which may be very different from those practiced in academic contexts.

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ELT EVALUATION: THE ISSUE OF IN-COMPANY ENGLISH TRAINING IN TUNISIA

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ABSTRACT
In today’s international competitive economy, companies often invest in developing their personnel in different areas to meet their expected objectives. In this regard, many companies offer different types of training including English communication. However, most often, trained employees still do not reach their target levels in English. To this end a Kirkpatrick evaluation model was carried out to evaluate the English training of 32 executives from advertising and pharmaceutical services provider companies. The results revealed that at the outset the trainees had a rather positive reaction to the course. However, when the learning level was explored, the trainees’ feedback suggested that they often did not meet the expected level. This in turn showed why just a few trainees used the acquired competencies at work. As far as ROI is concerned the training in the two respective companies has not managed to reduce the turnover.

Key words: in-company training, English, Kirkpatrick evaluation model

Introduction
With the advent of the 21st century Knowledge Age, lifelong learning has become inevitable as the education at schools is no longer considered as complete when the student leaves the formal classroom environment. (OECD/CERI, 2008). As a consequence, work procedures have been restructured and a ‘new work order’ has been established to meet the new global values and trends (Shied, 2003).

In order to fill the gap left by academic education, and to take part in the knowledge society, many companies in Tunisia engage in different types of training courses to be able to improve technical or communication skills of their employees. For these companies aiming to compete on a global level with a skilled workforce, workplace learning is an opportunity to connect the development of the individual with the development of the company through an emphasis on continuous development (Mavin et al, 2010). To this end, considerable amounts of money and time are invested in order to reach the desired goals.

Most often workplace training has involved people who are more likely to have had less rewarding school experiences and to view themselves as less able learners and more motivated by extrinsic rewards (for example, credit, qualifications, promotions) than intrinsic enjoyment in learning (Vaughan, 2008). This is why undertaking a formal evaluation of an English training program is vital to see how beneficial the training is for the trainees.

The evaluation of an English language training program helps ensure program quality as when weaknesses are identified, it allows a program to be improved, and it keeps a strong and successful program intact by confirming its success. (Rosenbusch, 1991, Indira, 2008, Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009.).

Workplace training evaluation is an under-researched area. The main objective of this work is to highlight English training achievements and challenges in a sample of two companies in Tunisia: an advertising agency and a pharmaceutical services provider company within a framework of a social and economic desire for a sustainable development.

The present work addresses the following research question:
How effective was the English training in the advertising agency and the pharmaceutical services company?
To answer this question, four sub-questions were formulated:
1. What was the trainees’ reaction to the course? (Reaction)
2. How much did the trainees learn from the course? (Learning)
3. Did the trainees change their working behavior thanks to the course? (Behavior)
4. Did the two companies benefit from the training course in terms of ROI? (Result)

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section introduces the major models of evaluation, findings from previous studies as well as taking into consideration the role of needs analysis and company culture in evaluating the effectiveness of a training program.

Models of evaluation

Although assessment and evaluation seem to be synonymous, the literature draws a clear distinction between them. In fact, assessment refers to judgment of learners’ performance, while evaluation refers to judgment of program or organizational effectiveness (OECD/CERI, 2008). In this regard, the present work will address the evaluation of an English training program for a group of executives belonging to an advertising agency and a pharmaceutical services company in Tunisia. To this end, a theoretical framework for a program evaluation is presented. Also a review of the literature relating to program evaluation in the vocational field follows. Prior to this some definitions are worth considering in order to understand the term ‘evaluation’.

Evaluation can be internal or external, formative or summative. Internal evaluation, often carried out by teachers or curriculum developers, is time saving and less threatening for the learners (Byram, 2001). Contrarily to internal evaluation, external evaluation is praised for objectivity; however, it is more time consuming, and may not be totally reliable as the learners may feel suspicious of the external evaluators (Byram, 2001).

On the other hand, evaluation can be formative or summative depending on the purpose and audience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While summative evaluation is carried out at the end of a program implementation and aims to assess its effect (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), formative evaluation is used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of an ongoing program, and aims to boost client satisfaction and save money spent on the design or purchase of a program (Tessmer, 2005).

Program evaluation can help in developing a concrete understanding of personnel requirements (Borate et al, 2014), it can also promote an analysis of the program’s efficiency and cost effectiveness (Wang, 2009). To this end different evaluation models have been cited in the literature. Eseryel (2002) identifies six approaches to evaluation as follows:

- Goal-based evaluation
- Goal-free evaluation
- Responsive evaluation
- Systems evaluation
- Professional review
- Quasi-legal

Goal-based and systems-based approaches are largely used in the evaluation of training (Eseryel, 2002), and within these two approaches a variety of frameworks for evaluation of training programs have been suggested. Kirkpatrick four-level model (KM) has been recognized as the most significant goal oriented approach. On the other hand, Eseryel (2002) reports that under the systems approach three models have come out: the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) Model; Training Validation System (TVS) Approach; and Input, Process, Output, Outcome (IPO) Model.

Table 1 displays Kirkpatrick’s goal-based evaluation approach and the three system-based models (CIPP, IPO, & TVS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal-based</th>
<th>System-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirkpatrick (1959)</td>
<td>CIPP Model (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPO Model (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TVS Model (1994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned in the table, Kirkpatrick suggested an evaluation model based on four levels: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. Reaction refers to the trainees’ satisfaction with the program. Learning, which is measured by exams or surveys, is the degree to which the trainees change attitudes, improve their knowledge, or increase their skills as a result of attending the program; Behavior relates to how much the trainees use the acquired knowledge or skills in the workplace, and finally, results, the fourth evaluation level, focuses on the lasting changes to the organization that occur as a consequence of the training program, such as increased productivity, improved management, or better quality (Owston, 2008).

Kirkpatrick’s and the other three models have been criticized for a failure to define the ways to improve training (Eseryel, 2002). In fact, many evaluators do not apply the whole KM, and end up evaluating the training only at the reaction or at the learning level due to the complexity involved in level three and four of the model (Eseryel, 2002). However, though criticized Kirkpatrick’s model has been one of the most influential evaluation models (Eseryel, 2002; Borate et al, 2014; Rehmat et al, 2015).

### Findings from previous studies
Different types of on-site training evaluation have used the Kirkpatrick evaluation model, and yielded different results. In their evaluation of the effectiveness of a training program in quality department at a multinational company, Borate et al (2014) found that the training course created a positive reaction and attitude in the trainees. On the second level, the trainees showed satisfactory results in their learning. With regard to the third level, behavior, the trainees showed some readiness to transfer the new knowledge acquired from the course to others. Finally, the trainees’ practical knowledge and confidence increased considerably after the completion of the training course.
Elsewhere, Rehmat et al (2015) found out that the evaluation of some different training programs delivered to 627 participants at some call centers yielded different results pertaining to each level. In fact, the trainees tended to rate the training as excellent at level one, reaction. However, the tendency towards excellence in evaluating the training program was likely to decline as they explored level two, learning, and level three, behavior. A 20% decline was noticed between the efficiency of the training at level one, reaction, and level three, behavior. Rehmat et al (2015) suggest that Kirkpatrick evaluation model has the advantage of calling the attention of organizations or trainers that trainees’ reactions to a training course tend to be inflated. In order to have an objective feedback, an exploration of the four levels is highly recommended.

In her evaluation of some training programs offered by an institution to the rural sector in India while using the KM, Indira (2008) found out that going through the different levels of the KM displayed the program’s shortcomings and the trainee’s desire for improvement. In fact, at level one, the participants were happy about the training they had received, and looked forward to learning more from the Institute that provided the different programs. They judged that the programs had a good content and design. There were however shortcomings in the training programs in terms of the problems faced by the participants in utilizing the learning in their home environment. In fact, the trainees felt that the training was not enough performance oriented in terms of practical applications. According to Indira (2008), such shortcomings should be met by taking into consideration the work situation where the participant returned to while designing the course in addition to creating an enabling atmosphere in the departments where change was expected.

At level four, some overall changes were reported by the trainees. Changes included (a) the introduction of new concepts, (b) an increase in productivity, (c) the ability to network with different people, (d) an increase in efficiency in delivery of services, (e) an improvement in interpersonal relations, (f) better service levels and (g) career advancement. However perceptible changes could not be seen in reduction of execution time of projects and improvement in revenue/project viability.

In addition to introducing the major evaluation models including Kirkpatrick’s as a framework establishing the evaluation structure in the present study, a presentation of the importance of needs analysis as well as the value of the workplace learning culture is worth highlighting.

The role of needs analysis in training

Literature on learning and development highlighted the necessity of a needs analysis so that the trainees in question can identify their particular needs. In fact, thanks to a needs analysis gaps in skills and knowledge are identified and proper training can be developed to meet these gaps (Mavin et al, 2010, Brown, 2002). Graves (1996) suggests that it is sometimes advisable for some trainers to check with the learners on a program design rather than come with a prearranged syllabus. This will set a framework of the development of the training program. In fact, a training program is a shared responsibility between the trainers and the trainees (Franco, 2005).

In this context, different needs analysis evaluations were carried out to check the learners’ actual needs. Some of the needs analysis was carried before the implementation of the training program in order to come up with a ready-made course, while others were carried after the implementation to judge the success of the program. Examples of needs analysis carried out before the program implementation include a study carried out by Kusumoto (2008). Confronted with the need to teach English at primary schools, Kusumoto (2008) conducted needs analysis for the future English teachers in Japan who had not received any training as far as teaching English is concerned. The main findings reported were that besides improving communicative English, teachers’ urgent need was to acquire practical knowledge linked to the daily teaching performance such as effective methodology and program development.

In her evaluation of a training program to executives at the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia, Ayachi (2015) found out that the training program met the trainees’ need to develop their communicative skills in general. In fact, they managed somehow to improve their social and business English. However, the urgent need to improve oral and aural skills, neglected somehow the need of the trainees to read and write in English. In fact, the trainees had to read and write some reports in English. The skills which they judged they did not practice enough during the training course.

When analyzing the needs of a given type of trainees, the awareness of the workplace culture they happen to belong to would enhance the success of a training program. It seems that a business strategy used to promote
a product or a service in a given company affects the way workplace trainees learn (Ayachi, 2015). In fact, in a previous study, Ayachi (2015) found out that trainees in the advertising sector and those in the pharmaceutical services provider sector used different learning strategies. The findings of Ayachi's study (2015) suggest that in the advertising sector, the trainees used the memory and the metacognitive strategies more frequently than the trainees in the pharmaceutical business. On the other hand, the pharmaceutical company participants were more likely to use the affective and the compensation strategy more frequently. The same study also highlighted that job position also affects the way a person learns. In fact, managers are more likely to plan, supervise, and coordinate, which made them use the cognitive strategy more often than their subordinates.

As a conclusion although most often needs analysis is carried out before the implementation of a given training program, it is also important to check whether the trainees’ needs were met during the evaluation phase.

METHODOLOGY

Participants:
The total number of the participants is 32. They come from two different companies: one is a multinational advertising agency and the other is a multinational pharmaceutical services provider company. The selection of these participants emanates from two reasons. The first reason is accessibility as the researcher is one of the trainers for these participants. The second reason is that these two companies have been clients to the same English training provider for more than two years. Therefore, viewing their experience in the English training with the same course provider, these participants can give appropriate feedback relative to the four levels of the KM.

Instruments
A questionnaire to evaluate the participants’ satisfaction with the training course in the form of closed and open-ended questions was handed to the respondents. The questions include some bio data. The questions are arranged in a way to answer the first two levels of the evaluation. To explore the trainees’ reaction, the trainees were asked to evaluate the amount of knowledge they gained from the training in general, as well as their opinion about the instructor. The learning level was explored by questions relating to the content of the course. They were also asked to rate the course form excellent to poor. The trainees were also asked to state the strengths and weaknesses of the course in the form of open-ended questions. The behavior level was investigated through an open-ended question inquiring about how often, when and how they used the skills they acquired from the course at work. Also, an interview with the line managers was carried out to evaluate the respective companies’ general benefit from the training.

Data analysis procedure
Kirkpatrick four level model was used to explore the effectiveness of in-company English training for 32 participants belonging to the advertising agency and the pharmaceutical services. In line with Rehmat et al’s (2015) evaluation methodology, the trainees’ answers to the survey were mapped to each level of KM as follows:

Level 1- Reaction: two questions were designed to evaluate the trainees’ reaction to the English training course, part one of the survey enquired about the overall practical knowledge the trainees gained from the course. Here the trainees had to rate the course on a scale going from ‘A great deal’, ‘Some practical knowledge’ to ‘None’. To calculate the scores, 5 marks were given to ‘A great deal’, 3 to ‘Some practical knowledge’, and 0 to ‘None’. The second part referred to the trainees’ evaluation of the trainer. The trainees had to evaluate the trainer’s capabilities and attitude to them on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Never’ to ‘Always’ where 0 points would be attributed to ‘Never’, 1 to ‘Sometimes’, 3 to ‘Usually’, 4 to most of the time, and 5 points would be given to ‘Always’. To have further information open-ended questions were designed so that the trainees could explain their reaction.

Level 2- Learning: In addition to calculating the average of the trainees’ tests, two questions were selected to explore the trainees’ learning acquisition from the training course. The trainees had to evaluate the course objectives, procedures, amount of listening and speaking on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly
Agree' to 'Strongly disagree' whereby 5 points were given to 'strongly Agree' and 1 point to 'Strongly Disagree'. The trainees had also to rate the course from 'Excellent' to 'Poor', and the same calculation was applied. In addition to the closed questions, open ended questions were developed to give the trainees the opportunity to express their opinions about the learning offered in the course.

**Level 3 - Behavior:** to explore this question, an open ended question was given to the trainees asking them how they implemented the new communication skills they learned during the training course.

**Level 4 - Result:** to investigate this question, an interview was carried out with the line managers of each company. The main question was the extent to which the respective companies benefited from the investment in the English training course in terms of quality of service and productivity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Level 1: Reaction

The trainees had a rather positive reaction to the course. In fact, the trainees' opinions were shared between gaining a great deal knowledge (50%), and gaining some practical knowledge (50%). Note, however, that a division in opinions was explained by some trainees' feedback in the open-ended questions. In fact, 10 participants said that the timing of the course which took place during lunch time was not appropriate. The trainees' reaction to the instructors followed the same trend, showing some positive reaction. In fact, 53% (17 trainees) said that the instructor always gave clear answers, 46% (15 trainees) found that the instructor was always considerate to them, 56% (18) said that the instructor was always effective in teaching the course, and 69% (22) said that the instructor was always enthusiastic about the course (See figure 1). In fact, in the open-ended questions, the trainees reported that among the strengths of the course were the ability to discuss different topics with the trainers, and good interactions with them. This agrees with Indira’s (2008) findings stating that more could be learnt while interacting with the trainers.

![Figure 1: trainees' reaction to the course](image)

Note that the trainees had a very positive reaction towards the trainer. In fact, being in contact with the same trainers during two years may have led the trainees to adopt a friendly attitude towards them. This may explain the positive reaction of the trainees. These findings agree with, Borate et al (2014) and Rehmat et al (2015) who reported that the trainees rated the training positively at level one – reaction.
Level 2: Learning

Concerning level 2, the trainees displayed some satisfaction with the learning they acquired from the training course. In fact the analysis of their tests’ grades revealed that the advertising agencies’ participants’ grades averaged around 13/20, while those of the pharmaceutical services company averaged around 12/20. However, in more practical concerns, although, the trainees expressed some satisfaction with the acquired knowledge, their rating towards excellence declined considerably in comparison to their attitude at the first level (See Figure 2).

These findings are in line with Rehmat et al (2015) who warn against drawing conclusions on the effectiveness of a training program while relying on the trainees’ reaction to the training. In fact, similar to Rehmat et al’s findings (2015), a decline of 25% is noticed between level one, reaction, and level two, learning. Whereas 56.25% of the trainees had a positive reaction towards the training, only 31.25% said that they were happy with acquired knowledge (See Figure 2). Such a decline may be explained by the mismatch between the program in use and the trainees’ actual needs as well as other concerns. In fact the program was criticized by 75% of the trainees. In this regard, the majority of the trainees (13) said that they did not practice English they learned at work. 1 trainee found that the program in use was not practical. 4 trainees judged that there was a bad atmosphere in the group because there were trainees from different departments and positions. 5 participants said that there were too many trainees and they could not participate during the training session the way they expected. 1 participant said that there was a discontinuity in the course. In fact many trainees could not attend the course regularly due to workload. Also their companies did not often renew the contract quickly with the training provider due to budget constraints.

These findings are in line with Indira’s (2008). In fact, Indira (2008) found out that the same training programs were given to trainees from different departments. This most often explains why they could not implement what they had learned. As a general comment and similar to what Marvin et al (2010) suggest, ‘learners may enjoy attending a program but not actually learn anything enough to have an impact on their performance in the workplace which minimizes the value of the program’ (p. 11).

Level 3: Behavior

The analysis of the open-ended questions revealed that the use of English depended on the company as well as the department the trainees belonged to. For example, in the advertising agency, the media support department has to deal with English speaking clients. The interaction was most often in the form of email. However, they sometimes have to speak on the phone for urgent matters. The trainees often delegated this...
task to their manager, who during the two year-training felt some improvement in understanding the clients' request. A follow-up by email is always necessary, though. So such feedback, presents two main advantages acquired from the training program. The first one is gaining self-confidence, and the second one is the ability to satisfy the clients. This finding agrees with Wang (2009) who suggests that ‘for any program to continue operating in this era of high pressure, high stakes business, governmental, educational, and individual endeavor, it must consistently and efficiently meet the needs of its clients’ (p. 149).

Other trainees belonging to the creative department started to feel the need to use English at work with the coming of a new creative director, who is Russian and can only interact with them in English. These findings agree with Indira’s (2008) who suggest that having an idea about the working environment where the trainee returns is very important while designing the training program.

In the pharmaceutical services provider company, the trainees reported that they did not use English at work. Their company is French and their clients are Tunisians. However, as they were anticipating a merger of their company with an American one, they expected to use English on a daily basis, hence the need to upgrade their English communication in the four skills.

Level 4: Result

This question deals with the Return on Investment of the training. In fact, the trainees had no idea about the cost of the training. However, they imagined it to be costly, though. An informal interview with the managers of the respective companies almost led to the same conclusions. Contrarily, to companies that offer products, the two companies offer services, therefore, the measurement of productivity is different. The manager in the advertising agency mentioned the fact that the executives’ use of English helped in winning the loyalty of an English speaking client. She said that they managed to have six big campaigns with them in 2015.

The measurement of the ROI with the pharmaceutical services provider company is different. In fact, in their daily activities, these people do not use English as they deal with Tunisian clients who are the medicine manufacturing laboratories, doctors, and the medical representatives. The use of English is restrained to writing reports or informing by way of conference calls the American managers about their activities. The ability to communicate with their American bosses is a proof of good practice. However, the fact that there is some turnover, the managers of the two companies said that their respective companies were losing money since they offered some training in vain.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study was conducted to evaluate an in-company English training program for two companies of different specialty areas in Tunisia; one is a multinational advertising agency, and the other is a pharmaceutical services provider company. The training program was evaluated using the Kirkpatrick model. The results indicated that the participants reacted positively to the training. However, the analysis of level two -Learning- showed that the participants’ trend towards excellence declined by 25%. This was explained by some participants who mentioned the fact that the training program did not fully meet their on-the-job task requirements. At level 3 – Behavior- the use of English depended on the position and the department in the advertising agency. As for the pharmaceutical services provider company, the trainees had an urgent need to train in English as they were expecting the merger of their French company into an American one. Thus all departments were expected to use English as they had to provide their American colleagues overseas with reports on their activities. Concerning level 4 – Results– No figures were obtained to explore to what extent the English training program had an effect on the respective companies’ improvement in the quality of services. However, the turnover reported by the managers of the two companies shows that the English training has not managed to retain employees.

The findings of the present study show that workplace English training still needs to be improved. In fact, at the learning and the behavior levels not much was acquired and implemented by the trainees in the two studied companies. This confirms Vaughn’s idea (2008) that although Workplace training opportunities are provided, workplace learning cannot be successful without an understanding of the learners themselves. So it is highly recommended that trainers not only delve more deeply in the trainees’ specialty fields, but also training programs should meet the requirements of different departments and positions in the same company.
The gaps in learning reported by the trainees highlights the importance of taking into account the culture of the workplace and the way learning is organized. An awareness of the culture of the workplace and its effect on the trainees’ learning strategies is highly recommended. In fact, as reported by a previous study, different working environments as well as different working positions affect the way the employees learn Ayachi (2015).

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research
It is essential to note that triangulation is limited in the present study. Although data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, class observations and interviews with the trainers would have provided more interesting information. It is also important to recognize that level 3, Behavior, and level 4, Results, were not well explored. An observation of the trainees at work as well as the analysis of productivity figures before and after the training would reveal more remarkable data. The data of the present survey cannot be generalized as the sample is limited. It is recommended, then, to conduct such a study with a bigger number of trainees from different sectors.

Acknowledgement
I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me with the possibility to write this article. Special thanks go to the trainees who gave valuable answers to my survey. I would also like to acknowledge the cooperation of the trainers in helping run the survey in their respective groups.

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THE IMPACT OF TEXT ANALYSIS TASKS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS’ PARAGRAPh WRITING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT
The present study sought to investigate the effect of text analysis tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. To this end, two intact classes at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, were randomly assigned as the experimental and control groups. To make sure of their homogeneity, all the participants sat for PET. Based on the results of PET, 60 participants (30 in each intact class) remained and the scores of other students were excluded from the data analysis in the remaining phases of this study (i.e., pretest and posttest). A pretest of paragraph writing was then administered. Afterward, the experimental group received a 10-session treatment through which the participants in this group encountered and performed genre analysis tasks. A paragraph writing posttest then was administered. An ANCOVA was conducted to compare the means of the experimental group and control group in the posttest while considering the scores of participants in the pretest phase as a covariate. Based on the results of this study, text analysis tasks have significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. Raising learners’ familiarity with different genres and subgenres, and inclusion of more genre analysis tasks in writing courses can be mentioned as the most important implications of this study.

KEY WORDS: Text analysis tasks, Genre analysis, paragraph writing

1. Introduction
Writing is a highly complex process. For a text to be coherent it should also make sense, and there should be a consistent development of ideas of the writer, concepts, or arguments (Almaden, 2006). According to Khoii and Arabsarhangi (2011), writing as a productive skill is more complicated and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development of thoughts in a structured way. Writing is especially important for the instruction of second language learners for three reasons: first, writing well is a necessary skill for academic or occupational success, but one that is especially difficult for second language learners to master this skill well. Second, writing can be an effective tool for the development of academic language proficiency as learners more readily explore advanced lexical or syntactic expressions in their written work. Third, writing across the curriculum can be invaluable for mastering various subject matter, as written expression allows learners to raise their awareness of knowledge gaps, abstract problem-specific knowledge into schemas that can be applied to other relevant cases, and developed mental representations of knowledge that can be more easily found and regained, while at the same time allowing teachers to better understand the students’ state of knowledge and thinking process and finally adjust instruction as necessary.

Writing is a basic communication skill and a unique property 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. Writing, like listening, is often slighted in language classes. Especially since the inception of the audio-lingual movement, the oral skills have received major attention and writing has been considered less important. The tendency to view writing as the least useful of the four language skills may lead to the conclusion that writing is less important and that it can be sacrificed to spend more time on the other three skills (Chastain, 1988). Critical analysis is always and necessarily the analysis of situated contextualized, language, and context itself becomes a crucial methodological and theoretical issue in the development of a critical study of language. As
Silverstein and Urban (1996, p. 1) specify the text idea allows the analyst of culture to extract a portion of ongoing social action - discourse or some non-discursive but nevertheless semiotic action - from its infinitely rich, exquisitely detailed context, and draw a boundary around it, inquiring into its structure and meaning. This textual fragment of culture can then be re-embedded by asking how it relates to its ‘context’, where context is understood as non-readable surround or background (or if the context is regarded as readable, by asking how the text relates to its ‘co-text’) (Blommaert, 2005).

Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) believe that the concept of genre provides a way of looking at what students have to do linguistically; i.e. what kinds of discourses they have to be able to understand and produce in speech and writing. They add that the genre perspective may also provide students with an understanding of why a discourse is structured the way it is, through a consideration of its social context and its purpose. Finally, they conclude that genre would seem to be a potentially powerful pedagogic tool. The present study gains significance as the authors investigate the application of genre approach to English for general purposes in an EFL context.

2. Review of the Literature
2.1. Text Analysis
Various examples have been presented of the rhetorical structuring of different text types. For instance, Meyer (1975) in an analysis of the rhetorical organization of ‘expositions’, presents four main types of text structure: time order, collections of descriptions, comparisons, and cause and effect. Other discussions of rhetorical patterning in texts can be found in the work of Hoey (1983) who discusses problem-solution, general-particular, matching contrast, and hypothetical-real texts, and Crombie (1985), who presents examples of the problem-solution and the topic-restriction-illustration type of text.

McCarthy (1991) and McCarthy and Carter (1994) discuss rhetorical variation in texts, and present a number of examples of commonly occurring text types. Each of these descriptions of rhetorical patterning is extremely useful for the language learning classroom. This discussion may give the impression that the notions of genre and text type are clearly defined in the area of genre analysis. Whilst this is true in some cases, it is much less so in others, and, in particular, in certain pedagogic applications of the results of genre analysis. In fact, some pedagogic applications of genre analyses seem to be based on the notion of ‘text type’ rather than ‘genre’.

2.2. Genre Analysis
Genre is a social activity in which language is used to establish and maintain relationship in order to achieve specific goals (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Miller, 1984). Essential to achieving these goals is an understanding of the communicative context, including the participants, their culture, history and purposes of communication. In order to create an effective example of a genre, writers or speakers use contextual knowledge to meet the genre expectations of the corresponding readers or hearers.

Badger and White (2000, p. 157) experimented using the genre and process approaches together as an alternative in a model called the process genre approach. Through this research, they affirmed that this dual approach works well if the writing cycle begins with models, description of the key linguistic features, discussion of the social situation in which it happens, and analysis of the recommended rhetorical patterns of each genre. Student writing is then subjected to the sequence of drafts in the process approach.

Henry and Roseberry (1998) did an experimental study in academic classes using short tourist information texts in English. Participants in this research were divided into two groups: a group which used the genre-based instructions and a group which did not employ the genre approach in the same writing task. After three weeks, participants took a test. The genre group did better than the non-genre group, and the data showed that knowledge of the typical structure of the content made it easier for learners to arrange their ideas in terms of both achieving their communicative goals and producing more well-organized writing. It proved that the learners’ understanding of both the rhetorical structure and the linguistic features was increased by the genre-based instructions (Henry & Roseberry, 1998, pp. 154-155).

Ding Eng Na (2009) investigated the effectiveness of using genre-based approach to teaching writing through the use of model texts. He, in particular, aimed to identify the moves of the adjustment letter, the allowable moves order and the strategies used to realize the moves. From a language teaching perspective, it is essential to view genre as consisting of a series of moves (Swales, 1990). He believed that a move is considered as a part of a text which achieves a particular purpose within a text. Apart from the analysis of moves, this study also viewed the learners’ writing in terms of content, structure and language. This study considered the
application of genre-based approach to teaching of writing in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context, especially for learners aiming to use English in the professional setting. 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 & Derewianka, 2001).

There are many ways of looking at discourse structures other than those presented here and each of them provides important views on the nature of genres. There are, too, already many examples, especially in ESP and the work of the Australian ‘genre school’ (McCarthy & Carter, 1994, p. 29), where genre-based views of language have been successfully applied in language teaching and learning.

2.3. Task and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The concept of task-based learning and teaching is not new, for tasks have been used in foreign language classrooms since at least the mid-1970s. And the term “task” came into deliberate use in applied linguistics in the early 1980s, and nowadays it is a widely used concept both in second language syllabus design and in second language acquisition research. In order to challenge the traditional linguistically-based approach, researchers have proposed many task-based syllabuses, for example, Prabhu’s (1987) Procedural syllabus, Breen’s (1984) Process syllabus and Long’s (1985) Task syllabus. Since then, task-based learning and teaching has become extremely popular among teachers and it is integrated into the communicative language teaching for its promotion of naturalistic learning and stimulation of acquisitional processes.

Definition of a task has been one of the areas in research and language teaching that has baffled the practitioners from its terminology to its scope and its differentiation from an exercise, an activity, or drill. According to Crookes (1986), there is no clear agreement as to what constitutes a task and there is no consistency regarding the description the different devices for eliciting learner language. A series of tasks can be designed to help students make rhetorically informed choices to express tentative claims in academic writing. Ventola (1997, p. 171), for example, proposes an activity that involves a text extract in which all modal verbs are removed from the text, and then students are asked to fill in the slots with the modal verbs they think most suitable to the context, in order to see how students perceive the modalization meaning and whether they would use the same value choices as the original author. Other tasks may be those which aim to understand and identify the degree of protection that the different strategies used for the function of hedging perform, and the linguistic devices available for their realization (Martín-Martin, 2008). These tasks should aim at making it clear that, for example, the use of the strategy of depersonalization (e.g. agent less passive and impersonal constructions) diminishes the writer’s commitment to the proposition expressed to a larger extent than modal devices, as the former strategy allows writers to greatly distance themselves from the claims made, and therefore represent a higher degree of detachment and deference to the community and this implies a higher degree of protection. Task-based instruction has its own advantages and disadvantages. It is beyond doubt that advantages outweigh disadvantages. TBI is appropriate for all ages and backgrounds, especially young learners. All children have acquired their L1 in a contextualized setting, and have acquired grammar and structure inductively. Their focus is on meaning, not form. A special consideration for these learners is that their language skills are still developing and teachers must be careful to create level-appropriate tasks for the learners (Bourke, 2006). Task-based instruction can also be used to teach content and language, can be integrated with more traditional teaching methods, can create motivation due to tasks being relevant and immediate, and can be a useful approach for learners who do not have a predilection for more traditional types of classroom learning or where teachers have little autonomy over their lesson planning (Krahnke, 1987).

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find the impact of text analysis tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. More specifically, this study aspired to compare the effects of two types of tasks (i.e. genre analysis tasks and register analysis tasks) on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. The question this study sought to answer was:

RQ: Do genre analysis tasks have any statistically significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability?
4. Method
4.1. The Design of the Study
The participants of this study were selected non-randomly, so the present study followed a quasi-experimental design. The participants of the experimental group received a 10-session treatment through which they encountered and performed genre analysis tasks. Meanwhile, the participants in control group received a 10-session placebo in which they encountered and performed register analysis tasks. To compare their paragraph writing ability, the participants of both groups sat for a pretest and posttest before and after treatment respectively. The schematic representation of the design is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test (writing test)</td>
<td>Pre-test (writing test)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment: (10 weeks)</td>
<td>Placebo: (10 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre analysis tasks</td>
<td>Register analysis tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test (writing test)</td>
<td>Post-test (writing test)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Participants
To fulfill the objectives of this study, 60 male and female intermediate EFL learners at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, participated in this study. Their age range was between 20-29 years old. These participants were non-randomly selected and homogenized through a piloted PET among 90 learners in 2 intact classes of the university. The participants whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. The rest of students were present in classes, but their scores were excluded from the data analysis phase. One intact class was randomly assigned as experimental group, and the other one as control group. The experimental group including 30 participants received a 10-session treatment through which they encountered and performed genre analysis tasks, and the control group which also included 30 participants received a 10-session placebo in which the participants encountered and performed register analysis tasks.

4.3. Instrumentation
To answer the research question of this study, the following instruments were used:

4.3.1. PET
The English language proficiency test used in the study for homogenizing the subjects was a sample of the Preliminary English Test (PET) adopted from "Objective PET" by Louise Hashemi and Barbara Thomas (2010), Cambridge University Press. PET is one of the standardized tests among the series by Cambridge ESOL. PET is an exam for people who can use every day written and spoken English at an Intermediate Level. It tests four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The PET used in this study was scored on the basis of the standard criteria introduced by the test.

4.3.1.1. Writing Rating Scale of PET
The rating scale used to rate the writing of participants in this study was the one provided by Cambridge under the name of General Mark Schemes for Writing. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the rating scale of 0-5.

4.3.2. Pretest
The purpose of this test administered before the treatment was to find the possible initial differences between the paragraph writing ability of the experimental and control groups. It required the participants to write a paragraph with a word range of 100 to 150 on a given topic. Two raters (i.e. the researcher himself and an expert teacher with a five-year experience of teaching writing to EFL students) rated the papers. To make
sure of the consistency of the scores, inter-rater reliability was calculated. The score of each participant then was the average of the scores given by the two raters.

4.3.3. Post-test
This test which was administered after the treatment sessions was equal in all respects to pretest except for the chosen topic. This change of topic was done to control for the probable testing effect. The participants were again required to write a paragraph with 100 to 150 words on the given topic. The papers were collected and rated by the same raters of the pretest phase. Inter-rater reliability was calculated again, and the average of the scores given by the two raters was considered as the final score of each participant.

4.4. Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis
This study was conducted in April and May 2015. Two intact classes including 48 and 42 students at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, were randomly assigned as the experimental and control groups. To make sure of their homogeneity, all the participants, majoring in English translation and passing their ‘Essay Writing’ course, sat for PET. Among those participants who passed the exam the ones who obtained the score one SD above and below the mean were selected for the study. Therefore, 60 participants (30 in each intact class) remained and the scores of other students were excluded from the data analysis in the remaining phases of this study (i.e. pretest and posttest). A pretest of paragraph writing was then administered. This test included writing test in order to check the knowledge of paragraph writing ability. Then, the experimental group received a 10-session treatment through which the participants in this group encountered and performed genre analysis tasks. Meanwhile, the participants in control group received a 10-session placebo in which participants encountered and performed register analysis tasks. At the end of these 10 sessions, a posttest of writing was administered. An ANCOVA was conducted to compare the means of the experimental group and control group in the post-test with the alpha level set at 0.5. It should be mentioned that the scores of participants in the pretest phase was considered as a covariate in this study.

5. Results
The hypothesis of this study was that ‘text analysis tasks do not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability’. To test this hypothesis, and after the collection of required data, the following descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted.

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of PET. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.
Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PET</th>
<th>valid</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>4.407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>19.426</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test i.e. PET. The mean, standard deviation and the variance are presented.

Sixty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control. To test their paragraph writing ability, two tests were run. One test was run before the treatment to find any possible initial differences between the groups and the second one was administered after the treatment to see the effect of treatment on the experimental group. The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pretest and posttest is shown in the following tables.

Table 4.2.
Type of class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of class</th>
<th>Value label</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3.
Descriptive statistics for the posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of class</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>45.87</td>
<td>3.767</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35.73</td>
<td>5.532</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40.56</td>
<td>7.163</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main ANCOVA results are presented in the next table, labeled Test of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 4.4.
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>875.818</td>
<td>39.143</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3119.206</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3119.206</td>
<td>139.407</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>23.569</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23.569</td>
<td>1.053</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>1719.501</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1719.501</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1275.364</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>3027.000</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .579 (Adjusted R Squared = .564)

The final table in the ANCOVA output (Estimated marginal means) provides us with the adjusted means on the dependent variable for each of our groups. Adjusted’ refers to the fact that the effect of the covariate has been statistically removed.

Table 4.5.
Mean and Corrected Mean of Paragraph writing Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of class</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound  Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>45.854</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>44.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35.146</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>33.416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest = 25.90.

Table 4.5 shows the corrected means of dependent variable i.e. paragraph writing ability. The data demonstrate that the means of the experimental group are upper than the control group.
Figure 4.1. Difference in mean scores between the two groups under investigation.

Based on the findings of this study, the results of ANCOVA analysis revealed that text analysis tasks had significant impacts on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. Those participants who received treatment in text analysis tasks performed better, and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

6. Discussion

This study was an attempt to answer this research question: “Do text analysis tasks have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability? As far as the overall experience was concerned, the findings of this study revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between experimental group working with genre analysis tasks and control group dealing with register analysis tasks. On the other hand, based on the findings of this study, the hypothesis of this study i.e. “text analysis tasks do not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability” was rejected. Text analysis tasks had significant impact on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. It should also be added that those participants who received genre analysis tasks treatment performed better than those who encountered register analysis tasks. To compare the research findings with those of previous empirical literature, the results of the present study are in agreement with the study done by Henry and Roseberry (1998). In both studies, genre analysis techniques and genre-based teaching proved helpful to EFL learners. Similarly, Weber (2001) focused on genre consciousness-raising tasks and concluded that these tasks turned language learning activities into confidence-building, cooperative and collaborative activities.

Regarding the effect of text analysis tasks on the paragraph writing ability of the EFL learners, the results of data analyses revealed that text analysis tasks have significant effects on EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability. The findings showed that text analysis tasks enhanced paragraph writing ability of both groups. Also, the findings revealed a significant difference between the groups in the posttest. The findings of the present study are in congruency with Johns’ study (1999) in which students analyzed genre forms as well as their shaping social forces in preparation for approaching a variety of texts. She noted that genre-based approach was particularly successful. As it is true about the present study, Hyon (2001) found...
genre-based approach helpful in improving reading confidence and speed, but the findings of this study contradicts the last part of Hyon’s study (Hyon, 2001) in which the author pointed out that the effect of genre-based pedagogy was limited to increasing vocabulary knowledge and content comprehension.

The results of the present study are in line with Hyland (2007) too. Hyland reports that repeated experiences with a specific genre and recognizing similarities in the frequently used genres help learners read, understand, and perhaps write them more easily. As proposed by Firkins, Forey, and Sengupta (2007), genre-based pedagogy views language as an open dynamic system, and suggests that knowledge about language should be taught explicitly. Genres, here, are seen as the starting point for modeling, deconstructing, and understanding language.

Providing safe, encouraging, non-threatening environment, i.e. creating settings that motivate students’ writing helps them improve their writing performance. Student-writers need to feel support and acceptance from the teacher and peers to take the kind of risk involved in the process of producing good writing. When they feel safe from criticism, they become eager to write and to share their writing. Therefore, the class becomes a community of writers and students respond positively to a supportive writing atmosphere. This is consistent with the results of other studies such as Mouritzen (1993), Edwards et al (1995), Tai Po Old Market Public School (2000) and Hill (2000).

7. Conclusion and Educational Implications
The findings of the present study revealed that there are some advantages on using genre analysis tasks in acquisition of paragraph writing among foreign language learners at intermediate level of language ability. Following the present research and through calculation of the data, this study’s hypothesis, i.e. “text analysis tasks do not have any effect on Iranian EFL learners’ paragraph writing ability”, was rejected. It indicates that text analysis tasks have a positive effect on paragraph writing ability of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. These findings have a lot of implications for different stakeholders in educational settings. In line with the results of this study, one of the most important responsibilities of teachers, materials developers, course designers, and ...etc is to make learners familiar with different genres and subgenres of different texts to enhance the writing ability of learners.

This study can be carried out in other educational settings with a larger number of participants. Due to the time constraint, this study lasted for only 10 weeks. Longer period could have resulted in more elaborate findings. In addition, other researchers can investigate the effect of text analysis tasks on other components and skills of language for example reading and vocabulary.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/7.1.57


ABSTRACT
Numerous attempts have been made to discover to what extent Universal Grammar (UG) is involved in second language acquisition, and what information can be transferred from first language (L1) at the initial state (lexical categories or functional categories). A number of researchers focus on principles and parameters model of acquisition which is assumed that L1 acquisition is constrained by the innate language faculty, UG. A significant number of second language (L2) researchers working within the principles and parameters framework, and examine the issue of L2 acquisition.

This study discusses the initial state and the role of native language transfer. The writers of this paper attempt to overview the learning hypothesis proposed for the initial state of second language acquisition i.e. Minimal Trees, Full Transfer/Full access, Valueless Features, and Modulated Structure Building hypothesis. Based on the logical discussion it can be said that Minimal Trees hypothesis believes in acquiring of functional categories in stages, in response to input while valueless features hypothesis holds that L2 strength associated with functional projection is valueless until learners acquire L2 agreement paradigm. Full Transfer/Full Access theory expresses that there is full transfer of the L1 while L2 learners have full access to the UG. Modulated Structure Building theory combines insights from Minimal Trees and Full Transfer/Full Access theories. The article suggests that more research is required to shed light on the initial state and first language transfer.

KEY WORDS: Minimal Trees Hypothesis, Valueless Features Hypothesis, Full Transfer/Full Access theory, and Modulated Structure Building theory.

INTRODUCTION
In the twenty century researchers began to study child language systematically and try to find the psycholinguistic process that helps everyone to have control over a complicated system of communication. There are different positions in the study of first language acquisition. One is nativist position which claims that children are born with innate knowledge and biological timetables (Brown, 2007). Innatist hypothesis is a theory which says that our knowledge develops from ideas which are in our mind at birth and are innate, and also it has been used to explain how children can learn language. Chomsky (1965) believed that children acquire their native language in short time because of innate properties of language. According to Chomsky, this innate knowledge is language acquisition device (LAD). Based on innate linguistic predispositions and generative theories of language, children use innate abilities to generate infinite utterances.

The nativist tradition is related with the theory of University Grammar introduced by Noam Chomsky. According to UG, every speaker knows a set of principles which apply to all languages and also a set of parameters that can vary from one language to another, but only within certain limit. White (2003) points out that “UG includes principles with a limited number of built-in positions (settings or values), which allow for cross-linguistic variation. Such principles are known as parameters (p.9)."
For example, locality are common to all languages, so it is a principle. But Cook and Newson (2007) claim “A particular language consistently has the heads on the same side of the complements in all its phrases, whether head-first or head-last” (p.44). English speakers know that English is head-first.

a. Completed questionnaire: verb head first before the complement NP in a VP.

b. bæstæni doost daræm: (I ice cream like) : verb head last in a VP.

According to UG, acquiring a language means applying the principles of UG to a particular language, e.g., English, Arabic, or Chinese, and learning which value is appropriate for each parameter. The universal principles that children acquire make up their core grammar, congruent with general principles operating across all languages (Chomsky, 1965). The peripheral grammar consists of rules that are established by universal grammar, but that may be derived from an older form of the language, or borrowed from another language. It might be easier to acquire the core grammar than the rules of the peripheral grammar. Since the peripheral grammar is outside the child's preprogrammed instructions.

But a lot of people speak more than one language. More than one language and one grammar can coexist within one mind. Many second language acquisition studies have emphasized on principles and parameters model of acquisition. The researchers aim to find whether UG, an innate system of parameterized principle assumed to constrain L1 acquisition, also guides L2 acquisition.

Much research on L2 acquisition analyzed whether or not L2 grammars are subject to the restrictions imposed by UG on L1 grammars. There are two views with regard to the “UG-accessibility” problem. Some who support a UG-based L2 model, like L1 learners believe that L2 learners also make use of a UG-based knowledge in acquiring a second language (e.g. Flynn 1987; Schwartz 1991, 1992; Thomas 1993; White 1985, 1989, 1990/91). Others claim that L2 acquisition is different from L1 acquisition (e.g., Bely-Vorman 1990; Clasben, & Muysken 1986).

Some of the processes of L1 acquisition may not be used in L2 acquisition in the same way because L2 learners previous knowledge of another language and may transfer properties of their L1 to the L2. In addition, because of initial transfer of L1 into L2 researchers try to determine whether some percentage of functional and lexical categories are transferred into L2. Concerning differences between L1 and L2 acquisition, one of the topics considered in the studies is the issue of L2 acquisition of lexical and functional categories and the extent of L1 influence.

During 1990s, three theories of general syntactic development in second languages became known. Although all use the framework of the principles and parameters approach to Universal Grammar, they represent different ideas about the nature of second language syntax. In what follows, a brief summary of the claims of each of these theories (Minimal Trees, Valueless Features, Full Transfer/Full Access, and Modulated Structure Building theories) is to be given and the way they account for the developmental problems are to be discuss.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

MINIMAL TREES HYPOTHESIS

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994, 1996a, 1996b) developed minimal trees hypothesis. They distinguished between lexical categories (such as N, V, A, P) and functional categories (such as 3rd person singular-s, past tense -ed). Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a/97) state that at the earliest stage of L2 acquisition, there are only lexical categories, and functional projection develops in succession. Moreover, they claimed that lexical categories will transfer from the L1. For example, if the verb follows its complement in the first language (such as Farsi), this will transfer to the L2 in the initial stages of acquisition. However, there is no transfer in regard with the functional division. Later, learners won't use the transferred lexical features any more due to the sufficient exposure to L2 input. Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996) cited the developmental evidence which comes from L2 learners of German. Vainikka (1993/94) proposes that phrase structure is built up VP from just a VP all the way up to a full clause. He believes that both L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition involve this sort of tree building. Very early on, kids use non-nominative subjects all the time, like:

a. His buy a toy.

The fact that subject is non-nominative can be taken as an indication that it isn’t in Spec Agr P. Vainikka's proposal was that children who do this are in a VP stage, where their entire syntactic form of a sentence consists of a verb phrase.
As children get older they start using nominative subject, but, they do not use nominative subject in wh-questions e.g.

-Think what his buying?

The nominative subject tells us that children has at least AgrP in their structure. Normally wh-movement implies a CP (wh-words are supposed to move into Spec (CP)). However, if there is no CP, Vainikka (1993/1994) hypothesizes that the wh-word goes to the highest specifier it can go to- SpecAgrP, which means that subject can't be there, and therefore can't be nominative.

Finally, children reach a stage where the whole tree is there and they use all nominative subjects, even in wh-questions. So L1 acquisition goes in syntactically identifiable stages. Those stages are equivalent to ever - greater articulation of the tree:

-VP Stage:
  No nominative subjects, No wh-questions

AgrP stage:
  Nominative subjects except in wh-questions

-CP stage:
  Nominative subjects and wh-questions

Vainikka and Young-Schoellten (1996) takes this idea and propose that it also characterizes L2 acquisition. That is L2 acquisition takes place in stages, grammar which successively replace each other. The stages correspond to the height of the clausal structure. They claim that L2 phrase structure initially has no functional projection, and so as a consequence the only information that can be transferred form L1 at the initial state is that information associated with lexical categories (specifically, headness). No parameters connected to functional projections (e.g. V->T) are transferred.

An important point about this idea that L2 learners go through VP, TP, AgrP, (CP) stages is that this does not mean that a learner at a given point in time is necessarily in exactly one stage, producing exactly one kind of structure.

There is a progression of stages, but that adjacent stages often co-exist for a time-so, between the VP and TP stages. Some utterances are VPs, some are TPs. Vainikka and Young- Schoellten consider L2 acquisition to be similar to L1 acquisition, though they leave open the question of speed/success/etc.

Many scientists have criticized minimal trees hypothesis. Hawkins (2001) argues that based on minimal trees hypothesis only lexical categories are transferred, but he found two areas of influence in the functional projection IP. He added: “If functional categories are not transferred from the L1 we would expect parallel development across L2 learners. It is difficult to explain this influence under the minimal trees hypothesis” (p.69).

Cook and Newson (2007) state that in L1 acquisition, children don’t use functional categories because they are immature, and functional categories must develop in sequence. But, in SLA, learners are either fully mature or past the L1 stages.

So while Vainikka and Young-Schoellten’s theory predicted interesting results based on different grammatical phenomena, there is some problems (such as functional transfer) which remains unsolved.

VALUELESS FEATURES HYPOTHESIS

Another theory for the initial state is the valueless features hypothesis of Eubank (1993/94). Like minimal trees hypothesis, the valueless features hypothesis postulates that functional parameters are not initially transferred from the L1. Unlike minimal trees, the valueless features hypothesis assumes that the entire functional structure is there. But, e.g., for V->T, the parameter/feature value that determines whether V moves to T is undefined.

Eubank (1996) believes that L2 learners transfer functional categories from the L1 with valueless features if positive evidence for projecting the functional category exists in the L2. Eubank and his colleagues (1997) go further with this valueless features theory, hypothesizing that this is not only the initial state, but also the final state- L2 features cannot be valued. In this approach, L2 learners have the possibility of optionality regarding syntactic representations.

According to Hawkins (2001), based on valueless features hypothesis there should not be any difference between Spanish and Japanese speakers in acquiring copula be. However, there was a significant difference in the rate of acquisition, and Spanish speakers acquired better. Hawkins (2001) said: “On the basis of the evidence we have accumulated so far, it appears that Vainikka and Young-Schoellten’s proposal deals more elegantly with the observations than the valueless features theory” (p.71).
FULL TRANSFER/FULL ACCESS MODEL

Schwartz and Sprouse (1994/96) prove that L1 transfer plays an important role in the SLA, since the L1 grammar is supposed to be the initial state of the L2 grammar. They assume that the L2 learner uses his L1 mental grammar to represent L2. It means that he transfers the L1 grammar completely. When the L2 input does not match his L1 grammar, he will change it, adapting his mental representation to the L2 input. Therefore, the learner gives up using his L1 grammar slowly, constructing an independent L2 grammar, but only if the input tells him so.

The initial state of the L2 parameter setting may be fast or slow. Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) assert: “In some cases, this restructuring may occur quite rapidly; in others, much more time may be needed” (p.41). Then they added: “The initial state of L2 acquisition is the final state of L1 acquisition” (p.41).

Newson and Cook (2007) state that there are two kinds of evidence in this hypothesis. One is the L1 that is completely present in the L2 grammar, the other is the developing grammar which formed because of using UG.

MODULATED STRUCTURE BUILDING MODEL

Hawkins (2001) presents his own model of SLA, including elements from full access and minimal trees models. He proposes a ‘working theory of L2 syntactic development’ modulated structure building, in which L2 learning is modulated by the L1 and is structure building in that functional categories are built up based on the input. At the earliest stage of L2 acquisition, there is transfer of L1 structures and categories. Some parameters are set very quickly, like head parameter, because head-complement relations are significant. In Hawkins' model, the acquisition of certain lexical item leads to establishment of a functional category which projects a head and specifier. For instance, the acquisition of copula in English triggers the acquisition of I and the projection of IP. Hawkins defends the full transfer position—that the initial state of L2 is the L1 grammar with some L2 lexical items.

He maintains that L1 influences L2 acquisition “at the relevant point in the construction of a grammar, and not before” (p.74). For example, there is no transfer of subject-verb agreement by Spanish learners who acquire English until he acquires the nonlocal requirement that I agree with its specifier.

CONCLUSION

Based on UG perspective, there are a lot of questions about the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition. For example, does the L2 learner have access to UG? If the answer is positive, why does he not get as proficient as an L1 learner? Which role does L1 play? Can the learner make use of L1 parameter setting?

There are different positions concerning UG access and L1 influence which all have supporters in the SLA research field. Three theories (Minimal Trees Hypothesis, Valueless Features Hypothesis, and Full Transfer/Full Access Theory) assume that developmental problem of L2 acquisition can be solved by a Universal Grammar of principles and parameters.

Minimal trees hypothesis is developed by Young-Scholten and Vainikka. The theory concerns what aspects of learner's first language is carried over into the grammar of the second language, in addition to Universal Grammar that allow new acquisition to take place. They have argued that only lexical categories (such as adjectival phrase) are drawn from the L1, and that functional categories (such as inflectional phrase) do not.

The minimal trees hypothesis is criticized because some researchers believe that linguistic behavior does not
follow the model, and others claim that it is theoretically misunderstood. For example, it is unacceptable to
those who approve full transfer.
Valueless Features Hypothesis proposed by Eubank (1993/94) holds that L2 feature strength associated with
functional projections is valueless until learners acquire actual L2 agreement paradigm. The interpretation of
a valueless feature is a crucial point. It is not clear what this should mean, but Eubank take it to mean
something like not consistently on or off.
The role of Universal Grammar in second language has long been debated. At one extreme, there are
approaches presenting that interlanguages are defective (e.g., Clashen & Hong 1995; Beck 1998). At the other
extreme theories that claim that second language learners have full access to UG (e.g., Flynn & Martohardjono
Based on Schwartz and Sprouse’s model, there is full transfer of the L1 while the L2 has full access to the UG.
The L1 parameter setting is the initial state of the L2 parameter setting and slowly step by step the parameters
will be matched to the L2 input. So, Schwartz and Sprouse (1994/96) expect transfer plays an important role
in the SLA process.
Hawkins (2001) put forward Modulated Structure Building theory which is based on the ideas of minimal
trees hypothesis and full transfer/full access hypothesis. But Hawkins (2001) suggests that “syntactic
properties of the L1 transfer into the L2 grammar, but only at the points of development where the relevant
property emerges as part of the general sequence of development” (p.75).
In sum, the aim of this study was to understand the role of L1 and Universal Grammar in second language
acquisition. Some theories were reviewed. The writers of this article have contended that none of the above
theories could solve the problem of SLA process. So we need to decide what previous research still fits within
new program, what needs to be changed in minimalist terms, and needs to be reworked.
As White (1996) noted, the acquisition of clitic pronouns by learners whose L1 does not have clitics is salient in
SLA because successful acquisition represents that learners scan reset lexical parameters. There is a need for
more research on this topic. Another question is whether inflectional morphemes is present in the mind even
if it does not occur in production, and under MP the issue of when morphology is fully acquired becomes a
fundamental question.
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EXPLICIT VS IMPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF LEXICAL LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING L2 LEXICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADULTS AND YOUNG ADULTS IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
The present paper aimed at investigating the effect of explicit and implicit vocabulary teaching strategies on L2 lexical development of learners. To achieve this objective from the population of adults and young adults learning English at Nahid language institute, Dehaghan city and Islamic Azad University, Dehaghn branch, fifty adults and fifty young adults were randomly selected based on a QPT test and a lexical knowledge test. Subsequently, they were divided into four groups, 25 each; namely, explicit adult group (EAG), implicit adult group (IAG), explicit young adult (EYA) and implicit young adult (IYA). During the treatment, two sessions, the first adult group received explicit instruction while the second was taught by implicit lexical strategies. Similarly, the same was accomplished for the young samples. The findings revealed that both adults and young adults that received explicit instruction outperformed other groups taught by implicit instruction. The results of this study have several important implications for the classroom practice concerning the vocabulary teachings.

Key words: implicit, explicit, instruction, lexical strategy. EFL students

1-Introduction:
In old days vocabulary in the area of language learning had little importance (Alemi and Tayebi, 2011). However, today everything has been changed and all instructors have emphasized the role of vocabulary in language learning and teaching. Actually, even language learners confirmed this and believe many of their difficulties in both receptive and productive language use result from inadequate vocabulary (Nation, 1990). The important role that the knowledge of vocabulary plays in language competence has continually acknowledged, particularly since the 1990s. Laufer (1998) believes that the most important difference between foreign learners and native speakers is the amount of vocabulary each group possesses. Similarly, Lewis (2000) argued that the single most important task facing language learners is acquiring a sufficiently large vocabulary.

Numerous studies have been carried out in this area and the results have showed a great deal of coloration between language proficiency and the knowledge of vocabulary (Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999). Therefore, learning a language to a great extent means learning the vocabulary (Gass, 1999).

There are a lot of language methods in language teaching that have proposed different techniques for learning the vocabularies (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As a result, researches in language acquisition will be helpful in giving insights into language instruction especially teaching and learning vocabularies.

Explicit/implicit distinction
The review of the literature in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching has revealed that there might be two basic approaches in teaching the vocabulary. The first one is explicit and the second one is implicit teaching. There are a lot of controversial debates over the issue that which one is more effective and efficient. Explicit vocabulary teaching focuses on the vocabulary itself while implicit vocabulary teaching concentrates on something else e.g. understanding a spoken martial or comprehending a written text. The goal of explicit teaching is to lead learner’s attention, whereas the aim of an implicit focus on form is to draw learner’s attention. In implicit learning, the assumption is that new lexis will be grasped “incidentally”, through exposure to various contexts, reading passage and other material without deliberate memorization being involved. Unplanned vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when one’s attention is focused on the use of language, rather than on learning itself.

Ellis (1994) states that implicit learning is typically defined as acquisition of knowledge by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operation; while explicit learning is said to be characterized by more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure.

Another view concerning dichotomous distinction has been expressed by Doughty and Williams’ (1998) they believe that knowledge can be acquired either implicitly or explicitly and that both contribute to language learning. It is obvious that pedagogically-oriented position of explicit teaching is to direct learner attention, whereas the aim of an implicit focus on form is to attract learner attention while minimizing any interruption to the communication of meaning” (Doughty and Williams, 1998).

In vocabulary acquisition studies, one key research direction is to explore the points at which implicit vocabulary learning is more efficient than explicit vocabulary learning, to ask what are the most effective strategies of implicit learning, and to consider the implications of research results for classroom vocabulary teaching (Carter & Nunan, 2002).

2. Literature review
This section discusses various dimensions of teaching vocabulary implicitly and explicitly in line with reading comprehension.

Ellis (1994) makes a distinction between implicit/explicit dimensions and puts emphasis on the importance of conscious operations. He specifies implicit learning as the "acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operations" (p. 1). Explicit learning, on the contrary, refers to a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure. That is, knowledge attainment may be achieved either by abstraction of the structural nature of the stimulus via exposure to instances or by searching for information then forming and testing hypotheses or via assimilation of given rules.

Berry (1994) explains these two modes of learning not in terms of consciousness but of the recourse to deliberate strategies: Learning is implicit when people learn to employ the structure of an environment without using such analytic strategies as generating and testing hypotheses; learning may be explicit when such deliberate strategies are used. Given that, Berry (1994) provides little elaboration on the relationship between deliberate strategies and consciousness, it remains to be seen whether these two terms are co-referent from her standpoint, but it has almost become conventional wisdom that consciousness has some role to play in the discussion of the implicit – explicit dimension.

According to Celce-Murcia (2001), knowledge can be gained and represented either implicitly or explicitly and both contribute to language learning. There exists a central debate emerging from the studies dealt with whether effective vocabulary learning should give attention to explicit or implicit vocabulary learning. In implicit vocabulary learning, students engage in activities that focus attention on vocabulary. Incidental vocabulary is learning that occurs when the mind is focused elsewhere, i.e. learning without conscious attention or awareness; such as on understanding a text or using language for communicative purposes. From a pedagogically-oriented perspective, the goal of explicit teaching is ‘to lead learner’s attention’, whereas the aim of an implicit focus on form is ‘to draw learner’s attention’. Moreover, individual tasks can be located along an explicit or implicit continuum, and complex tasks may combine both explicit and implicit subtasks. Most researchers recognized that a well-structured vocabulary program needs a balanced approach that includes explicit teaching together with activities providing appropriate contexts for incidental learning.

In implicit learning, the assumption is that new lexis will be grasped “incidentally”, through exposure to various contexts, reading passage and other material without deliberate memorization being involved.
Unplanned vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when one's attention is focused on the use of language, rather than on learning itself.

Various researchers have concluded that learners should be given explicit instruction and practice in the first two to three thousand high frequency words, while beyond this level, most low frequency words will be learned incidentally while listening or reading.

There are various methods of teaching words explicitly to learners. Duin and Graves (1987) mention that explicit vocabulary instruction can be given through providing word definitions, synonym pairs, word lists, word associations, the keyword method, semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis. Harmer (1991) states that the introduction of new vocabulary can be carried out through the use of realia, pictures, mimicry, contrast, enumeration, explanation and translation. All these vocabulary teaching techniques involve direct teaching.

However, Nagy (1997) believes that teaching vocabulary directly is time wasting. His major argument is that there are a large number of words in English and therefore a large amount of time is needed to deliberately and explicitly teach vocabulary. He concludes that direct teaching can only account for a very small proportion of native speakers' vocabulary growth.

Nation (2001) points out that in SLA, there is the distinction between high frequency and low frequency words. For non-native speakers, they need to learn the high frequency words first, which make up a relatively small group of words, which deserve time and attention.

Nation (2001) also points out that direct teaching of second language vocabulary can raise students' awareness of particular words so that they notice them when they meet them while reading. He also believes that direct vocabulary instruction has a place in SLA and he puts forward several points supporting the notion.

First, he notes that non-native speakers beginning their study of English generally know very few English words. Because the high frequency words of the language are so important for language use and consist of a relatively small number of words (about 2,000), it is practical and feasible to directly teach a substantial number of them. Second, direct vocabulary learning is a way of trying to bridge the gap between second language learners' present proficiency level and the proficiency level needed to learn from unsimplified input. Third, direct vocabulary study is a way to speed up the second language learning process (p.157). However, he maintains that direct vocabulary instruction should be directed towards the high frequency words of the language and warns that direct instruction can deal effectively with only some aspects of word knowledge and not effectively with others, which rely on quantity of experience and implicit rather than explicit knowledge (p.97). For example, when teachers explicitly teach students to analyze word parts, students may be able to remember the spelling and also the pronunciation of the words (productive knowledge) more easily but regarding collocational and grammatical behavior of words, it may be better for learners to read in context.

Schmitt (2000) points out that learners are capable of learning large quantities of vocabulary, for example by means of word lists and the 'depth of processing' hypothesis suggests that the more a piece of information is manipulated, the more likely it is to be retained in memory (p.121). Oxford and Scarcella (1994) take the position that explicit vocabulary instruction is necessary to guide learners to learn specific strategies for acquiring words, and show students how to learn words outside of their L2 classes (p.235). In a study on Asian ESL learners, Wintergerst and DeCapua (2003) find that Asian students are more used to teacher-centered classrooms, which implies that they are more used to being given instruction by teachers although it is generally agreed that learners may become less autonomous if they are always provided with explicit instruction.

This study aims to investigate answers to the following questions:
1- What mode of instruction, explicit or implicit mode, is more effective for EFL Iranian adults?
2. What mode of instruction, explicit or implicit mode, is more effective for EFL Iranian young adults?
3. Are there any differences between adults and young adults in learning vocabulary either explicitly or implicitly?

3. Methodology and design
3.1 Design of the study
50 students studying English at Nahid English institute at Dehaghan city as well as 50 students at Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan branch participated in this study. They were both adults and young adult
students. This research used four groups, namely explicit adult group (EAG), implicit adult group (IAG), explicit young adult (EYA) and implicit young adult (IYA). They were passed a 40-item proficiency test which was used to measure their proficiency level and a lexical knowledge test. The students who included in the study got scores between 15 to 25 points.

3-2 instrument
The material used in this study included a 40-item proficiency test, four reading comprehension passages, and four 10-item vocabulary tests used for the final examination. The proficiency test (Fowler & Cor, 1998) consisted of 40-items vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension questions. For the final examination in order to measure the effect of implicit versus explicit instruction on the students, eight reading passages were selected from select Readings, pre-intermediate (Linda Lee+ Eric Gundersen 2011). Each passage included a one page text and 5 multiple-choice comprehension questions. Four 10-item multiple-choice vocabulary tests were selected from select readings pre.Int-Quiz& Answers book to test students’ vocabulary knowledge.

3-3 procedures
This study was conducted in two sessions at Nahid English institute as well as Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan branch. The students who scored between 15 to 25 were included in the study (100 participants). Students then were divided into four groups 25 each, that is, explicit adult group (EAG), implicit adult group (IAG), explicit young adult (EYA) and implicit young adult (IYA). There were two different modes of instructions. In one mode of instruction, implicit instruction, the teacher utilized inferred method for teaching vocabularies. Moreover, students were supposed to guess the words from the passages by using context clues. In other mode of instruction, explicit instruction, the teacher utilized specific strategies such as mind mapping, Persian equivalents, and English synonyms as well as definitions. After teaching explicitly, in the second session of the treatment, the subjects were given a reading passage with some multiple-choice reading comprehension questions. Then they were asked to read the passage and answer the comprehension questions. Following that the passages were collected and a ten-item vocabulary posttest was distributed among the students to check their knowledge gain of words. The purpose was to find out how much the students would learn through explicit exposure which involved more cognitive load, in the sense used by Laufer (2001). After teaching implicitly, in the second session the same procedure was repeated. The purpose was to find out how much the students would learn through implicit exposure to words in a text. The independence variable for this study was the mode of instruction implicit classroom instruction versus explicit vocabulary. These modes were applied to the different groups of students, namely explicit adult group (EAG), implicit adult group (IAG), explicit young adult (EYA) and implicit young adult (IYA). The dependent variables for this study were the scores of final examination on vocabulary and reading comprehension. For the vocabulary scores, the lowest possible score was 0 and the highest possible score was 20.

A comparison of the mean scores of test obtained by the four groups showed that, very obviously, performance was a bit higher for both adults and young adults when the words were taught through an explicit instruction associated with mind mapping technique and synonyms and definitions in the passages than implicit vocabulary instruction technique of inferred passage.

4. Results and Discussions
4.1 Descriptive statistics
Results of the pre-tests and post-test on vocabulary knowledge of the participants (Table 4.1) show that the participants in young adult groups had similar performances on the two vocabulary and comprehension pre-tests. This also confirms that the subjects chosen based on their performance on the proficiency test were rather homogeneous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Pre</th>
<th>Standard Deviation Pre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-1 mean and standard deviations for the pre-test and post-test
Results of the pre-tests and post-test on vocabulary knowledge of the participants (Table 4.1) show that the participants in adult groups had similar performances on the two vocabulary and comprehension pre-tests. This also confirms that the subjects chosen based on their performance on the proficiency test were rather homogeneous.

| 2 explicit | Young adults | 13.33 | 2.96 |
| 1 implicit | Young adults | 9.93 | 2.28 |
| 2 explicit | Young adults | 16.25 | 2.75 |

| Table 4-2 Mean and standard deviations for the pre-test and post-test for young adults n=25 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| group | 1 implicit | Adult_pre | 1010 | 1.78 | Adult_post | 14.05 | 1.99 |
| 2 explicit | Adult_pre | 10.55 | 2.03 | Adult_post | 16.80 | 1.97 |

Analysis of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to measure normality. H0 and H1 stated as following:

H0: Data distribution is normal
H1: Data distribution is not normal

The results presented in table 4-3 show that significance levels for K-S test for research variables is more than 5% error so H0 does not reject and data are normal.

| Table 4-3 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| variable                          | group           | K-S test        | P value         |
| Vocabulary instruction in young adults | Implicit mode | Pre-test | 0/628 | 0/825 |
|                                   | Post-test       | 0/492 | 0/969 |
|                                   | Explicit mode   | Pre-test | 0/780 | 0/577 |
|                                   | Post-test       | 1/156 | 0/138 |
| Vocabulary instruction in adults  | Implicit mode   | Pre-test | 1.122 | 0/161 |
|                                   | Post-test       | 0.916 | 0/371 |
|                                   | Explicit mode   | Pre-test | 1/043 | 0/277 |
|                                   | Post-test       | 0/936 | 0/345 |

4-3 inferential statistics
In order to test research hypotheses, the co-variance analysis has been used. Scores of implicit instruction considered as helping variable and they used in the models.

The first hypothesis: explicit mode of instruction is more effective than implicit mode of instruction. In other words, there is significant difference between mean scores of instruction in explicit mode and implicit mode.

H0 and H1 hypothesis has stated as following:

H0: explicit mode of instruction has no effect on vocabulary acquisition in comparison with implicit mode of instruction for adults.
H1: explicit mode of instruction is more effective than implicit mode of instruction for adults.

Levene’s test results to check default variance equality of scores of adults in two groups of explicit versus implicit are presented in table 4-4 instruction.
Table 4-4
Dependent Variable: OMID_PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.061</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

In table 4-4 with regard to significance level of Levene’s test that is not less than %5 the variance of teaching vocabulary to the adults in the post-test are accepted. Therefore, the covariance analysis can be used for confirming the above hypothesis.

In table 4-5 the scores of pre-test of explicit instruction versus implicit instruction in adult groups are considered as helping variables. In the test of difference between the scores of explicit mode of instruction versus implicit instruction in adult groups the level of significance calculated (.000). It is less than %1 so that the H0 is rejected and the H1 is confirmed. As a result, the explicit mode of instruction is more effective than implicit instruction. With regard to ETA squared the rate of effectiveness or difference is equal to 0.735. That is, 73/5 percent of total variance of vocabulary instruction is based on group membership.

The second hypothesis namely, explicit mode of instruction is more effective than Implicit mode for young adults. In other words, there are significant differences between mean scores of instruction in explicit mode and implicit mode. H0 and H1 hypothesis has stated as following:

H0: explicit mode of instruction has no effect on vocabulary acquisition in comparison with implicit mode of instruction for young adults.
H1: explicit mode of instruction is more effective than implicit mode of instruction for young adults.

Levene’s test results to check default variance equality of scores of young adults in two groups of explicit versus implicit are presented in table 4-5 instruction.

Table 4-5
Dependent: Variable Train 2 post -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.072</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

In table 4-5 with regard to significance level of Levene’s test that is not less than %5 the variance of teaching vocabulary to the young adults in the post-test are accepted. Therefore, the covariance analysis can be used for confirming the above hypothesis. The results of covariance have been presented in table 4-6.

The results of covariance instruction of explicit versus implicit instruction on young adult groups

Table 4-6 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent: Variable Train 2 post

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
<th>Noncent. Parameter</th>
<th>Observed Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected</td>
<td>62.984a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31.492</td>
<td>24.850</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>49.700</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>54.504</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54.504</td>
<td>43.009</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>43.009</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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[DOI: 10.26655/mjltm.2016.6.1]
In table 4-6 the scores of pre-test of explicit instruction versus implicit instruction in adult groups are considered as helping variables. In the test of difference between the scores of explicit mode of instruction versus implicit instruction in young adult groups the level of significance calculated (0.000). It is less than %1 so that the H0 is rejected and the H1 is confirmed. As a result, the explicit mode of instruction is more effective than implicit instruction. With regard to ETA squared the rate of effectiveness or difference is equal to 0.569. That is, 56.9 percent of total variance of vocabulary instruction is based on group membership.

The third hypothesis there is significance difference between explicit versus implicit instruction in adults and young adults. In other word, two different mode of instructions have differential effect on vocabulary acquisition. The H0 and H1 hypotheses are as the following.

\[
\begin{align*}
H_0: & \mu_1 = \mu_2 \\
H_1: & \mu_1 \neq \mu_2
\end{align*}
\]

In order to investigate the third hypothesis the \( t \)-test has been used based on two independent samples along with significance levels.

**Table 4-7 of \( t \)-test** for determining the differences between vocabulary learning in two modes of instruction in adults and young adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>( t )-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through explicit instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>-.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through implicit instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in table 4-7 shows that the level of significance of \( t \) for the variables of teaching vocabulary in both explicit and implicit form is not less than %5 so the H0 hypothesis isn’t rejected and the amount learning vocabulary in adults and young adults either explicitly or implicitly is the same.
5. Conclusions and Implications
Results of the present study have shown that explicit instruction of vocabulary better influenced vocabulary learning among Iranian adults and young adults pre-intermediate learners. Furthermore, there are many levels of explicit learning/knowledge which are not grasped by the implicit vs. explicit distinction. It is worthy of notice that as a result of this research, we can argue that incidental vocabulary acquisition occurs through operation of input hypothesis: that reading provides comprehensible and necessary input that eventually leads to acquisition. As Krashen (1989) states, the acquisition of vocabulary and spelling is achieved through exposure to comprehensible input. Wode (1999) in a study of incidental vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language classroom, found that it is important to investigate in detail which properties of teaching are best suited to trigger the incidental learning with respect to vocabulary (and other linguistic elements). Ellis and He (1999) investigated the roles of modified input and output in the incidental acquisition of word meaning. Their study proved that interactional output which provides opportunities for learners to use new vocabularies contributes to better incidental vocabulary acquisition.

We may conclude that implicit learning is not entirely implicit, as learners must pay at least some attention to individual words. Students generally benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction in conjunction with extensive reading. To the extent that vocabulary learning is an implicit skill acquisition, it is also an explicit knowledge acquisition process (Ellis, 1994). The tunings of the implicit learning can be guided and governed by explicit learning and explicit learning can be consolidated and reinvigorated by implicit learning. Thus, implicit learning and explicit learning are, as it were, two sides of a coin in vocabulary acquisition.

With respect to the importance of vocabulary instruction, findings of the present research are useful for language teachers in planning a wide variety of contextualized vocabulary activities for EFL learners. The findings can also be of significance for material developers in preparing reading and vocabulary materials for language learners. Moreover, EFL learners may find the results useful in planning strategies to grow their vocabulary knowledge.

REFERENCES


THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WOMAN CHARACTERS
IN HNEINRICH BOLL AND JALAL AL-E AHMAD

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ABSTRACT
Jalal Ale-Ahmad and Heinrich Böll are considered as one the most prominent and foremost writers of Iran and Germany. They are famous not only due to their stories and literary novels, but also they have special rank as theoretician. The present paper deals with a brief explanation of social and literary life of these two authors; also studies and analyzes some of their works as sample and finally investigates some similar elements of their works and thoughts.

Keywords: Novel, Catholicism, Gharbzadegi (Occidentosis (A Plague from the West)), Realism, Tradition, Mechanism, National Socialism.

Introduction
Jalal Ale-Ahmad was born into a religious family on December 2, 1923 in the old parish of Seyed Nasreddin, Tehran, and as he says, he grew up in a religious aristocratic well off family. His sociopolitical life has been changed during different stages; in a way that his intellectual life can be considered as union of paradoxes. Once, he was a follower of Tudeh Party and later, fan of nationalism. But, there was a time that he left all and therefore, different faces can be seen in a single body. Such changes have influenced on his writing. They were under influence of political atmosphere of Iran and Tehran at the time besides his family conditions and educational origin; this political atmosphere made Ale-Ahmad a political partner, leader of party and a critic writer. Such intellectual mixture made him as a unique author; not so many people can be seen like him during his time. It has to be noted that despite all above changes and transformations, he never stops writing, ideology and though; either Tudeh, nationalism, democracy and Muslim; in other words, Jalal Ale-Ahmad always continued his writing. Besides story writing, he was engaged in essay writing and translation of western works. Among these translations, we can point out to The Gambler by Dostoyevsky, L’Etranger and Le Malentendu by Camus. A salient point about Ale-Ahmad is that he is more a pragmatic than theoretician; i.e. he is foremost as a theoretician intellectual than a pragmatic intellectual; and consequently, it is difficult to rank his learning especially social one after his academic learning. The result of his experimental and practical learning during two decades was restoration of his thoughts and finally their presentation as a theory. He, who had too much influence on intellectuality course on his era, has wrote social essays, anthropologic researches, travelogues and several translations in addition to short stories.

Some Characteristics of Ale-Ahmad’s writings
1- Most of Ale-Ahmad’s stories consist of short stories. The characters have no chance to come into existence or develop in these short stories and they have been made prior to involvement in the story and the reader is usually familiar with them at critical and important stages of their family. Therefore, the explanation and description to be presented by the author from their life style is necessarily transient and superficial. In some cases, the characters have no name at all and the location, time and rules of the story are also unclear. The genre of short story is selected based on a proper method in accordance with Jalal’s writing style. He uses this format to oppose an idea and call in requisition. The characters are firm during the story in both his short stories and novels, such as By the Pen (Noon va Alghalam) and The Cursing of the Land (Nefrin-e Zamin), so they can be known as rigid representatives of various thoughts.
2- Self-expression is another specification of Al-e Ahmad's stories. In fact, the characters' thoughts are the thoughts of the writer himself; i.e. the author tells his unsaid statements by the characters' speech and thus the reader always feels the author's presence. Most of his stories are processed in the author or narrator's mind and the reader involves in hidden angles of the narrators or characters' mind instead of external world. He always brings up sociopolitical issues of Iran and people in most of his stories in an allegoric and realistic manner; therefore, most of the characters of his stories consist of ordinary people, but as it was mentioned later, such characters, thoughts and ideas are the author himself created in a human form and retell the author's thoughts in form of a specific character or name. Each character is an example of a special social class; i.e. a character explains social issues and economic issues are explained by other character and ...: each character carries an intellectual and cultural responsibility that have been created by the author to explain the concerned idea. What is important is dialogue, explanation of thought and idea although in some cases he remains unaware of other specifications such as location, time and ...: "The principal was local. All were clear from his appearance. He took a rosary with his middle finger; his wrists were like a stick with a big head wearing no hat. There was a forty or fifty-year old man with him. Dignified and sun struck and coarse figure. Mr. Mobasher, introduced the principal."

3- One of the most important literary specifications of Al-e Ahmad's writing is his concise and brief prose but neurotic and quarrelsome. Some of his stories are colloquial and informal with very versatile and fluent style. He is a conservative writer representing society's traditional class. Among other specifications of his style of writing we can point out to laconism and avoiding of talking too much, using vulgar expression free from lampenism. He addressed him bewilderedly and revealed his paradoxes boldly. His language style originates from his traditional base as though he intended to define Iranian identity based on tradition and unified his language style with Iranian culture. There are too many deleted sections in his prose and he connected several sentences with conjunctions. In general, the theme of Al-e Ahmad's stories is a conflict between tradition and modernity; of course, partiality to tradition (The Cursing of the Land). He believes in theory of author's commitment and mission and takes step towards social realism. Most of his stories are narrative and we can see fewer dialogues among his characters. Social ceremonies are seen in his style like mourning, wedding, feasts and ... "There was no smell of food and smoke of fire neither in seventh night, forty night and memorial day of his death".

There are too many factors such as folkloric poems and songs (Nefrin-e Zamin :The Cursing of the Land) or other proverbs and ironies (Zan-e Ziadi :Unwanted Woman) in Al-e Ahmad's writing style.

4- One of the issues noticeable in some of Al-e Ahmad's works is castration. It is noteworthy that he not only uses this issue in his stories and characters, but also in social conditions, cultural and political situation. For example, in Collection of Stories and A Stone upon a Grave (Sangi Bar Goor), we can see heroes with common feature; inability in fulfillment of a work who intended to perform; also incapability to make their desirable changes. In A Stone upon a Grave, Al-e Ahmad describes this tragedy in the life of an ordinary man who is castrated. He is unable to produce child and he is at his wit's end with instructions and talking of his relatives. Such a theme can be found in Charbzaadegi (A Plague from the West). In this book, he spoke about people who intended to make some changes but they couldn't since they have been sterilized by the Western.

5- In some stories, Al-e Ahmad is manifested as a subject himself. For example, in A Stone upon a Grave, he attacks himself fearlessly; a courage like a confession not with external purpose. In contemporary literature, there are fewer people who speak about themselves critically and revealingly as a subject. Despite other contemporary writers, he does not present himself with special vanity while the confession referral to the Jalal himself is admirable. Such a revelation, self-criticism and its resulting consternation relates to his various interests including religion and schools like Marxism and Existentialism.

6- One of the noticeable points in Al-e Ahmad's personality is his aggressive spirit. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that his efforts have not reached to his desirable conclusion as he desired and too many changes have not been fruitful to improve the existing situation. It has to be noted that some recognize him as a semi-perfect man both in terms of intellectual revolutions and story writing. Perhaps, the reason for such strange revolutions is his gradual knowledge about unchangability of people.

7- One of the specifications of Jalal's works is his unique Monographie; monographs that are concordant with his consternations as though only such monographs are expected by such a bewildered man. Among his
successful monographs, we can point out to A Stone upon a Grave and The School Principal. The best monographs of Jalal can be seen in A Stone upon a Grave and the feeling of his inferiority and repression is noticeable against physicians and modern medical equipment in this work. His concise and interrupted style that is usually brief and along with deletion of indications is manifested in this novel by interrupted, short, replaceable or telegraphic sentences. Every single sentence has such self-sufficiency and autonomy also the rhythm of short and repeated sentences not only do not harm it, but also to some extent calms it since it is based on tranquility and peace: "The school was in two stories and newly constructed. It was alone in mountain slope and exposed to the sun. Its building was constructed by a money-bags culture lover in his middle lands".

8- Occidentalism: He was critic of modernity; on the other hand, willingly or unwillingly critic of traditionalism and this issue indicates his consternation between these two different spaces. He believed that deep conflicts of Iranian society originate from Iranian Occidentalism and western colonization and he was worried about this issue that intellectuals have a friendly approach to the west without familiarity with realities and historical and traditional fields and believed that the best strategy to escape such problems is conversion to tradition and eastern nobility. He wrote Owrazan and Tat People of Block-e Zahra in this regard. Al-e Ahmad has investigated his surrounding environment in this book and has planned to reidentify himself and reevaluation of local environment and his norms. The Cursing of the Land is a reflection for conflict between tradition and modernity in the contemporary century. This is the story of attitude of a traditional rural towards imported machinism. In the author's point of view, which is only a prediction and to some extent has realized, the judicious combination of this machinism with village usual life ruins the texture of rural life, i.e. villages will be abandoned in favour of cities. He not only is a critic of modernity, but also critic of renaissance; but the renaissance which is criticized by Jalal is machinism that is bound to other values of renaissance like freedom and humanity. He does not generally negate machinism and only believes that we should produce machine and control it; indeed, he believes that we can secede machine from western cultural aspects and attach it with our cultural aspects. We may have machine notwithstanding its cultural aspect. Perhaps the issue of self-restitution and nobility is a basis for attraction of modernity positive aspects and he intends to customize modernity through this method.

The publication of long essay of Occidentosis (A Plague from the West) should be also analyzed in this connection. This essay is important from two aspects: one is that he entered this topic, i.e. Occidentosis, into Iranian cultural and political literature like a paradigm; therefore, many contemporary writers and also writers after him have been under his influence; although it was protested by some authors. Also, this book is important in terms of development of contemporary Persian prose and considered as a start of new era in Persian prose. In this essay, he brings up Occidentosis like an illness and investigates its reasons and pays attention to its historical background and refers us to history: "I say that Ghur lands is like cholera [or] sunstroke or frostbite. But no. It's at least as bad as savvities in the wheat fields ..." Also: "How this era created? What happened in our through dispense with development of machine, others made and processed it, they came and arrived and when we wake up, we witnessed each oil pylon pitted in this neighborhood like a pin? What we turned to Occidentosis? Let's back to the history ....?

In some of Al-e Ahmad's stories, the narrator resorts to satire for confrontation with tormenting identicalness and his tranquility. Satire is used as a style and the narrator is outwardly an objector and inwardly a revolutionary and applies such style in order to confront with the tormenting identicalness and his tranquility: "The school's signboard is also very big and legible. The poem 'Knowledge is Power' was clear from a distance of hundred meters .... whatever your wishes!"

9- Form and Concept: Al-e Ahmad's writings emphasize concept rather than form; many emphases on the message also confirm this issue although it is not true about all his works. For example, although the theme of By the Pen is real, the characters are the same as they are imagined and a little imagination is also beyond it. Although Al-e Ahmad believes such issue is due to compelling circumstances and calls it "writing manners and moods"; therefore, more emphasis on the concept rather than form is knowingly by the writer. He wrote stories with the predetermined aim. Although there are not too many ups and downs in some of his stories and sometimes they begins from a direct line and ended with the same form, the theme recounts another issue. Sometimes it seems that the author pays attention to the theme and concept rather than its literary and technical pleasure. His style of writing is narrative; it is not too much imaginary and surrealism; his characters have real life while they are naive and simple. He chooses his characters among the society and does not give
life to them; he uses their speech although enforces them to confession and objection; or sometimes he himself enters into the story as fictional types and explains his ideas.

**Study of a Story: Someone else's child**

In *Someone else's child*, Al-e Ahmad imagines a woman who has a three-old son from her previous marriage and she married another man after her separation, but the second husband is not desirous to take care of the child; so the wife had to abandon her child in the street to protect her marital life. One of the significant issues of this story is the woman's position in Iranian traditional society. The society in which the women is considered as an object, commodities and means for reproduction and satisfaction of men's sexual intercourse or a housemaid. Inhuman behaviors are completely natural and rational in this society. Perhaps in this story, Al-e Ahmad addressed to the women so that their position changes and they can defend from their femininity and considers an identity for them. As thought the woman of this story gives up her freedom and unwillingly puts the destiny of her child and herself under the care of the husband; i.e. under current traditions of the society. It is worthy to mention that her responsibility also diminishes by losing her authority. She became empty of her femininity and therefore she cannot love her child as a mother. In this story, Al-e Ahmad speaks allusively about ideology of patriarchy. She knows the child as her own child to some extent that the man knows him as his own child and the customs enforces her to supply his welfare and loves him with her maternal love according to the customs and practice. But the child is considered as the else's child when the father does not accept him as his own child; also such a mother does not and cannot believe any responsibility and duty against such a child.

It is worthy to attention that other women also have no information on a woman and mother's rights; as though the man's request concerning non-guardianship of the child is completely accepted for them and conforms to the usual customs. In fact, Jalal emphasizes that shortsightedness and disinterest is imposed on the women by wrong structures of the patriarchy society; therefore, he browbeats the women not to involve in such an idea; he also invites men to further profound thoughts and liberality as worthy for a human, invitation to humanity, morality and humane love.

**Heinrich Böll**

Heinrich Böll was born on Dec. 21, 1917 in Cologne. His childhood intermixed with war issues and its social development. He was a hard-working writer and created too many novels, short stories and essays. Since his material and personality growth was coincided with World War II, his works also explain the history of those events. Although the study and analysis of Böll's works requires more opportunity than such a brief paper, some cases are studied in this paper depending on our objectives.

1- The influence of family religious training is completely tangible in his works, although in some cases it seems as a criticism. In other words, the effect of religious training in his works is tangible even in form of explicit and frank criticism. One of the reasons for his critical approach as to the church is the agreement of church which resulted in muteness against Hitler's crime. It has to be noted that Böll is very liberal; i.e. broad-minded human believes along with a humane Catholicism consist his believes. His combat against injustice, either through church or the Fascism of Hitler and also German Democracy, arises from his liberalism.

2- In addition to humane Catholicism, his family had highest influence on his value discipline. He reminds his mother as a "great and wonderful woman" who offers a cup of coffee to anyone came to her house, either Nazi or not. (Robert C. Conard, Heinrich Böll, translated by Khashayar Deyhimi, Mahi Publications, P. 9) and the outcome of training at such a home is a deep reverence for all, either friend or enemy. Therefore, it is not unusual that all his protagonists are simple-hearted and good-natured and they do not usually disregard human dignity.

3- Besides religion and family, the third factor forming his personality and nature was socio-environmental circumstances where he was born. His life coincided with World War II and influenced by its resulting social conditions. War or post-war conditions plays an important role in most of his stories. He strongly taunted his compatriots due to protection of Hitler and his party in some of his works, although many of his compatriots including his family opposed National Socialism from the beginning. His first novel named "Wo warst du, Adam? ( where were you, Adam? )" describes a camping place where all Jewish prisoners are killed. By this
novel, Böll was recognized as one of the Germany's foremost writers, who remembered Jewish Holocaust by
the Hitler in literature.

4- Essays: Most of Böll's works are essays and he is considered as one of the important Germany's writers. Nowadays these essays have significant place in contemporary literature of Germany. Böll brings up himself as a literary theoretician in these essays by revealing the principles of aesthetics and presentation of his definition of commitment as a writer. On the other hand, these essays show his situation against Germany historical events tangible in background of his novels. Such essays generally form more than half of his works.

5- Böll's writings animate and warm the reader's emotion and his humanity and sound judgment captures the reader's heart. Böll always resorts to the reader's moral conscience and good nature in his essays. He believes that all humans enjoy from such a moral conscience and good nature and the sense of justice and honesty is undoubtedly the common heritage of all humans.

6- As mentioned later, he strongly criticizes the political situation and conservative church of the time in some of his works. The Clown is one of the most important and influential books in this regard. "The Clown" is one of the most influential novels of the twenty century. It is about a clown named Hans Schnier, who attended religious meetings for five years and amuses spectators by his satiric speeches. He was born to a reputable factory owner and has rejected his paternal wealth and chose a simple life. This is a bitter and tragic work and mostly has a critical opinion toward Catholic Church.
Another characteristic of his works especially The Clown is his criticism about solitude and vanity of the modern human. He deals with psychoanalysis of the modern world's problems in this book. As mentioned before, he strongly opposed the church in this story. Such conflict with church and especially catholic religion by Hans relates to missing his lover and her marriage with a catholic religious person. Hans is angry due to the fact that the Christian leaders, who made their utmost efforts to save Marie from sin and impurity, violated his privacy and separated him from his foremost living value that is "Marie" and selected another husband for her among the Catholics. Although Hans and Marie had common sense and mutual understanding and they even love each other, Marie inevitably cannot and will not endure Hans' thought by the believes, attitude, religious instructions and new issues as inspired her; so religious tents is the base for their separation. In Hans' point of view, religion should be a personal issue like other ideas without any permission to intervene other's privacy.

6- Group Portrait with Lady:
The novel centers around a woman named Leni with too many clear paradoxes. Although she is a naïve woman, the description of her and her behavior is not simple. She is materialist who is hindered of material enjoyment. She is actually an innocent woman, but she is looked as a lewd woman by the society. In his point of view, she is communist, but she is personification of Nazi's Idea "Germany Daughter". Böll has created Leni and her Russian Beloved as well as their sons as a holy family which personifies dogmatic Christian socialism. In addition to Leni, different peoples and characters from various social classes are seen in this story; in other words, a complete spectrum from Germany Society of those years. We have two narration layers in this novel. In the first half of the novel, Leni's life is retold by an unknown narrator in precise and obsessive manner. This section contains the narrator's careful research about the Leni's life and his interpretation about precision and value of his findings. Thus, the Leni's adventure is narrated from her birth upto March 2, 1945, the day of the Allie's nine-hour air attack to Cologne, i.e. the day when World War II is ceased in the Cologne. Then, in the second section, the narrator disregarded his role and joint to the Leni's friends, i.e. he plays a role in the story. From now on, each character retells the story of his/her life about that horrible air attack up to 1970. Since all these people are in contact with Leni, Leni's story is also retold from different perspective during these 25 years along with their stories. In this novel, Böll finds a suitable opportunity again that conforms to his aim, i.e. dealing with contemporary history of Germany and different phases of its development during postwar period. Although Böll is politically impartial in the novel, his critic from western and eastern systems is different: the western society is introduced as a production-based society for the purpose of profitability not meeting the human needs. Sympathy and justice is not found in this society. As pointed it out in the novel, capitalism is based on an unrestrained greedy philosophy. On the contrary, Böll's critic of communism does not conform to its ideals, but it relates to non-obeying the instructions and orders of this religion. From this
point of view, the novel's criticism of the existing socialism is similar to his criticism of church. By Leni and especially her son, Leif, Böll indicates that religious and socialistic principles form humanities together. The message of radicalism is also seen in this novel as it is reflected in his other works: Christianity and capitalism are incompatible; their long time bond is only due to the fact that the organized religion permanently victim human values for socioeconomic purposes.

Similar Elements of Al-e Ahmad & Heinrich Böll's Works

1- Religion and Religious Training Situation: Paying attention to the religion and religious training is perfectly noticeable in the works of both authors, but what is worthy to mention is that in Al-e Ahmad's sample work, religion is on dogma and ideologic basis; criticism does not relate to the religion basis and returning to the religion is finally defined as a salvation path. Although there are some religious people in the Jala's works who behave unwisely, immorally or irregularly, no criticism of religion is seen in Jalal's works. But as it mentioned later, there are explicit criticism of church in Böll's works; though such criticism relates to the peripheral issues of the church rather than the religion basis.

2- Significance of Both Authors' Essays: As it was studied, both writers have too many essays, which are considered as their important works. Essays are considered as literary theories in both authors' works and both of them are introduced as theoretician in their essays.

3- Author's Moral Mission: The morality role is emphasized on both writers' works. As though in their point of view, the writer is revealer of mass conscience and ideal conscience of human society. It seems that in their point of view, the author's responsibility before reader is even more than the responsibility of writer before his conscience.

4- There is a kind of realism in both authors' stories. Such realism necessitates the author to write about his contemporary time and show the way to the readers by dealing with ordinary and routine issues as well as explaining his desirable issues through the story.

5- The professional life of both writers is influenced by global and local sociopolitical developments. For example, we can point out to the influence of the 1953 Iranian coup d'état (known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup d'état) on Al-e Ahmad and also World War II on Heinrich Böll.

6- Woman's Situation in their stories: There are too many woman characters in both writers' works who are mostly heroine. In some stories, the existence of woman character indicates the author's moral desires and wishes and shows moral desires of a humane society in a higher level. In other stories, both writers opposed to customs and deficiencies of the society through woman characters. It seems that if visible and invisible abnormal behaviors of the society are shown by the women, it negative impact is manifested more clearly and it can accompany the reader better. Such heroines are simple and material women and in some cases they are protected from material pleasures; but they are innocent in kernel although they are considered evil by the society.

REFERENCES

THE ATTITUDES OF ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM LEARNERS TOWARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT
This study was conducted to investigate the Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners’ attitudes toward English language learning (ELL) in terms of the behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects. This also aimed to explore whether there is any significant difference in the learners’ attitudes towards learning the English language based on their profiles such as age, gender, and year level. Twenty-three learners enrolled in the ALS Program of Brgy. Tinago, Ozamiz City answered a survey – questionnaire, a checklist and an assessment questionnaire as measuring instruments. Generally, the results showed that the participants have positive attitude toward English language learning and that there were significant differences in the learners’ attitudes towards learning English language based on their gender, year level, but not on their age.

Keywords: dropouts, ESL context, attitudinal aspects, Filipino learners, ELL, ALS

INTRODUCTION
Language learning is regarded as the cornerstone of human existence. Knowing a language can help us to express our opinions, hopes, and even our dreams (Tavil, 2009). At a micro – level, a second language such as English is learned as a means to achieve some specific, personal goals. It is learned to earn a good job, to travel, to be used as a tool for further studies, or as a requirement for a degree (Taha, 2007). In a broader sense, language, especially English, is an important instrument in the fields involving scientific communications, education, business, cultural interchanges, political issues, etc.

In the Philippines, English language holds strong dominance and persistent popularity (Manarpaac, 2003). Gonzalez (2004) points out that because of economic advantages, English has remained as the most dominant language of literacy. The combination of local and international labor requirement, and the power that is held by English that is the key to socioeconomic and global opportunities supported the position of the second language in the Philippines. Nowadays, the idea is, if you do not learn English, you remain poor (Mahboob & Cruz, 2013). Fluency in English is therefore a key to success in life (Oroujou & Vahedi, 2011). Since it is recognized that English is an indispensable medium of local and global business exchange and communication, the Philippines gives high regard to the learning of English among students through its bilingual education policy, using English and a major indigenous language, Filipino (Smolicz & Nical, 1997). In the context of foreign language learning, there are various factors that influence the learning process. These include motivation, attitudes, anxiety, learning achievements, aptitudes, intelligence, age, personalities, etc. (Gardner, 1960; Lehmann, 2006, cited in Shams, 2008). However, learner’s attitude is acknowledged to be one of the most significant factors that impact language learning (Fakeye, 2010).

Attitude, according to Gardner (1985), is an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent. Ajzan (1988) considers attitude as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event”. Moreover, Wenden (1991) presented a more comprehensive definition of the concept of attitude. He classified the term into three interconnected components: cognitive, affective/emotional, and behavioral. These attitudinal aspects are based on the three theoretical approaches of cognitivism, behaviorism, and humanism (Abidin et al, 2012). First, attitudes tend to have a cognitive component. This could involve beliefs or perceptions about the objects or situations related to the attitude. Second, attitudes have an affective component. This means that the objects or situations related to the attitude may generate like or dislike. Third, attitudes have a behavioral component, i.e. certain attitudes tend to prompt learners to adopt particular learning behaviors. (Karahan, 2007)
Research in the field of language studies has indicated that attitude to language is a construct that explains linguistic behavior in particular (Mamun et al., 2012). Studies done by Gardner (1985), Baker (1992), Hohenthal (2003), and Kara (2009) show that the learners’ attitudes towards learning strongly influence their learning behaviors and consequently on their performance. Karahan (2007) states that positive language attitudes allow learners to have positive orientation towards learning English. Conversely, negative attitude and the lack of it can lead to obstacles in learning a language (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they can influence students’ success or failure in their learning (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009).

There is a plethora of research that has been carried out internationally to explore on the nature of learners’ attitudes towards the English language as a foreign and a second language (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). Saidat (2010) mentions that language attitude research has been considered in the previous 50 years because of the growing relation between the importance of the language use and the nature of individuals. Studying language attitudes among students is very significant. An in-depth understanding of it benefits not only the learners but also the stakeholders. Firstly, an investigation into students’ attitudes is an effective method by which language teachers, education planners, syllabus designers and researchers can obtain greater understanding into the language learning or the teaching process (Al Nouri, 2013). It may assist ESL/EFL curriculum and instruction designers to devise language teaching programs that generate the attitudes most conducive to the production of more successful ESL/EFL learners (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). Furthermore, it can help instructional material writers create and teachers select tasks that tap positive attitudes among students. Lastly, studies on attitudes that are conducted on the Filipino students especially those of the drop – outs, in the researcher’s view, are very limited.

Objectives of the Study
This study aimed at investigating the ALS learners’ attitudes towards English language learning. Most specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

a. identify the profile of the ALS learners
b. determine the general attitude of the ALS learners’ attitudes towards learning the English language taking into consideration the three aspects of attitude namely emotional, cognitive, and behavioral
c. explore the significant relationship of learners’ demographic profile and their attitudes towards learning English.

METHODS
Design
The design of this study is quantitative in nature i.e., descriptive and inferential as well. An adapted questionnaire was employed as a measuring tool. The participants were required to answer all the items of the questionnaire honestly, giving their own perceptions about their attitudes towards learning English language in terms of the emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of attitude as well as their demographic profile i.e., gender, year and age.

Respondents
The population in this study involved all the learners enrolled in the Alternative Learning System of Brgy. Tinago, Ozamiz City in the first quarter (January – March) 2015. They were 15 to 30 year old out-of-school youth and adults who have been dropped – out from the formal schools for some personal, financial, or academic issues. They are presently enrolled in the Alternative Learning System under the Abot – Alam program. The total number of learners was twenty-four (23) with fourteen (14) males and nine (9) females. They composed the respondents of the study.

Research Setting
The research was conducted at the Community Learning Center of Brgy. Tinago, Ozamiz City. It is situated at the 2nd floor of the ALS Building beside the Barangay Health Center at Purok Mauswagon, Tinago, Ozamiz City. At present, it is composed of one Abot – Alam teacher and one Mobile teacher.

Instrument
There were three instruments employed in the study: survey questionnaire, checklist and an assessment questionnaire. The Profile Survey Questionnaire has three (3) items which were used to collect information regarding the learners’ demographic background. It identified the respondents’ age, gender, and their year level.
The second tool used was the Factors of School Drop-Out Checklist. It listed thirteen (13) school-related, five (5) family-related, one (1) peer-related, three (3) employment-related reasons of dropping out. Respondents’ were to check the causes of their drop-out and identify other related reasons not listed in the questionnaire.

The third instrument used was the Attitude toward English Language Learning Assessment Questionnaire. The adapted instrument utilized was a standardized tool prepared by Dr. Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin (2012). In sum, there were 40 items concerning language attitudes in terms of behavioral (12), cognitive (14), and emotional (14) aspects of attitude. There were 28 items which were positive and 12 items were negative. The items were put in a 4-point Likert scale from Level 1: Strongly Disagree, Level 2: Disagree, Level 3: Agree and Level 4: Strongly Agree. Respondents were to check the number that reflects their attitudes and perceptions towards the English language.

A score of ‘4’, ‘3’, ‘2’, and ‘1’ were given to the responses of the sample in the given order for the favorable statements and they were reversed for the unfavorable statements. The grant score was used to interpret the attitude level of the individual using the following continuum: 1. 00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

Reliability and Validity
The reliability of the questionnaire items in terms of the three aspects of attitude were as follows: a) Cronbach’s Alpha regarding the behavioral aspect is 0.731 b) cognitive aspect obtained 0.772 c) emotional aspect is 0.677.

To investigate the validity of the questionnaire items, the questionnaire was given to one specialist, a professor from Misamis University. Her comments were taken into consideration and she advocated that the items of the questionnaire are valid and reliable to investigate the research objectives.

Data Collection
The following were the steps undertaken in gathering the data:
1. Permission was asked from the Education Program Specialist in ALS, Designate in the Division of Ozamiz City for the test administration.
2. Respondents were asked to answer the Profile Survey Questionnaire, Factors of School Drop-Out Checklist and Attitude toward English Language Learning Assessment Questionnaire.
   a. The researcher explained every item in the questionnaire using the learner’s mother tongue (Cebuano) to facilitate comprehension.
3. Answers were then recorded and analyzed.

Ethical Consideration
Before administering the questionnaire, the respondents were briefed on the goals of the study. To reduce their fear of exposing their honest views and to ensure better and valid results, the respondents were informed that their answers would be treated with complete confidentiality. Moreover, ethical issues related to the culture and nature of the respondents and the policy of the environment were taken into consideration when conducting the survey - questionnaire.

Data Analysis
The collected data were processed using the MS Office Excel Program and were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) Program version 17.0. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions and they are expressed in terms of Frequency, Percentage Mean Values and Standard Deviation. In analyzing the relationship of the variables involved, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized. The independent sample T-test and One-way ANOVA analysis test were conducted were also used to facilitate in meeting the research objectives. The findings are indicated in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Profile of the ALS Learners
A total of twenty-three (23) learners were involved in the study. There were fourteen males and nine females. Most of the respondents were 15 – 17 years old (56.52%). There were seven 18 – 20 years old learners (30.43%), two (8.70%) 20 – 23 years old adults and one (4.35%) 24 years old learner who composed the total population. As can be seen in table 1, majority of the learners (34.78%) were not able to graduate in
Elementary. They are followed by those who were able to reach 3rd year High School (30.43%). There were also those who graduated in Grade – Six and stopped schooling (17.39%) and those who entered 1st Year High School but were dropped later on (13.04%). These respondents are just few of the millions of youths globally who are out of school.

Quite sadly, the Philippines ranks fifth in the list of countries worldwide that has the most number of out-of-school youths. Based on a recent report from UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics (2013), more than 1.5 million Filipino children are denied the right to primary and secondary education.

Table 1: ALS Learners’ Demographic Profile (n=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 17 years old</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.52 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 20 years old</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 23 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 years old &amp; above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.87 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEAR LEVEL:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.78 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Undergraduate</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents have been dropped out from the formal schools and are now currently in the Abot – Alam Program under the Alternative Learning System. Their dropping out of school can be traced to various
reasons. Table 2 highlights the frequency of the causes of dropping out by the respondents in the study.

Thirteen of them dropped school because of being influenced by peers. Seven of the respondents confirmed that their barkada (peers) persuaded them to play online computer games until such time they got hooked by it and so they dropped school eventually. This finding concurs with that of an earlier study by Ballo-Alzate (2007). Peer pressure played a critical role in what adolescents did and did not do. It is characteristic of several high school dropouts from urban areas. Adolescent students could easily be swayed by their peers, some of them sacrificing their schooling in order to be accepted (Nava, 2009). Moreover, twelve of the respondents dropped school because of frequent absenteeism. They reported that they incurred several absences because of financial reasons. Four had to support the family by getting a job. They had to earn a living so they could have baon (allowance) to school and that they could pay for their requirements and projects. This validates the earlier findings of Barton (2006) that poverty is the primary cause of school leaving.

Six of the respondents also said that they stopped schooling because they could not keep up with schoolwork and they could not get along with teachers. Similarly, Boholano & Go Puco’s (2013) study on 292 students in Cebu, Philippines showed that more than one-half of the children (168; 57.5%) indicated that they did not like their teacher, which could be interpreted as a practical reason to lose interest in studying. Hence, it is logical to generalize that students may be motivated to go to school every day when they like their teachers.

Five of the respondents also dropped schooling because they were getting poor/failing grades, and could not get along with others. In the same aforementioned study by Boholano & Go Puco (2013), two hundred fifty seven respondents (88%) had the perception that their classmates did not like them. This signifies poor social relatedness, a disconnected feeling from the social interactions at school that can unfavorably affect learning. Social relatedness correlates with learning in that a positive sense of social relatedness will produce positive learning behaviors and classroom participation while the inverse will produce negative results (Royer, Provost, Tarabulsy, & Coutu, 2008). Other school, family, employment and peer–related factors have also been identified by the respondents.

School leaving has become a global concern. With this glaring number of young Filipinos uneducated, alongside the fulfillment of the EFA (Education For All) Goals 2015, it has been very timely for the government through the Department of Education to implement the Abot-Alam Program thru DepEd Order No. 17, s. 2014 to locate those who have not completed basic and higher education (aged 15-30) and enroll them in appropriate program interventions in education, entrepreneurship, and employment so their lives may be eventually transformed.

Table 2: Frequency of Factors of School Dropout among ALS Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School-related reasons:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had many absences</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was getting poor grades/failing school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not like school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not keep up with schoolwork</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought could not complete school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not get along with teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not feel belong there</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not get along with others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Attitude of ALS Learners toward English Language Learning

The Abot–Alam learners’ attitude toward English Language Learning is positive. The result of the descriptive analysis shows that the overall mean score of English Language Attitude (ELA) among the participants is 2.8561 (SD= 0.21129) as seen in Table 2. This result reveals that the participants have a desirable attitude towards learning English in all of the three aspects of attitude as interpreted using the continuum below Table 3. The same result was also shown in a survey conducted by Al Noursi (2013) in Applied Technology High School, United Arab Emirates.

It is not quite surprising that Filipino learners developed a positive attitude toward English language learning because they might be fully aware of the international role the English language has been playing on the world arena being the language of technology and science, business, banking, industry and commerce, transportation, tourism, international diplomacy, advertising, telecommunication, mass communication and the Internet (Zughoul, 2003). The English language may be hegemonic in nature but it is roughly needed in the Philippine archipelago to connect with the world for education, acquisition of technology and development in general.

It is therefore fitting for teachers to sustain this established positive attitude among learners by providing them with more meaningful and contextual learning activities suitable to their needs and relevant to their age and areas of interests. Once sustained, the teacher must continue taking this to a higher level of positivity that will enhance their level of awareness, appreciation, and later, love for learning the second language. This must also challenge language policy makers in the Philippines to improve the English - oriented education that is only more focused in the formal schools than in the non-formal education set-up. It is argued that
national examinations in the Alternative Learning System and in the Abot – Alam Program are slightly deficient since the Filipino language is the only medium used in constructing test items in Mathematics and even Science thereby decreasing in depth comprehension as learners were exposed to learning mathematical equations and formula, scientific data and ideas in English. The Bureau of Alternative Learning System must also utilize the English language as its medium of test construction in all subject areas except Filipino and Araling Panlipunan, in the same way English is utilized in the National Achievement Tests taken by students in the formal schools. Through this, the interest of the non-formal learners (Abot – Alam) toward English may be strengthened.

### Table 3: ALS Learners’ General Attitude toward English Language Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eng. Language Attitude</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>2.8561</td>
<td>.21129</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** 1. 00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

#### a. The Behavioral Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

As shown in Table 2, the behavioral aspect of attitude towards English language represents the highest mean score 2.8735 (SD = .29952). That is, the participants have positive behavioral attitude and pay their fullest attention whenever the teacher starts the English class. The items “Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressing myself” and “I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English” obtained the first rank (M= 3.17 see Appendix: table A). These results substantiate the previous findings of Karahan (2007) that learners have a strongly positive attitude toward the importance of English making them behave well during learning sessions. On the contrary, the lowest mean score (M= 2.09) shows that learners feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students. Shams’ (2008) study also explored that most of the participants were confused and nervous when they started speaking English in front of other students. Similarly, the study conducted by Lei and Quin (2009) on EFL learners in China, revealed that one of the three variables contributing to failure as identified by their students was the lack of confidence. This is also true with the Abot – Alam learners considerably because of the kind of background the respondents have. Some of them have been suspended and expelled due to misbehaviors, others left because of poor performance in school, which is why higher level of self-esteem cannot be expected from them. Teachers must be able to provide them an encouraging, comfortable, caring, and unintimidating learning atmosphere so they can utilize the language to express themselves freely and without any hesitations. Besides, the results of the current study disclosed that learners believed that studying English helps them to improve their personality. Some of the students also agreed that when they hear a student in the class speaking English well, they like to practice speaking with him/her. That’s why they wish that they could have many English speaking friends to help them in practicing and understanding English. With that, teachers must be very creative in designing communicative - collaborative learning tasks (such as dialogues, role playing, peer critiquing and the likes) that allow learners to functionally use the language, recognize and instantly correct linguistic errors within and among them.

### Table 4: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Behavioral Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Attitude</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.8735</td>
<td>.29952</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** 1. 00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

#### b. The Cognitive Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

The findings seen in Table 5 indicate that majority of the respondents showed positive cognitive attitude and agreed that studying English is important because it will make them more educated. This response among the respondents represents the highest mean score M= 3.73 with SD=.456. Most of them believed that people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable and that being good at English will help them study...
other subjects well (see appendix: table B). These findings reflect what Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified as one of the two main roles of attitudes in second language acquisition that is, instrumental attitude. Instrumental attitudes are related with the desire to receive social status, recognition or profitable benefits. These functions describe the position of students with respect to their language learning situation. Students learning a second language have strong instrumental attitudes being able to utilize the language learned in studying other subject areas.

However, it can be noted that the cognitive aspect represents the lowest mean score of attitudes towards English (M=2.7643 / SD = 0.29045). This indicates that the ALS learners have a slightly more positive emotional and behavioral attitude than their cognitive attitude toward English. This lower result can be explained by the complexity of the subject. English language is difficult and complicated to learn because students see it as a foreign language for study only and unrelated to their practical communications (Life, 2011). Some of the respondents may have left the formal school because of some difficult topics that have overwhelmed them. To avoid the reoccurrence of this and to improve their cognitive attitude toward English learning, teachers have to simplify their teaching, think of more effective methodologies, and most importantly, personalize instruction. Language teachers have to scheme activities that are relevant to the needs of the learners and are highly comprehensible at their level.

### Table 5: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Cognitive Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attitude</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.7643</td>
<td>.29045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

c. The Emotional Aspect of Attitude toward English Language Learning

The overall emotional/affective attitude of the respondents toward English language learning is positive (M=2.83 / SD = 0.34115). As can be seen in Table 6, most of the participants say that knowing English is one important goal in their life (M = 3.52/ see appendix: Table C ). This result is in line with Mahboob and Cruz’s (2013) study wherein Filipinos said that since English is the language of opportunity, they have to study it more extensively. Majority of them also say that learning English gives them good feelings such as being proud and dignified. This again is supported by Mahboob and Cruz (2013) as they revealed in their study the linguistic hegemony of English. The results also demonstrated that learners are interested in the subject that is why they enjoyed doing English activities. This result is in contrast to the study of Soleimani , Hanafi1 (2013) to Iranian Medical Students’ Attitudes towards English Language Learning. Their study revealed that students do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when the English is being taught due to the belief among learners that learning English language is not essential or important.

Feng and Chen (2009) stressed that the learning process is an emotional process. The teacher and the learners engage in multifarious emotional activities that result varied fruits of emotions. These inner feelings and emotions of learners influence their perspectives and their attitudes towards the target language (Choy & Troudi, 2006). Since the respondents have already acquired positive emotional attitude toward English language learning, the challenge is for facilitators to give adequate positive reinforcements for every successful linguistic outcome. Schools must also promote a fair, and friendly learning environment as learning a language is also psychological in nature.

### Table 6: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Emotional Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Attitude</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>2.8282</td>
<td>.34115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

Attitudes towards English Language Learning regarding Participants’ Demographic Profile
The following sections discuss whether there are any statistically significant differences in the respondents’ attitudes towards English in terms of their demographic profile.

a. Language Attitudes and Participants’ Gender

To answer the question concerning the differences in the participants’ attitude towards English by gender variable, the inferential statistical analysis was used. The results in Table 7 below show that the mean score of language attitude among female students is 2.9645 (SD = 0.07662) while they are 2.7865 (SD = 0.04604) respectively among male students. These descriptive results show that the attitudes of female ALS learners towards English are slightly higher than that of the male ones.

Table 7: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.7865</td>
<td>1.7228</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.9645</td>
<td>2.2985</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive. Moreover, the output of the SPSS program showed that the p-value was 0.046 that is less than 0.05. This suggests that there is significant difference in the attitudes between males and females. Females have more positive attitudes than males.

These results are similar with those in the study of Abidin et al (2012) and Shoaib and Dornyei (2005). The latter believed that gender is an essential perspective under second language learning investigations and they concluded that females demonstrate more positive behaviors, interests and performances than the males. There are many factors to explain the differences between the male and female respondents’ attitudes. It may be caused by the variety of teaching strategies and the tasks employed by English language teachers in teaching female and male learners. (Abidin et al, 2012). The design and the content of English curriculum may not meet the interests and needs of the male learners, on the other hand. It is therefore necessary for teachers to make sure that teaching methods would cater to all males and females.

b. Language Attitudes and Participants’ Age

Table 8 below shows that the attitudes’ mean scores among learners who are 15 – 17, 18 – 20, and 21 years old above are 2.8666 (SD = .23696), 2.7536 (SD = .13262), 3.0500 (SD= .08660) respectively. As can be seen, learners who are 21 years old and above have the highest positive attitude among the three age groups. This is because they already know the importance and the significance of English especially in applying for jobs. In analyzing the differences in the participants’ attitudes towards English regarding their age, One - way ANOVA was used. The computed F=2.364 (p =.120) which is higher than 0.05, shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of the students when grouped according to age. All of the age groups have the same positive attitude toward English language learning that implies the same orientation towards the importance of English. This implies a commendable approach exerted by the teachers where the utility of the English language has been highlighted and never neglected.

Table 8: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.8666</td>
<td>.23696</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>2.364</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.7536</td>
<td>.13262</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0500</td>
<td>.08660</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.
c. Language Attitudes and Participants’ Year Level

Table 9 below shows that the attitudes’ mean scores among learners who reached first year, third-year, Grade 6, and elementary undergraduates are: 2.6447 (SD = 0.4235), 2.9071 (SD = 0.17837), 2.6375 (SD = 0.13769) and 2.9841 (SD = 0.17319) respectively. It can be observed that there is a difference among the four groups in their attitudes towards English. Those learners who weren’t able to graduate in Elementary showed positive attitude than those who reached 3rd year high school, those who entered 1st year high school and lastly, those who were able to graduate in Grade 6.

One-way ANOVA was used in analyzing the differences in the participants’ attitudes towards English regarding their year level. The SPSS output demonstrates that there is significant difference in the respondents’ attitudes towards English due to their year level as the p-value is less than 0.05 (p= 0.004 > 0.05, F=6.327).

These results prove that learners who have not yet reached higher level of schooling have more optimistic attitudes toward English than those who have completed Elementary and those who reached High School. This may be because students in the higher years have already gone through the complexities of learning the subject unlike those in the lower grades who were only taught the basic phonemic and phonological structures of language. Hence, it is essential for teachers and administrators to create a lasting engaging, uplifting climate where learning does not become upsetting, boring and frustrating. Learners must be fed and equipped with rich amount of competencies in accordance to their linguistic abilities.

Table 9: ALS Learners’ Attitude toward ELL by Year Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Yr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6447</td>
<td>.04235</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Yr</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.9071</td>
<td>.17837</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>6.327</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elem Grad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6375</td>
<td>.13769</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El. Under.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.9841</td>
<td>.17319</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.00 – 1.75 highly negative; 1.76 – 2.5 negative; 2.51 – 3.25 positive; 3.26 – 4.00 highly positive.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The respondents’ positive attitude towards English may lead us to the conclusion that they are well-informed of the importance of the English language and its utility. The concept of attitude is considered as a very crucial component in language learning especially for learners who have been dropped from school and have decided to study again. So, English language teachers must continue building up this positive attitude towards the subject. This can be achieved by employing the most appropriate methods and techniques in teaching English effectively. Teachers must use updated, relevant and engaging materials and supplementary resources (e.g. films) in addition to the English modules. Teachers are also recommended to apply more of the communicative approach in teaching the second language to make the learning process worthwhile. Learners must be exposed to activities where they can collaborate and discuss their experiences and related issues concerning the language.

Furthermore, curriculum designers in the Bureau of Alternative Learning System must reevaluate and improve the content and the design of the modules to continue upholding the needs and the interests of both young and adult learners. They are recommended to take into account the different perceptions of the Abot Alam learners in second language learning due to their differences concerning gender, age, year level. English curriculum and classroom activities should continuously involve behavioral, cognitive and affective aims to cater the students’ needs and their individual differences. Therefore, language teachers must also
demonstrate the proper attitude in respecting and being sensitive to the learners’ beliefs, feelings, and behaviors to assure the most positive attitude and performance from the learners.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

I. Profile Survey Questionnaire

Direction: Check items as applicable.

A. Age
   ( ) 15 – 17 years old
   ( ) 18 – 20 years old
   ( ) 20 – 23 years old
   ( ) 24 – above

B. Year Level
   ( ) 1st year HS
   ( ) 2nd year HS
   ( ) 3rd year HS
   ( ) 4th year HS
   ( ) Elementary graduate
   ( ) Elementary Undergraduate

II. Factors of School Drop-out Checklist

Vol.6, Issue 3, June 2016
School-related reasons:
- Had many absences
- Was getting poor grades/failing school
- Did not like school
- Could not keep up with schoolwork
- Thought could not complete school requirements
- Could not get along with teachers
- Did not feel belong there
- Could not get along with others
- Was suspended
- Changed schools and did not like new one
- Thought would fail tests
- Did not feel safe
- Was expelled

Family-related reasons:
- Was Pregnant
- Had to support family
- Had to care for a member of the family
- Became a father/mother of a baby
- Married or planned to get married

Employment-related reasons:
- Got a job
- Could not work at same time

Peer-related reasons:
- Influenced by friends

Others (cite) __________

III. Attitude Toward English Language Learning Assessment Questionnaire

Direction: Read the statements carefully and check the appropriate choices that reflect your attitudes and perceptions towards English language. Be guided by the rating below:

4= Strongly Agree (SA)
3= Agree (A)
2= Disagree (D)
1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No. | Items | 4-SA | 3-A | 2-D | 1-SD
---|---|---|---|---|---

BEHAVIORAL ATTITUDE TOWARD ENGLISH
1. Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried. | | | | |
2. Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends. | | | | |
3. I like to give opinions during English lessons. | | | | |
4. I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English. | | | | |
5. When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her. | | | | |
6. Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressing myself. | | | | |
7. Studying English helps me to improve my personality. | | | | |
8. I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students. | | | | |
9. I like to practice English the way native speakers do. | | | | |
10. I wish I could have many English speaking friends. | | | | |
11. When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers for the homework on what has been taught. | | | | |
12. I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when the English is being taught. | | | | |

COGNITIVE ASPECT OF ATTITUDE TOWARD ENGLISH
13. I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English. | | | | |
14. I look forward to studying more English in the future. | | | | |
15. Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.
16. Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.
17. Studying English helps me getting new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge.
18. I cannot to summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself.
19. Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.
20. In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.
21. Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.
22. I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.
23. I am able to think and analyze the content in English language.
24. I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.
25. In my opinion, English language is difficult and complicated to learn.
26. English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge.

AFFECTIVE ASPECT OF ATTITUDE TOWARD ENGLISH

27. Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.
28. To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.
29. I feel proud when studying English language.
30. I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.
31. I don’t get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English Class.
32. I enjoy doing activities in English.
33. Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.
34. Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).
35. I do not like studying English.
36. I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.
37. Knowing English is an important goal in my life.
38. I look forward to the time I spend in English class.
39. I wish I could speak English fluently.
40. I am interested in studying English.

© Dr. Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin (2012)

Table A: Descriptive Statistics of Abot - Alam Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Behavioral Aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.968</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Downloaded from mjltm.org at 0:38 +0430 on Sunday June 21st 2020

DOI: 10.26655/mjltm.2016.6.1
I like to give opinions during English lessons.
I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English.
When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.
Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressing myself.
Studying English helps me to improve my personality.
I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.
I like to practice English the way native speakers do.
I wish I could have many English speaking friends.
When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers for the homework on what has been taught.
I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when the English is being taught.

Valid N (listwise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>.877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.491</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.09</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.628</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td>.771</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<td>.601</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Descriptive Statistics of Abot – Alam Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Cognitive Aspect

Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.

Valid N (listwise)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look forward to studying more English in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying English helps me getting new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am able to think and analyze the content in English language.

I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.

In my opinion, English language is difficult and complicated to learn.

English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge.

Table C: Descriptive Statistics of Abot – Alam Learners’ Attitude toward ELL in terms of Emotional/Affective Aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud when</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studying English language.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel excited when I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicate in English with others.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t get anxious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when I have to answer a question in my English Class.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy doing activities in English.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like studying English.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could speak English fluently.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in studying English.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.928</td>
<td>.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying English subject makes me feel more confident</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.733</td>
<td>.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing English is an important goal in my life.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look forward to the time I spend in English class.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise): 20
EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION TASKS ON LOW INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNER’S LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT
There is a controversy on the use of English foreign language in second and foreign language classrooms, and language learners are usually recommended not to use their shared L1 in such situations; however, some researchers and methodologists have recently begun to have a different look at the use of L1 in language learning contexts. Many researchers suggest that translation can be a suitable activity to explore and develop aspects of foreign language students listening performance. In the current study, the participants are 40 female language institute students that were divided into two groups (experimental and control groups) to know whether collaborative translation task can have any effect on their listening outcome. To do so, the researcher used a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) design. In the control group, the students learned traditional listening. They received instruction without translation of the test. They just listened to the listening tracks and answered the related comprehension questions. In the experimental group, after listening to the audio materials, the students translated it collaboratively. Before translating, the teacher explained the question and the students answered them. In the in control group, the students learned traditional listening. Data analysis showed instruction with translation results in improved listening comprehension test scores. It was concluded that CTT may result in more positive effect on developing EFL listening performance.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative, Listening Comprehension, Translation, Task

1. Introduction
In this chapter, a general background on the effect of translation task and its application is provided. This can help us investigate the usability and application of collaboration translation task on Iranians’ EFL listening comprehension. In addition, the statement of problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses, definition of key terms will be explained. Listening comprehension plays an important role in English foreign language process, but the main issue is how to have an effective use of collaborative translation task on listening comprehension in the classroom. Listening is a complicated process (Richards & Renanda, 2002). It can be only hearing, sometimes listening and even understanding but without obedience. Transaction happens between the receptions of sounds and
a clear reply by the receiver Vandergrift (2005).
Translation involves a transfer of meaning from one language to another. Translation profession has been in existence for a long time. Translators have enabled the works of great writers to be read by many people of different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Translation has long played a role in the dissemination of scientific information. (Hammond, &Linberg, 1992).

There is a controversy on the use of L1 in second and foreign language classrooms, and language learners are usually recommended not to use their shared L1 in such situations. However, some researchers and methodologists have recently begun to have a different look at the use of L1 in language learning.

The importance of listening in language learning can hardly be overstimulated. Through reception, we internalize linguistic information without which we could not produce language. In classrooms, students always do more listening than speaking. Listening competence is universally larger than speaking competence. Listening comprehension has not always drawn the attention of educators to the extent that it now has place a concerted emphasis on listening comprehension. Perhaps human beings have a natural tendency to look at spacing as the major index of language proficiency. Listening comprehension is in pedagogical research is seen as the outcome of complex processes.

2. Literature review
According to Catford (1965), translation can be defined more strictly as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. He also explains that there are reasons to see translation as being widely needed in every day situations and not as a specialized activity. This is true whether we take translation in the established sense of producing texts and utterances which replace textual materials in one language by equivalent material in another language. However, some techniques need to be employed judiciously using appropriate tasks. Translation is a mean not an end, in the sense that students are not being trained to be translators and is a very natural phenomenon among foreign language users. Many EFL users are probably as likely to listening English via their L1 as they are to read directly into English (Cook, 2010).

Rivers and Temporally (1978, p.102) describe English ling’s the translation process in an EFL setting as “The production of an acceptable translation into English is for students a means for developing sensitivity to the meanings expressed in a stretch of discourse in one’s own language and to the different linguistic mechanisms used by the two languages to convey these meanings.” In the translation process, students need to think from the meaning to the words, letting their thought shape the Language (Duff, 1981).

According to Swain and Lapkin (1995), during translation task, the incidence of focus on form will be more than other tasks. Translation tasks help learners to approximate target language models by pinpointing the organizational variations of the two languages (Hyland, 2003).

Duff (1989, p. 7) summarizes succinctly that “Translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: flexibility, accuracy, and clarity. It trains the leaner to search for the most appropriate words to convey what is meant.

Learners also typically employ their L1 in learning an L2, most noticeably in the consistently high usage of bilingual dictionaries (Schmitt, 1997). They also strongly believe that translating helps them to acquire English language skills, such as listening, writing, and particularly words, idioms, and phrases (Liao, 2006). But perhaps the best evidence for L1 influence comes from psycholinguistic studies, which demonstrate that the L1 is active during L2 lexical processing in both beginning and more-advanced learners (Hall, 2002; Kroll, 1993).

Translation process requires problem identification, linguistic analysis, storage, retrieval of information, general search and selection, text inference and reasoning. (Gerloff, 1997). Using the L1 to facilitate the form-meaning input association (by providing an easy access to meaning) may allow more cognitive resources to be focused on form (Barcroft, 2002).
Translation can be considered as an option for pragmatic awareness-raising and collaboration. Having such an attitude toward translation task, House (2008) asserts that "it is high time I believe that the dominance of monolingual practices in language teaching is overcome, and contrastive, transactional techniques should be adopted to enrich the repertoire of pragmatic teaching ".(p.135). It and it is through translations that linguistic and cultural barriers can be overcome, her idea, as she mentions, lies in her own theory of translation, which is based on corpus linguistics and discourse. In other words, translations should involve both semantic and functional equivalence. She believes that, "Listening and context of situation are not really separate the context of situation in which the text unfolds is encapsulated in the text through an inextricable connection between the social environment and the functional organization of language" (p. 138).

Human communication in many fields like science, technology, commerce, culture and literature depends heavily on translation (El- Dali, 2011). Translation task seems to have both features of consciousness-raising tasks; (CRT) hence, it can be considered as a kind of consciousness-raising tasks. First, in a translation task, the language itself is the content, and second, attention to the target language form is inevitable.

Ellis (2011) believes that translation task is definitely a kind of C-R task since 1980, there have been a number of studies involving the investigation of listening comprehension strategies used by FL/L2 learners. With regard to ESL listening, Conrad (1985) found that as L2 listeners increased in proficiency, they relied more on contextual semantic cues than on syntactic or phonological cues. Murphy’s study (1985) indicated that more proficient listeners tended to have an open and flexible use of Strategies, while less proficient listeners most frequently had a dependence on the text and a consistent use of paraphrase. O'Malley (1989) found that effective listeners use more self-monitoring, elaboration, and inference.

As for the study of EFL listening comprehension strategies, Rost and Ross (2001) used EFL students at three different colleges in Japan. Results showed that beginning Listeners had a persistent pattern of asking for repeat ion, rephrasing or simplification, whereas more advanced listeners asked questions using information already given in the story and used backchannel communication.

Hung and Naeser (1987) examined the learning strategies in oral communication used by EFL learners in China. They found that functional practice was the strategy that distinguished successful EFL learners ones, and successful learners more often employed. First, they found that more subjects used top-down approach than bottom-up approach in EFL listening comprehension. There is no striking difference in learner strategies between listening in a classroom situation and in a natural situation. Good listeners and poor listeners are similar in terms of listening strategies (Ket6, 1996) asked subjects to summarize their weakly self-selected listening activities and comment of their listening skills. Results indicated that students made exciting discoveries about their own listening strategies and more easily observed various listening comprehension factors most often used by subjects included asking Speakers for repetition or paraphrasing, trying to understand each word, self-questioning for comprehension, and checking comprehension. Finally, Chen (1997), by using think aloud procedures, identified five effective strategies patterns employed by EFL listeners. They included text oriented, learner oriented, exploring and testifying, wait and see, and word hooking.

There are also a few studies examining listening comprehension on strategies on foreign languages other than English. For example, Laviosa (1991) looked at Italian, De Fillipis (1980) and Vandergrift (2005) studied French, and Bacon (1992) and Vogely (1995) investigated Spanish. No matter what the language is, all these researchers came to the same results on using listening strategies by language learners.

3. Translation in Language Teaching

As the main purpose of task-based language teaching is to provide language learners with opportunities for authentic communication, L1 use has strongly been rejected by some (e.g. Haldey, 2001; Lee & Van Patten, 2000; Skahan, 1996). However, in some recent studies its use has been justified for several reasons (Anton DiCamilla, 1996; Cook, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Anton and DE Camilla (1998) view L1 as a psycholinguistic tool and cognitive support, helping learners to analyze language with more ease. They also refer to maintaining interest in the task and
developing strategies to facilitate performing difficult tasks.

Cook (as cited in Scott & La Fuente, 2008, p. 100), without referring to translation task, sets forward that "L1 and L2 coexist collaboration in the learner...and L2 learners should be viewed as multi-competent language users rather than deficient L2 users when compared to native speakers". He also argues that in TBLT "through L1, the students may explain the task to each other, negotiate the roles they are going to take and check their understanding or production of language against their peers" (p.118).

White (1987) emphasized that it is comprehension difficulties that provide learners with the negative feedback that is necessary for L2 acquisition. Analyses of classroom, mother-child, and native speaker and non-native speakers (NS) to NNS interactions demonstrate how conversation partners scaffold the acquisition of novel vocabulary and other constructions by focusing on perceptual features or shades of meaning and their corresponding linguistic form (Ellis, 2000; Cass, 1997; Long, 1993; Oliver, 1995).

Translation task, as a complex cross-linguistic activity, is expected to be effective in promoting EFL learners' pragmatic competence and their ability to understand the pragmatic contrasts between their native and target languages (House, 2008). Anton and De Camilla (1996) view L1 as a psycholinguistic tool and cognitive support, helping learners to analyze language with more ease. Learners especially at the intermediate and lower levels they resort to L1 in their private speech; similarly.

When L1 and L2 provide contrasting interpretations of a given structure, stronger L1 patterns will typically dominate in comprehension. This means that learners will attempt to understand L2 information in terms of L1 structures, such as word order patterns or agreement structures (McDonald, 1987). In production, this means that learners will produce sentences in L2 that have a L1 syntactic accent. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) suggest that there is a relationship between one's own and new language which lies at the heart of encountering a new language, rather than the new language being regarded in isolation, and that a better metaphor for what happens should be participation rather. Translation would see to be the prime candidate for fostering a sense of that relationship. According to Gass and Selinker (2008), language learners work more to understand the properties of syntax and phonology and less to understand discourse.

Pragmatics and vocabulary" (p. 485).

According to Ellis (2004), focused and unfocused tasks are the two general types of tasks. Focused tasks are designed to induce learners to use specific linguistic forms as well as using language communicatively while the only function of unfocused tasks is communicative language use. Since focusing on linguistic forms is inevitable in a translation task, it is more focused than unfocused. In focused tasks, teachers provide the learners with opportunities to use specific linguistic features under real operating conditions, yet the major problem of designing such tasks is ensuring learners' use of the forms, as Ellis (2004) says, "this is because the learners can always use communication strategies to get round using the targeted feature" (p.17).

House (2005) explained the relationship between the mount of L1 use, and the quality of student's reading. In her opinion, the development of L1 supports the development of the second language. She focuses on reading translation, and has categorized translation into two sort's of overt and covert translation. In the overt, the readers know it is a translation, but in covert translation the reader is not mindful of reading a translation.

The attention to pedagogy value of translation tasks in L2 acquisition can be justified with regard to several reasons. First, this option is available in most ESL and EFL contexts (Bruton, 2007). Second, the learners can use their previously learnt linguistic resources (Uzawa, 1996). Third, as mentioned by Swain and Lapkin (1995), during translation task the incidence of focus on form will be more than other tasks. Finally, translation tasks help learners to approximate target language models by pinpointing the organizational variations of the two languages (Hyland, 2003).

According to Sarsara (2007), there is a big difference between treating as a language foreign language and having it as a medium of instruction at school. If we are teaching our students math and
physics which most of the students find them difficult, it would be better to teach them in their mother tongue because students will understand better since there will be no language barriers that might hinder their comprehension.

The class collaboration on L1-L2 translation tasks can help students to write in foreign language, and it has an important function that can facilitate language learning, so translation can be a useful tool to develop reading ability (Cook, 2010).

According to House (2008), translation should involve both semantic and functional equivalence. She says, “Translation plays a very crucial role in developing both reading and writing abilities, so it can increase the learner’s motivation” (p.141).

According to Gass and Selinker (2008, p.485), “language learners work more to understand the properties of syntax and phonology and less to understand discourse, pragmatics and vocabulary”. The most influential factor of this stage, as they assert, is the learners’ prior linguistic knowledge including the knowledge of their native language.

Carless (2012) explained recent research has shown that teachers view the use of L1 in the L2 classroom more positively, seeing some use of the L1 as a constructive tool in teaching and class management.

4. Theories of Collaborative Learning

A theory of collaborative learning concerns these four items: criteria for defining the situation (symmetry, degree of division of labor), the interactions (e.g. symmetry, negotiability), processes (grounding, mutual modeling) and effects. The main theories (socio-cognitive, socio-cultural) cover the four aspects while more local theoretical contributions (e.g. the self-explanation effect) cover a specific aspect. The key for understanding collaborative learning is in the relations between those four items. At a first glance, the situation generates interactions patterns: these interactions trigger cognitive mechanisms which in turn generate cognitive effects. However, such a linear causality is a simplification. Most relations are reciprocal.

- There is a bi-directional link between the situation and the interactions: on one hand, the situation defines the conditions in which some interactions are likely to occur, but on the other hand, some situations are labeled ‘collaborative’ because the interactions which did occur between members were collaborative.

- There is a bi-directional link between the interactions and the processes, as illustrated above by the relationship between synchronicity and mutual modeling: I needed to refer to cognitive process (mutual modeling) in order to define a feature of interaction (synchronicity) beyond simple technical terms.

- There is a bi-directional link between the processes and the effects of collaborative learning. In principle, the processes generate the effects. However, some processes are described by the effects, such as 'internalization'. Conversely, some effects are expressed in terms of group processes, such as the ability to work in group. This ambiguity is not specific to the field of collaborative learning: for instance induction can be viewed as a process by a psychologist while it might be viewed as the output of complex chemical processes by a neurophysiologist.

- This ambiguity also concerns the distributed cognition theory, where the very idea of viewing the group as a unit can both be understood as a theoretical standpoint (group interactions being described as cognitive processes) or can be understood as the description of an effect or an achievement (Dillenbourg, 1999).

4.1 Elements of Cooperative Learning

In general, there are five major factors that define cooperative learning and make cooperative learning successful: -to-Face interaction

□ Face
Individual accountability

Teaching of social skills

Quality of group processing

These five elements form the ‘five pillars’ of cooperative teaching (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991) which use as their basis for utilizing such practices in the college Classroom. This five pillars approach seeks to provide a complete model for implementing educational change (Vcsmr & Rao, 2013).

4.2 The Cooperative Learning Process

Issues of choice, collaboration and personal visibility are built-in elements that all participants will inevitably face on a program me or event working within the peer learning model. From the outset, participants begin negotiating and collaborating over issues of content, management and the style and method used in the program me. These three important inter-related strands in the peer learning process, and therefore, and need emphasis and understanding.

Visibility: peer learning depends upon individual participation - participation in identifying and expressing one’s own learning needs, preferences for what is to be done when and what topics shall be covered, and who will be worked with and so on. It puts a high level of commitment upon the individual participating to ‘show’ themselves to others in a way that is unfamiliar to many.

Individuals must first become visible to themselves through others. They must find what it is like to hold their own space, become recognized and acknowledged by their colleagues, as well as become willing to engage in and with the differences that are inevitably revealed.

The opening round, the coming together of the community, is an example of how a peer learning community can encourage visibility amongst its members. In this round, the individual has the opportunity to speak at whatever point they choose, say as much or as little as they like, reveal as much or as little of their own process consistent with the overall purpose of ‘getting here’, all with the clear understanding that they will not be challenged or opposed. It becomes a space of revelation and learning in its own right for a good many participants. Through the use of this space they begin to learn how to hold themselves before others in a way that is centered and grounded (Taylor, 1999).

Choice is fundamental to a peer learning process. Individuals are making choices throughout a program me, about what, when, who. It is through the examination of choices and how they influence their opportunities that many participants begin to recognize that they only choose at a very rudimentary level. In short, it is a form of sub autonomous choice. It is based on conventional notions of politeness, expectation and adaptation rather than on surfacing, expressing and negotiating the individual’s felt needs (Taylor, 1999). According to Talyor (1999), choosing can be based on a deep recognition of individual needs and preferences, and can be held with an openness and willingness to revise choices in the light of the information that is revealed as others declare their choices. Choosing in this open and dynamic fashion can be a prolonged and existential activity that reveals all kinds of insecurities, fears and distresses. These are frequently based on past rejections, past avoidance and the consequences of having been willing to show oneself and being ‘put down’, or worse, in the past. Healing such misconceptions, correcting the view that such hurt is inevitable, challenging the notion that choice is somehow not an acceptable activity because their sensitivities might (indeed will) get awakened, is a major issue in the choice of skills groups and other working arrangements.

Collaboration inevitably depends upon the degree to which a person can manage working with the preconditions of visibility and choice. Unless a peer group actively seeks to examine its own life, it quickly, like any other group, develops recognized formations of pairings and sub-groupings. This results in foreshortening creativity and experimentation, reducing opportunities for group members to engage with each other and begins to replicate the features of group life in more traditional meetings.

If one is unwilling to make himself visible, will not work with his choices, and leaves it to others, then collaboration – the dynamic of engagement – is impossible. Collaboration is not the same as majority voting. Usually, the majority is only some cobbled together collusive assembly of un-worked
out preferences that is motivated more by getting the process over with than by engaging with what results it will bring about.

Collaboration is arduous. It involves surfacing the implications of preferences, checking out the likely results of proposed arrangements, inviting people to reconsider (at the most fundamental level) whether their current position is indeed really expressing a choice.

As Taylor (1999) points out, all this is part of collaboration and peers can learn to engage with it strongly and with skill. Collaboration takes time but when people work strongly together, though they do not all get all their needs met all the time, they all know that their needs have been recognized and taken into account in the process that is agreed, and a process is not agreed until it is agreed by all. It is this combination of visibility, choice and collaboration upon which the life of a peer learning group depends for the degree of challenge and learning that it achieves for its members.

4.3 Use of Cooperative Learning Processes and Classroom Structure

The project intended to change the classroom structure and learning environment in classes to make it more developmentally appropriate by using cooperative learning structures and processes. Research has shown that cooperative learning can have a significant positive effect on students' achievement, attitudes and social relations particularly if it includes both group goals and individual accountability (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1983). Group goals give students a season to cooperate or share their ideas. Individual accountability makes all students responsible for learning and reduces the potential for students to rely on others in the group to do the work (Slavin, 1983). When the two elements are combined, it creates a structure that fosters positive interdependence where students rely on and help one another, which increases achievement, productivity, and attitudes toward others (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Cooperative learning also makes learning processes more active as students discuss tasks with one another. It provides advantages by having students model complex processes and giving feedback to one another. As students interact, they internalize the strategies and processes needed to construct meaning (Stevens, 1994). During cooperative dialogue, students provide elaborative explanations to one another that give them a deeper understanding of what has been taught (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

Finally, cooperative learning builds student responsibility for their own learning and gives them a greater sense of input into or control of their education (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Cooperative learning structures encourage all students to succeed through collaborating to achieve a goal based on effective and mastery, rather than through competition. The structure gives all students an opportunity to participate and feel successful which in turn has a positive impact on students' perceived competence and self-efficacy (Schunk, cited in Stevens, 2003).

4.4 The Methodology of Task-Based Teaching

Course design is concerned with the selection and sequencing of content-the 'what' of teaching. As such, it contrasts with 'methodology', which addresses the 'how' of teaching. Together, 'course design' and 'methodology' comprise the language curriculum. It has been suggested, however, that the distinction between 'design' and 'methodology' is not relevant in task-based teaching. Nunan (1989) argued that in this kind of teaching the focus shifts from 'the outcomes of instruction' (i.e. the linguistic knowledge or skills to be mastered towards the 'processes of learning') i.e. what learners need to do in order to learn. Thus, Nunan claimed, the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching are merged. Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (1993) argued that “methodology becomes the central tenet of task-based pedagogy” (p. 73) since the goal is to allow learners to navigate their own paths and routes to learning. However, these arguments ignore the fact that a task-based curriculum still involves making decisions about content (i.e. what tasks to include in the syllabus) and methodology (i.e. how the tasks will be used in the classroom).

Thus, it is important to maintain the distinction in discussions of task-based teaching (Ellis, 2005).
4.5 Task-Based language Teaching (TBLT)

Van den Branden (2006) points out that the marriage of meaning and form constitutes one of the key features of TBLT: Muranoi (2000) believes that learning the functions of any learned piece of language plus its form plays an important role in learning the target language. The syllabus seems rather uncertain for some time after the emergence of CLT, there is also wide acceptance that a focus on form has in the classroom (Nunan, 2004). It is accepted that grammar is a necessary resource in making meaning (Halliday,1992; Hammond & Darewianka,2001). Nunan (2004) states that “at present, debate centers on the extent to which a grammar syllabus should be embedded in the curriculum, some arguing that a focus on form should be an incidental activity in the communicative classroom” (p.9).

Much of the recent literature on task-based language teaching explores how focus on form can optimally be integrated into task-based classroom but the question is whether this should be “accomplished implicitly or explicitly, during task performance, before or after it, and so on” (Van den Branden, 2006, p.9).

The use of task repetition as an immediate post-task activity to focus attention on form can be an effective way to draw learners’ attention on form when using a task-based approach (Hawkes, 2012, p.329). It is mainly based on Bygate’s (1996) early study which showed the evidence of enhanced performance in task repetition in terms of grammatical complexity, range, and lexis. Goh and Burns (2012) hold that there are various ways for repetition and propose a stage for focusing on language, discourse, skills, strategies between first speaking and second speaking tasks (task repetition) in the teaching speaking cycle. They also note that by repeating especially speaking task “learners have had a chance to analyze and practice selected language items or skills during the stage for focusing on language and therefore, have been able to apply this knowledge in order to enhance their performance” (p.160).

As Bygate (1996) suggests, "previous experience of a specific task aids speakers to shift their attention from processing the message content to working on formulations of the message “(p.144). Hawkes (2012) in his study indicates that a shift of attention toward form takes place when learners repeat a task. Therefore, his study is meaningful in terms of task repetition as an influential way to direct learners’ attention from meaning to form. This study supports "the argument that a strong version of TBLT with no focus on form may not be enough for interlanguage development” (p.335).

Willis (cited in Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2012) proposes a cycle in task-based teaching: The first stage is an introduction to both topic and task, in which the teacher helps learners understand the goals of the task. For Bowen (2004), in this stage, students participate in activities that either help them remember words or phrase which might be useful during task performance. The teacher encourages learners without correcting them.

In third stage, called planning, learners spend some time on integrating spoken or written form on what they did and conclusions they reached. If required, the teacher can help learners to use language, emphasizing ability to the following points: a) language which students were able to use but they did not use, b) language they used but not as accurate as they should have, c) any other language relevant to the topic and task which the teacher deems important and desires to focus on. This stage could contain drills, dialogues or common activities from the practice stage of presentation, practice, and production in all cases, the goal is to draw learners’ attention to key language items. The final stage is the parallel task in which the students have a chance to cover the task again, but with various material which will necessitate the same kinds of language.

4.6 Learning through Task-focused Interaction

The integration of listening and speaking emphasizes active listening with the listener negotiating and shaping the spoken message. Part of the skill of listening is learning how to take an active role in providing feedback to the speaker (Brown, 1986). This feedback may involve pointing out problems with the comprehensibility of the message and specifying where the problem lies. This feedback and questioning is called negotiation (Nation & Newton, 2009).

One of the main ways that negotiation helps the listener learn is by clarifying unknown items. As Long
(1996) claims,

. . . tasks that stimulate negotiation for meaning may turn out to be one among several useful language-learning situations, in or out of classrooms, for they may be one of the easiest ways to facilitate a learner’s focus on form without losing sight of a lesson’s (or conversation's) predominant focus on meaning (p. 454). Negotiation also plays other roles in assisting language development, such as the following which are based on Long's detailed discussion of interaction (Long, 1996, p. 445-454). Negotiation:

- makes input understandable without simplifying it, so that learnable language features are retained
- breaks the input into smaller digestible pieces
- raises awareness of formal features of the input
- gives learners opportunities for direct learning of new forms
- provides a "scaffold" within which learners can produce increasingly complex

Utterances

3. Research Questions & Research Hypotheses

The study attempts to answer the following questions:
1) Does collaborative translation have any role in the development of Iranian Students listening comprehension at the low-intermediate level?
2) What is the Learners’ Iranian EFL students’ attitude toward using CTT in listening classes?

4. Methods

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 45 female students in a language institute in Kazeroon. They were selected based on availability sampling. All participants ranged between 16-25 years in age. They all were native speakers of Persian English. They formed two groups randomly as control and experimental.

4.2 Instrument

To collect the necessary data for this study, three instruments were utilized. First of all, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used choosing low-intermediate group in listening classes. The second was a listening test used before and after the instruction. The Third instrument was an interview to identify the attitudes of students about translation task effectiveness in listening comprehension improvements.

In this study, the quick placement test by Oxford University Press Examinations was used as a widely recognized reliable and valid test which has been pretested and validated by more than 19,000 students in 6 countries (Oxford Online Placement Test) to determine proficiency levels of university participants. The quick placement test has 60 multiple-choice items, each worth’s one point. It is divided into two parts: part one (Questions 1-40) and part two (Questions 41-60). Items 1-40 check reading comprehension, and in the second part, the students’ knowledge of English, vocabulary, structure and reading comprehension are examined. Students must mark one letter A, B or C on their answer sheet.

A test has been chosen from the book named Tactics for listening so as to be used as pre and post test. And to determine its standardization, it was piloted and its reliability was .78

4.3 Data Collection Procedures

First, an OPT was run and 45 low-intermediate students were selected. Then, the participants of the two groups listened to some tracks as pre-test. The purpose of using the pre-test was first to see if the participants were homogeneous in listening ability and then to see how much the students will improve. After that, each group received a different instruction in listening comprehension. I in the control group, the students did not translate the texts. They just listened to the listening tracks and answered the related Comprehension questions. Each session lasted about 20
In the Experimental group, after listening to the audio materials, the students translated it collaboratively. This was performed in 8 sessions: once a week for two months. Finally, a post-test of listening was given to both the control and experimental groups.

the audio materials, the students translated it collaboratively. This was performed in 8 sessions: once a week for two months. Finally, a post-test of listening was given to both the control and experimental groups.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures
The data was entered and analyzed using the SPSS version 22 as the Statistical analysis software. The major statistical procedures used were independent and paired samples t-tests because the researcher wanted to know whether there is any difference between the listening performance test is usually used to compare the scores of two different groups of subjects or not. As a T-test is usually used to compare the scores of two different groups of subjects finally, students participated in an interview during which the teacher asked them some questions about their feelings of different teaching and learning listening strategies and tasks.

5. Results & Discussion
In order to place the participants in low-intermediate group, the participants took Oxford placement test. 45 participants, who were at the low-intermediate level of proficiency, were selected from among 60 EFL students based on their proficiency test scores by considering one standard deviation above and below the mean. Those whose scores were 32 or lower were in the ‘low-intermediate’ group. Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants’ proficiency test scores.

Table 6.2
Descriptive Statistics on Listening Pre-test Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.1667</td>
<td>1.33945</td>
<td>.31571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.9074</td>
<td>1.63928</td>
<td>.31356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Table
Descriptive Statistics on OPT Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34.70</td>
<td>2.799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, low-intermediate participants were divided into two groups of control and experimental. In order to be sure that there is not any significant difference among two groups of participants regarding their listening proficiency, a listening pre-test was administered. Table 6.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants’ listening pre-test scores.

According to Table 6.2, the mean scores of two groups of control and experimental in listening pre-test are 16.1667 and 16.9074 respectively which are approximately the same.
The obtained data were analyzed through an Independent Samples t-test, the results of which are shown in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3**

Independent Samples for Listening Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Diff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Equal variances</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>-1.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>40.997</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results of Independent Sample t-test in Table 6.3, there is not a significant difference between two groups of participants regarding their listening comprehension \( p > 0.05 \).

**5.1.1 The First Research Question**

The first research question was: Does Collaborative Translation Task (CTT) improve *Iranian low-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension*?

To answer the first research question, a paired sample t-test was run to see if there was any significant difference in the listening scores of pretest and posttest of participants in control group. Table 4.4 shows the descriptive statistics of paired sample t-test for the first group of participants.

**Table 6.4**

Descriptive Statistics for Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test scores of Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Mean</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>16.9907</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.34537</td>
<td>.32619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>16.7639</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.69877</td>
<td>.40040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 6.4, the mean scores of the pre-test and post test in control group were approximately the same, and there is not a significant difference between them.

Table 6.5 shows the results of descriptive statistics of pre and post-test scores of experimental group.
According to Table 6.5, the significance level is bigger than 0.05 (t = -411, p = .686), so it can be concluded that the listening improvement measurement in the control group has not shown an increase. Table 4.6 shows the results of descriptive statistics of pre and post-test scores of experimental group.

Table 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Err</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>16.4048</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.71296</td>
<td>.37380</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.2619</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.68908</td>
<td>.3685</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 6.6, the mean score of the pre-test and post-test in experimental group were not the same, and there is a significant difference between them. Table 6.7 showed the results of the paired sample t-test for the second group of participants' listening scores.

Table 6.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Err</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>1.65562</td>
<td>36129</td>
<td>-0.10351</td>
<td>-1.61077</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.85714</td>
<td>1.16520</td>
<td>.36129</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 5.7 shows, the mean score for the experimental group, in the post-test is bigger than the pre-test, and significance level is smaller than 0.05 = -.411, p = .028). It can be concluded that the listening improvement measurement in the experimental group has shown a significant increase.
According to Table 6.8, the mean score of experimental group (17.2619) is higher than the mean score of the control group (16.7639). In order to see whether this difference between the mean score of two groups of participants is statistically significant or not, an Independent Samples t-Test was conducted. Table 6.9 shows the results of Independent Samples t-test for two groups of participants.

As the results of the Independent Samples t-test indicates, the difference between the listening post-test scores of two groups of participants did not reach significance, as p>0.05. The values obtained for the F and p values showed that the two groups of participants achieved equally.

6. Discussion

In this part, results are discussed and compared to the results of the previous studies. The results of the first research question stated that Collaborative Translation Task (CTT) improved Iranian low-intermediate EFL learner’s listening comprehension.

Contrary to previous research by Guthrie (1984) and Macaro (2001) who did not find any correlation between the students’ Spanish and English use with that of their translations this study found a strong role first language use could have with the students’ English achievement. This finding supports those who promote exclusive use of the L1 in the classroom due to what many perceive as the detrimental effect of L1 in the FL classroom.

Cook (2001) argued that the first language should be avoided in the classroom by teachers and students. His justification for this rested on a doubtful analogy with first language acquisition. He reported that the L1 has already been used in alternating language methods and in methods that actively create
links between L1 and L2, such as, Community Language Learning, He believed that treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up several ways to use it, such as for teachers to convey meaning, explain grammar, and organize the class, and for students to use as part of their collaborative learning and individual strategy use. The first language also can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users.

The results of the present research are in line with the study of Miles (2004). He investigated the use of L1 in the English language classroom. The experiment actually involved two different experiments. In the first, three low-level first-year university classes were compared. One class did not permit the use of L1 in the classroom, while another did permit it, and the third actually utilized L1. The results showed that in the class where L1 was utilized, the students showed a significantly higher improvement in the area of speaking. The reason suggested here was that confidence was the determining factor, and that L1 use helped to foster this confidence.

The results are not in line with the study of Thompson (2006). He found that the amount of L1 use by either teachers or students did not adversely influence the students' gain scores on the listening exam. The researcher studied sixteen first- and second-year classes over the course of three observations. Additionally, over 500 students participated in a pre-and post-listening test as well as a survey regarding in a pre- and post-listening test as well as a of L1 and TL in use in the classroom and beliefs about language use. The results showed that while there was a strong positive correlation between instructors’ use of the L1 and the students’ use of the L1, this did not adversely affect the listening gains in the classroom. Also, it was found that both the students and the instructors were able with a high degree of accuracy to predict the L1 and TL of the instructors in the classroom.

The results of the study confirmed the effectiveness of translation task, as suggested by House (2008) and Cook (2001), in developing writing performance, and pragmatic knowledge.

The study of Kargar, Sadighi and Ahmadi (2012) attempted to explore the effectiveness of collaborative translation tasks and two structured input tasks with and without explicit instruction on the production of pragmatic utterances by low-intermediate EFL learners. The participants of the present research were one hundred and fifty university learners in four experimental groups and one control group participated in pre-tests, post-tests and two month follow ups consisting of open-ended discourse completion tasks (OPDCT), mobile short message tasks (MSMT) and telephone conversation tasks (TCT). The results of the study indicated the two Collaborative Translation Task (CTT) groups showed better retention of pragmatic knowledge. It was concluded that collaborative translation may result in deeper processing of both pragma linguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge leading to more appropriate pragmatic production.

In supporting the present research findings, House (2008) asserts that "it is high time I believe that the dominance of monolingual practices in language teaching is overcome, and contrastive, transactional techniques be adopted to enrich the repertoire of teaching...and it is through translations that linguistic and cultural barriers can be overcome" (p.135).

The results also are in line with the study of Afzal (2013). He indicated that the mother tongue was used by the majority of teachers investigated, and both students and teachers responded positively toward its use. The teachers participating in the study indicated that the translation of some words, complex ideas, or even whole passages was a good way to learn a foreign language. According to Afzal, without translation, learners would be likely to make unguided and often incorrect translations. This study also revealed that in the EFL classes observed Persian played only a supportive and facilitating role. The chief medium of communication in the class was still English. As with any other classroom technique, the use of the mother tongue was only a means to the end of improving foreign language proficiency. The study of Farhangi, Kargar and Sorahi (2015) examined the effect of collaborative translation tasks (CTT) on developing EFL learners' writing. They found that the use of translation seemed to influence the affective and cognitive conditions in the writing performance. Similarly students in the Non-translation group did associate improvements in their writing without using translation, only by explicit teaching. The difference between scores in pre and post-test in experimental group was significant because they used their mother tongue in their English class.

Generally listening, the same achievement of two groups of participants may be due to some disadvantages of collaborative tasks as Despite these benefits, collaborative translation can involve some
disadvantages including the lack of participation of some team members and the dominant attitude of some members, especially self-confident) ones. Also, there is a tendency in which weak students usually benefit from the most advanced ones, whilst the opposite rarely occurs. Further, more sometimes students find it difficult to trust the other team members, since some of them prefer to work individually and are not motivated to work as a team. Misunderstandings may occur with some team members, which may result in only some students carrying out the task assigned to the whole team. Klimkowski (2006) claims that inappropriate teamwork performance may cause difficulties in coordinating the project and attaining the planned goals.

The findings of the second research question stated that learner’s had positive attitudes toward using CTT in listening.

The results indicated that the participants were generally receptive to the CTT and believed that the tasks were useful to benefit the new knowledge about the language. Their replies showed that the tasks were useful learning tools. They stated that they were able to understand and comprehend the listening input that they had learnt as a result of having completed the tasks.

In contrast to previous studies, Auerbach (1993, p. 19) summarized her conclusion on the use of L1 in English classroom in the following way: "Starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English."

The students in the present study were highly motivated to learn English. Few of them felt that English was imposed on them or regarded the use of English as a threat to their identity. Among participants, some learners expressed that they had many difficulties with listening skill and did not understand anything before the treatment.

Some students stated that the atmosphere in CTT class was so easy and comfortable. This help learners reduce their anxiety and increase their motivation. They explained that collaborative translation task could help uncomfortable learners to overcome to their unpleasant emotions, stress and anxiety and participate in the group tasks to develop their listening skill.

Other learners said that it could enable them to examine and look for the elements in first and second languages. Yet, some of participants expressed that the use of translation was not acceptable and right in English classes. Hopkins (1988) states, "One's sense of identity as an individual is inextricably bound up within one's native language.... If the learner of a second language is encouraged to ignore his/her native language, he/she might well feel his/her identity threatened" (p.18).

The results of the second research question are in line with the study of Karimi and Talebinejad (2012). They stated that the language learners use a wide variety of learning strategies concerning their mother tongue to comprehend and remember, and they have positive views toward the use of L1 in their classroom because in their opinion, it will increase the development of L2 gradually, and it enables them to compare the new language knowledge with the existing knowledge of their L1.

In supporting the research findings, Steven Krashen (1989), with his Natural Approach to language acquisition, proposed that students learn their second language much in the same way that they learn their first, and that L2 is best learned through massive amounts of exposure to the language with limited time spent using L1 (Tang, 2002).

Farhangi, Kargar and Sorahi (2015) reported that the majority of participants in their study had a positive view toward using the CTT in their English classes because they got familiar with necessary cohesive devices and grammar points, which are necessary in writing. Participants first wrote in their mother tongue, then changed it into English in their mind, and next wrote it down.

The study of Timor (2012) was on the question of whether or not the first language should be brought back from to use. It aimed at the examination of English teachers' attitudes and ways of implementation with regard to the use of Hebrew as the Mother Tongue (MT) in EFL teaching in elementary and secondary schools. This was done by conducting a study among EFL teachers and presenting their attitudes and practical implementation regarding the use of Hebrew as the MT in class. Findings demonstrated that teachers’ attitudes were positive, and most of them saw the benefit of using the MT in EFL teaching. These findings supported Cook’s (2001) criterion of "learning", indicating that teachers’ attitudes may derive from their experience that the introduction of the MT in EFL classes enhances learning. The results can be explained by the fact that translation emphasizes on the linguistic Competence of the learners, so it enables teachers to improve the students’ listening skill. House
(2005) and Cook (2010) emphasized the role of the teachers in promoting Students' learning through CTT. In collaborative translation task, teachers act as monitors or facilitators, and encourage their students to perform the activities. The method is based on the belief that students can learn more effectively when their mind are focused on the task in collaboration, rather than on the language they are using.

According to Gass and Selinker (2008) language learners ‘work’ more to understand the properties of syntax and phonology and less to understand discourse, pragmatics and vocabulary (p. 485). The most influential factor of this stage, as they assert, is the learners' prior linguistic knowledge including the knowledge of their native language the second question tried to ask students about their attitude toward using this method in their English class. The analysis of the results of the second research question their class showed that the students have positive view toward using translation in. After post-test, the majority of them explained that they could develop their listening ability during the term because they and Also got familiar with some necessary grammar points. Finally as a whole, they learned how to listen English. In their opinion, it can also help them to increase their motivation, and decrease their stress. In CTT class, the atmosphere is comfortable, cooperative and non-threatening. Consequently, less confident students benefit from the core activity so much that all the psychological barriers such as stress, anxiety and fear are put away. Furthermore, the students can improve their speaking ability.

According to Karimi Talebinejad’ study (2012), the language learners used a wide variety of learning strategies concerning their mother tongue to comprehend and remember as well as produce English, and they have positive view toward the use of L1 in their classroom because in their opinion it will increase the development of L2 gradually and enable them to compare the new language knowledge with the existing knowledge of their L1carless (2012), explained recent students have shown that teachers view the use of L1 in the L2 classroom more positively, seeing some use of the L1 as a constructive tool in teaching and class management.

Some students stated that the atmosphere in CTT class was so easy and comfortable. This helps learners reduce their anxiety and increase their motivation. They explained that collaborative translation task could help uncomfortable learners to overcome to their unpleasant emotions, stress and anxiety and participate in the group tasks to develop their listening skill. Other learners said that it could enable them to examine and look for the elements in first and second languages.

7. Conclusion
This research study was designed to determine whether listening teaching with translation in English class for EFL students would promote listening performance, and whether Students have positive or negative attitudes toward using that. Regarding the need for more Principle-based approaches in language teaching, collaborative translation task can be (CTT) Recognized as a conscience- raising task. The results of the study confirmed the Effectiveness of translation and collaboration task, as suggested by House (2008) and Cook (2010), in developing listening performance. For students in the translation group, the use of translation appeared to influence affective and cognitive conditions in their listening performance.

Similarly, students in the non translation group did have improvements in their listening without using translation, but it was insignificant. The difference between scores in the pre and post-test in experimental group was significant. The majority of them had positive views toward using collaborative tasks in their English class. Thus, it can be suggested that using translation along with collaboration in an EFL class remains promising as an educational tool that might enhance the academic listening of foreign language students as well as facilitate the instruction of academic listening.

In the present study, some students stated that the atmosphere in CTT class was so easy and comfortable. This can help learners reduce their anxiety and increase their motivation.

They explained that collaborative translation task could help uncomfortable learners to overcome their unpleasant emotions, stress and anxiety and participate in the group tasks to develop their listening skill. Some other learners said that it could enable them to examine and look for the elements common in first and second languages. Yet, some of participants expressed that the use of translation was not acceptable and right in English classes.

Hopkins (1988) states that an individual sense of identity as an individual is inextricably related to his native language" If the learner of a second language is encouraged to ignore his/her native language, he/she might well feel his/her identity is threatened" (p.18).The results of the second research
questions are in line with the study of Karimi and Talebinejad (2012) as they stated that language learners use a wide variety of learning strategies concerning their mother tongue to comprehend and remember, and they have positive views toward the use of L1 in their classroom because in their opinion, it can increase the development of L2 gradually and enables them to compare the new language knowledge with the existing knowledge of their L1. In supporting the research findings, Krashen (1989), with his Natural Approach to language acquisition, proposed that students learn their second language much in the same way that they learn their first, and L2 is best learned through massive amounts of exposure to the language with some time spent usingL1 (Tang, 2002).

As the conclusion, the findings demonstrated student’s attitudes were positive, and most of them saw the benefit of using translation and collaboration in EFL teaching. These findings supported Cook’s (2001) criterion of learning, indicating that their attitudes may derive from their experience in their mother tongue. It was revealed that EFL students can increase their ability to comprehend the spoken language by the use of collaboration and translation.

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THE EFFECT OF LEXICAL INFERENCING ON THE VOCABULARY LEARNING AND READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
The present study investigates the effect of lexical inferencing on the vocabulary development of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. In addition, this study explores the interaction of gender and inferencing instruction. To achieve this purpose, 62 out of 80 intermediate students were picked based on a proficiency test, then they were assigned to an experimental and a control group. Prior to the treatment, a pre-test was given to both groups. Only the experimental group received the treatment. The control group did not receive any particular treatment. After completing the treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups, and the results were analyzed by applying a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results of the pre-tests and post-tests revealed that students using lexical inferencing yielded better results in the retention of the words. Finally, male learners had better performance when they learned new words via lexical inferencing in comparison to female learners.

KEYWORDS: Intermediate EFL learners, Lexical inferencing, Reading comprehension, Vocabulary strategy, Vocabulary learning.

1. Introduction
Repeatedly it has been acknowledged in vast vocabulary literature that vocabulary plays a crucial role in second or foreign language learning and teaching. Hence, the development of applicable programs that boost vocabulary in learners seems to be inevitable. Despite the acknowledgment of the significance of vocabulary by second/foreign language researchers, and despite the fact that researchers agree that the acquisition of vocabulary is probably the greatest stumbling block in language acquisition, there is no consensus on how vocabulary should be taught. Moreover no one denies the role of vocabulary and vocabulary strategy in reading comprehension. According to Coady & Huckin (1997), a reader who has much vocabulary knowledge can comprehend a text better. Limited lexical knowledge hinders reading and simultaneously, a lack of reading restricts vocabulary growth. A lot of research (Grabe, 1991; Coady & Huckin, 1997; Nation, 1990) has confirmed the relation between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Hence, different techniques and...
skills for vocabulary teaching and learning have been offered. One of the useful strategies is guessing from the context or lexical inferencing which learners can acquire and apply inside and outside classroom (Thornbury, 2002). Guessing an unknown word’s meaning is also called lexical inferencing (Schmitt 2000). In this study these two words are used interchangeably. Lexical inferencing is defined as the process of “making informed guesses as to the meaning of a word in light of all available linguistic clues in combination with the learner’s general knowledge of the world, her awareness of context and her relevant linguistic knowledge” (Haastrup, 1991, p. 197). Via lexical inferencing learners can establish connections between parts of a text when they try to interpret texts. EFL learners can possibly draw the meaning of unknown words using the context in which they appear. (Shangarfam, Ghorbani, Safarpoor, & Maha, 2013). Lexical inferencing can be applied to other skills i.e. reading, speaking, or even listening context, and it may lead to retention of the word form as well as semantic and other lexical information (Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). Nation (1990) contends that while practicing lexical inferencing, students not only pay more attention to the words in context, but also enhance their reading ability. Therefore through large amounts of reading, students can accumulate a lot of vocabulary.

According to Clarke & Nation (1980), the strategy of guessing the meanings of words from context has different advantages. Firstly, this skill allows the learners to learn vocabulary without the assistance of the teacher and learner’s vocabulary can be expanded through extensive reading. Secondly, owing to several encounters with one word in context, learners can enhance their command of the word and its various uses. Thirdly, with the skill of lexical inferencing, learners can continue their reading without stopping to consult a dictionary, which allows them to develop independent thinking regarding which unguessable words need to be looked up in a dictionary. Fourthly, learners are encouraged to summarize the information of the guessed word they get in context before consulting a dictionary. Finally, by using the skill of lexical inferencing, learners can practice seeking information and making predictions of the word in context, which can in turn develop their reading skill.

It could be assumed that Lexical inferencing seems to enhance word learning and retention, through associating old and new text information, based on this view in order for learning to occur, new information should be incorporated into what the learner previously knows. It could be said that this learning would lead to deeper learning, and thus, longer retention of the learned words. According to Richard & Renandy (2002), guessing word meaning from context is a complex and often difficult strategy to carry out successfully. To guess successfully from context, learners need to know 19 out of 20 words in a text. On the other hand, there are three sources of inferencing used by language learners: contextual, intralingual, and interlingual clues. Contextual clues refer to one or two words from the immediate context of new lexicon, the entire sentence context containing new lexical items, or a specific aspect of context beyond the sentence in which the new word may help in global understanding of the whole text. Intralingual clues have to do with the morpho-syntactical and phonological features of the new word in which the learners rely on their general information about phonology, orthography, morphology, word class, and collocations to guess the meaning. Interlingual clues relate to a language other than the second language, e.g., the learners’ first language. Interlingual clues are employed by learners when they rely on their knowledge of their mother tongues or another language they have acquired to infer or guess the meaning of a word in their second language (Haastrup, 1991).

Schmitt (2000) also proposed seven factors that affect inferencing success. These factors are described as follows:

1. The context must be rich enough to offer adequate clues to guess a word’s meaning.
2. Readers are better able to use local clues in proximity to an unknown word than more global clues that are located further away.
3. Learners may mistake an unknown word for one they already know with a similar orthographic (written form) or phonological form (spoken form).
4. Cognates can help guessing from context if they are used discreetly.
5. Background knowledge about the topic and the culture being discussed aids inferencing.
6. Learners need to be skilled in guessing.
7. Guessing a word from context does not mean that it will be remembered.
Despite the fact that the vast majority of research confirms the efficacy of lexical inferencing, some researchers challenge its effectiveness. For example Kelly (1990, cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 262) holds that there is little chance of guessing the correct meaning of the word, if the context support is limited, moreover gussetting from context fails to draw attention to word form and meaning, and hence little learning occurs. Moreover this strategy depends on good reading and listening skills. Hunt (1996) also mentions that in natural reading texts, there are not sufficient contextual clues for learners to guess unknown words. Instead, many contextual clues in more natural reading texts often lead to misinterpretations or confusion. Although this strategy is time consuming and difficult, it still contributes to vocabulary learning, and especially works well for advanced and proficient learners. Several studies have been conducted that back up the effectiveness of this strategy for vocabulary learning.

Shokouhi & Askari (2010) demonstrated that teaching guessing from context has a uniformly positive effect on vocabulary learning. In their study, one hundred male and female students were randomly selected and assigned to context and non-context groups. The context group received a CGS instruction to infer the meaning of low-frequency words while the non-context participants were treated by a direct method. The results indicated that CGS instruction was more effective than the non-context method in improving reading and vocabulary learning.

Zaid (2009) employed two methods for vocabulary instruction to 34 learners of level three in College of Languages and Translation drawing on direct strategy teaching of the individual meanings for a set of unfamiliar words and contextual guessing. The findings of that research indicated that both methods were effective in helping students acquire, retain, and further recall the lexical items instructed. Shangarfam et al., (2013) investigated the comparative effects of lexical translation and lexical inferencing techniques on female intermediate EFL learners’ vocabulary retention. The results of the study revealed that the lexical inferencing group outperformed the lexical translation group on the retention of the lexical items.

As is evident from the literature discussed above, lexical inferencing plays a significant role in vocabulary learning and should not be ignored in teaching and learning vocabulary. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of lexical inferencing on the vocabulary learning of Iranian learners. In addition, this study attempts to make a comparison between male and female learner’s performance in using lexical inferencing.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Questions

The present study intended to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are there differences in English major learners’ reading comprehension and vocabulary recall tests as a result of lexical instruction?

2. Are there differences in male and female English major learners’ reading comprehension and vocabulary recall tests as a result of lexical instruction?

Null Hypothesis: there are no differences in English majors’ reading comprehension and vocabulary recall tests as a result of lexical instruction.

Null Hypothesis: there are no differences in in male and female English major learners’ reading comprehension and vocabulary recall tests as a result of lexical instruction.

2.2 Design

The current study employed a quasi-experimental design. The participants were assigned to an experimental group and a control group. A pre-test and post-test were given to both groups. Only the experimental group received the treatment.

2.3 Instruments

The instruments used are as follows:

1. A TOEFL test was administered to all groups to ensure the homogeneity of the participants.
2. Two researcher-made multiple-choice vocabulary tests and reading comprehension tests (Appendix 1) were devised. They were used as pre-test and post-test to establish the homogeneity of subjects in terms of vocabulary and reading comprehension. To determine their reliability, KR-21 formula was applied.

2.4 Participants

This study comprised 62 learners from two major institutes in Sabzevar, Iran. They were within the age range of 19 to 26. A TOEFL test was administered to all groups to ensure the homogeneity of the participants. Those learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected and then they were assigned to the experimental and control groups.

2.5 Procedure

At the beginning of the research, in order to test the homogeneity of the participants a TOEFL test and a vocabulary and reading comprehension test were administered to all subjects. The vocabulary and reading comprehension items required approximately 45 minutes for completion. Materials for the study were based on the student’s reading course book. The subjects in the experimental group were taught how to use lexical inferencing based on the lexical inferencing format proposed by Clarke & Nation (1980). However this model was slightly modified. Based on this model the students in the experimental group were taught to follow the next steps.

Step 1: Look at the unknown word and decide its part of speech.

Step 2: Look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word. Guess using association or collocation knowledge (i.e. a clue word).

Step 3: Look at the relationship between the clause and sentence containing the unknown word and other sentences or paragraphs. Guess using thematic or world knowledge.

Step 4: Use the knowledge learners have gained from Steps 1-3 to guess the meaning of the word.

Step 5: Check that the guess is correct.

a. Check the part of speech of the word learners guess and the unknown word.

b. Replace the unknown word with the guess.

c. Use prefixes and roots as a guide.

d. Consult the dictionary.

In the first session, after asking the subjects to read the first selected unit in class, the researcher first demonstrated the steps using the word “frontier”, which appeared in the passage. In Step 1, the researcher asked the subjects to read the whole sentence once and then look at the word “frontier” to find out its part of speech. Because the word “frontier” was preceded by “a”, the subjects could respond the word “frontier” was a noun. In the sentence that included the word “frontier”, the subjects were asked to look at preceding words like, ‘area’ based on this word the subjects could guess that “frontier” is related to a limit of place. In Step 3, the researcher asked the subjects to look at the other following words like ‘unexplored’. In Step 4, the students were asked to use the knowledge they had gained from Steps 1-3 to guess the meaning of the word. In the final step, the researcher asked the subjects to replace the word “frontier” with their guess and then to see if the guess was correct. Moreover, the subjects were asked to check the meaning of “frontier” in a dictionary to see if their guess was correct or not.

The subjects in the control group were exposed to the same materials through a regular teaching procedure, they were provided with definitions and synonyms of new words. After completing the treatment sessions, a post-test was administered to both groups. The entire study lasted for 5 weeks.

3. Results and Findings

3.1 Analysis of Pre-Test Results of Vocabulary for Both Groups

In order to ascertain the homogeneity of both groups, a reading and a vocabulary test were administered. The results were analyzed by applying ANOVA. The deceptive statistics of the pre-test is presented in Table 1. As indicated in Table 2, F-observed value is 0.648 at the 15 degree of freedom lower than the significant value 0.
797. Based on these values, there is no significant difference between learners in terms of the vocabulary and reading comprehension in the pre-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>24.9063</td>
<td>5.67029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>24.3438</td>
<td>4.44035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid (listwise)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. One-way ANOVA for the Two Groups’ Performance on the Pre-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>376.519</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.101</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>620.200</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38.762</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>996.719</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.2 Analysis of the Post-Test Results for Both Groups

In order to answer the first question, a One-way ANOVA was run. The results of the one-way ANOVA in Table 3 show that there are significant differences among the performances on the reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. As indicated in table 3, the F-observed value at the 10 degree of freedom is greater than the significant value 0.337. Thus the first hypothesis is rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>25.469</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.547</td>
<td>1.216</td>
<td>0.337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>44.000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.095</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69.469</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.3 Analysis of Research Question Two

To answer the second question, once again an ANOVA was run. The results are displayed in table 4. With regard to the gender difference, the male students benefited more from Lexical instruction. There is significant difference on their performance after instruction. As the results indicate the value of F-observed is 0.872 at the level of 7 degree of freedoms greater than significant value 0.591. It seems that, instruction elevated the males’ performance more significantly on the two tests, rejecting the second null hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>52.000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.200</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>0.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>47.900</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.900</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. One-way ANOVA for the Performance of male and female Learners on the Pre-Test
Table 5. One-way ANOVA for the Performance of Male and Female Learners on the Post-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum Squares</th>
<th>of Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>62.333</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.467</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>69.917</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.653</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132.250</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of lexical inferencing on developing vocabulary and reading comprehension. The two groups were exposed to two different treatments. The quantitative data indicated that lexical inferencing instruction improves the subjects’ vocabulary learning.

Based on the obtained results, it can be stated that the strongest vocabulary gains were experienced by that class which was taught through inferencing. This finding is in line with previous research findings concerning the effect of lexical inferencing on vocabulary learning (Shokouhi & Askari, 2010; Alsewwed, 2005).

As for gender differences, the male learners outperformed the female learners. It is worth mentioning that to date no study has been conducted to compare the performance of males and females in learning vocabulary via lexical inferencing.

The positive impact of lexical inferencing can be attributed to the fact that in lexical inferencing the relationships between words are explored, and thus, more ties among words are made in the lexical knowledge network of the learners hence engaging the learner in deep processing. Establishing such a network in the cognitive repertoire of the learner can lead to stronger comprehension of the texts using the target words. According to Shangarfam et al., (2013), inferencing techniques involve deeper mental processing that is more sophisticated and requires greater cognitive effort than those with shallow processing. Schmitt’s (1997, cited in Shangarfam et al., 2013) argues that deeper processing involves the kind of elaborative mental processing and requires a greater cognitive effort; thus, more mature learners can realize their values.

It should be noted that there are many factors to explain L2 learners’ vocabulary gains and losses with different characteristics; it is possible to conclude from this study that vocabulary is better acquired through inferencing learning activities. The feedbacks from both the instructor and the learners confirm that the learners were interested in the lexical inferencing activities.

The present study has provided several invaluable pedagogical implications. Since apparently most Iranian learners learn vocabulary through traditional ways of vocabulary learning and cannot know how other methods boost vocabulary learning, instructors need to allocate some time to engage students in using an appropriate and useful strategy. Hence, direct instruction of lexical inferencing could be regarded beneficial to English majors in their vocabulary learning. Text-book designers can incorporate the techniques of lexical inferencing in books and provide exercises relevant to this strategy.

Additional research could be conducted to compare the performance of students with different majors, different learning styles, and different reading strategies. In this study, the design of the vocabulary tests and
reading comprehension tests was multiple-choice test; other future studies can use retrospective thinking aloud method.

REFERENCES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The authors would like to thank the students involved in this study.

APPENDIX 1
Reading Pre-Test
1995-2000 Reading Full Test 1995-08

Questions 1-9
Paragraph 1: The ocean bottom - a region nearly 2.5 times greater than the total land area of the Earth - is a vast frontier that even today is largely unexplored and uncharted. Until about a century ago, the deep-ocean floor was completely inaccessible, hidden beneath waters averaging over 3,600 meters deep. Totally without light and subjected to intense pressures hundreds of times greater than at the Earth’s surface, the deep-ocean bottom is a hostile environment to humans, in some ways as forbidding and remote as the void of outer space. Although researchers have taken samples of deep-ocean rocks and sediments for over a century, the first detailed global investigation of the ocean bottom did no actually start until 1968, with the beginning of the National Science Foundation’s Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP). Using techniques first developed for the offshore oil and gas industry, the DSDP’s drill ship, the Glomar Challenger, was able to maintain a steady position on the ocean’s surface and drill in very deep waters, extracting samples of sediments and rock from the ocean floor. The Glomar Challenger completed 96 voyages in a 15-year research program that ended in November 1983. During this time, the vessel logged 600,000 kilometers and took almost 20,000 core samples of seabed sediments and rocks at 624 drilling sites around the world. The Glomar Challenger’s core samples have allowed geologists to reconstruct what the planet looked like hundreds of millions of years ago and to calculate what it will probably look like millions of years in the future. Today, largely on the strength of
evidence gathered during the Glomar Challenger’s voyages, nearly all earth scientists agree on the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift that explain many of the geological processes that shape the Earth.

Paragraph 3: The cores of sediment drilled by the Glomar Challenger have also yielded information critical to understanding the world’s past climates. Deep-ocean sediments provide a climatic record stretching back hundreds of millions of years; because they are largely isolated from the mechanical erosion and the intense chemical and biological activity that rapidly destroy much land-based evidence of past climates. This record has already provided insights into the patterns and causes of past climatic change --- information that may be used to predict future climates.

1. The author refers to the ocean bottom as a “frontier” (underlined in paragraph 1) because it ………. 
(a) is not a popular area for scientific research  
(b) contains a wide variety of life forms  
(c) attracts courageous explorers  
(d) is an unknown territory

2. The word “inaccessible” (underlined in paragraph 1) is closest in meaning to ………. 
(a) unrecognizable  
(b) unreachable  
(c) unusable  
(d) unsafe

3. The author mentions “outer space” (underlined in paragraph 1) because ………. 
(a) The Earth’s climate millions of years ago was similar to conditions in outer space  
(b) It is similar to the ocean floor in being alien to the human environment  
(c) Rock formations in outer space are similar to those found on the ocean floor  
(d) Techniques used by scientists to explore outer space were similar to those used in ocean Exploration

4. Which of the following is true of the Glomar Challenger? 
(a) It is a type of submarine.  
(b) It is an ongoing project.  
(c) It has gone on over 100 voyages.  
(d) It made its first DSDP voyage in 1968.

5. The boldface word “extracting” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to ………. 
(a) breaking  
(b) locating  
(c) removing  
(d) analyzing

6. The deep Sea Drilling Project was significant because it was ………. 
(a) an attempt to find new sources of oil and gas  
(b) the first extensive exploration of the ocean bottom  
(c) composed of geologists form all over the world  
(d) funded entirely by the gas and oil industry

7. The boldface word “strength” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to ………. 
(a) basis  
(b) purpose  
(c) discovery  
(d) endurance

8. The boldface word “they” in paragraph 3 refers to ………. 
(a) years  
(b) climates  
(c) sediments  
(d) cores

9. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage as being a result of the Deep Sea Drilling Project?
(a) Geologists were able to determine the Earth’s appearance hundreds of millions of years ago.

(b) Two geological theories became more widely accepted.

(c) Information was revealed about the Earth’s past climatic changes.

(d) Geologists observed forms of marine life never before seen.
IN SEARCH OF A UNIFIED CONCEPTUALIZATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS’ KNOWLEDGE – BASE: FANTASY OR REALITY?

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ABSTRACT
During the last two decades, the attempts to conceptualize what it is that language teachers need to know to be effective and successful in actual practice have been increased rapidly. Although there is a general consensus on some helpful knowledge areas such as teachers’ proficiency and cultural awareness, the extent to which such knowledge areas are relevant to different educational contexts has remained a controversial issue in the field of teacher education. Key divergences that are not yet resolved are introduced and discussed in this paper.

Key Words: Teacher Education- Knowledge Base

Introduction
Nobody can deny that the prominence of powerful teaching has become more and more important in contemporary society. Standards for learning are now higher than they have ever been before and education is increasingly important to the success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence reveals that among all educational resources—teachers’ abilities are particularly key contributors to students’ learning. Likewise, the demands on teachers are increasing. Teachers need not only be able to keep order and provide useful information to students but also to be increasingly effective in enabling students to learn ever more complex material. Many years ago, teachers were supposed to prepare only a small minority for ambitious intellectual work, whereas they are now believed to prepare almost all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few.

Educational research has had a long history of examining teaching based on student achievement—the so-called process-product research paradigm (Britten, 1985; Erickson, 1986). Under this paradigm, teaching has been studied from an outside observer’s perspective in terms of quantifiable behaviors and activities that are associated with learning outcomes (Freeman, 1996; Richards, 1998; Shulman, 1987). This process-product view of teaching has emphasized the learners’ perspectives and encouraged teachers and teacher educators to focus professional preparation mainly on mechanical skill learning and building (Shulman, 1986; Valli, 1992). According to Shulman (1987), effective teaching has mostly been about the teachers’ management of the classroom (see also Brophy & Good, 1986). Shulman (1992) further argued that given the importance of teaching as “the center of all education and educational reform” (p.14) the process-product view is unhelpful as it is rather partial and incomplete. To fully appreciate the act of teaching, the simplified and mechanical understanding derived from the process-product paradigm needed to be extended by means of including, for instance, the cognitive aspect of teaching (e.g. Erickson, 1986; Shulman, 1992; Valli, 1992) and teacher knowledge is one strand of scholarship in general education that has evolved from the new focus on teacher cognition.

In language teaching, there have been efforts similar to the process-product research. For instance, Moskowitz’s (1976) much cited study has listed characteristics of effective language teachers such as more use of the foreign language, less teacher talk, more movement and instructional nonverbal gestures, rapid pace, and so on. Although lagging behind general education by almost a decade, research in language education
has also experienced a similar shift towards the cognitive aspect of teaching and given recognition to the central role teachers play in language learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Abandoning from a mechanical view of teaching, the field is mainly concerned about ways to explore what it is that second or foreign language teachers need to know.

A number of qualitative and quantitative studies indicate that both teachers' behavior and knowledge make a difference in their students' schooling. Researchers (Goe, 2007; Wilson, 2011; Shahmohammadi, 2011) have also proved that students achieve better when teachers have a wide array of skills and adapt these skills to different contexts. What the studies try to show is that teacher quality can be achieved through exploiting reliably systematic policy of teacher education as well as in-service programs which are of two benefits; 1) reviewing the known knowledge and 2) merging the knowledge with new educational technologies.

Divergences in teacher education programs

Reviewing research on knowledge base of teacher education programs, one can detect four key divergences in the field. What we need to recognize is that such divergences are yet to be resolved and the current study is actually an attempt to have a more profound journey and understanding of issues relevant to teachers' knowledge base. According to Richards (2010), the divergences are as follows:

1. Nature of teachers' knowledge base (TKB): What assumptions exist for TKB as an attribute of teachers? Is it an unalterable characteristic or does it changes with experience and/or particular kinds of preparation or professional development?
2. Model of TKB: How is TKB related to the professional knowledge base for teaching? Is it transformative or integrative?
3. Measurement of TKB: Is TKB a knowledge base, an artifact or practice, or both? What are the appropriate levels to measure TKB? Should it be examined at the topic level or the domain level?
4. Contexts for studying TKB: Where should the emphasis of TKB research lie? Should it be studied in terms of the translation of teacher knowledge to practice, or in terms of the relationship between TKB and student outcomes?

Measuring Teachers' Knowledge Base

Educators and researchers have developed several techniques and methods to study TKB (An et al., 2004; Carpenter et al., 1988; Kromrey and Renfrow, 1991; Carlson, 1990; Rohaan et al., 2009). Baxter and Lederman (1999) give a description of the most general techniques that are used and their criticisms. They organize the different method into three groups: convergent and inferential techniques; concept mapping, card sorts and pictorial representations; and multi-method evaluation.

Convergent and inferential techniques include Likert self-report scales, multiple-choice items and short answer formats. These techniques seem to be an economical means of improving general teacher tests, but it is unclear if these tests are actually tapping into new domains of knowledge. The assessment and measurement of TKB concerns the study of a teacher’s ability to deal with the unusual, non-generalizable aspects of teaching. Accordingly these techniques seem to be inadequate because they are too restrictive. Concept mapping, card sorts, and pictorial representations are tools that have been largely used to study teachers’ knowledge and beliefs, and to measure short-term changes. These tools are not suitable to study the persistence of changes and (therefore) they have little value in understanding the development and change of TKB (where TKB involves changes that take place throughout the years). Multi-method evaluations include a variety of techniques to collect data such as interviews, concept maps, and video-prompted recall (Magnusson et al., 1999). Studies conducted with multi-method evaluations are effective in assessing TKB but they are time and energy consuming. For certain studies (Hashweh, 1987) difficulties exist concerning the feasibility to replicate the measurements. In some cases there is the need to make difficult decisions as to which data sources are needed to build a global profile of TKB. The description of the multi-method evaluations suggests that the assessment of TKB is neither simple nor obvious.
Methods and instruments to measure and assess TKB are being studied and experimented. The most common trend is to rely on qualitative approaches. However, these produce results that do not allow one to generalize concepts about teaching and TKB because they often consist of case studies. It seems that quantitative approaches have been rarely adopted and their results give a partial view of TKB. Both methods are effort and time consuming. The qualitative methodology requires time for the data analysis part (e.g., interviews transcripts), and in contrast the quantitative method requires time for the development of the research instruments (e.g., adequate multiple-choice items design).

From a methodological perspective, we are yet to devise an investigative technique that will help us study what we want to study. Most research projects in teacher knowledge have depended on data collection techniques such as interviews, diary studies, case studies, self-reports, think aloud protocols, simulated recall, etc. By analyzing whatever participating teachers say, the researcher has to infer a possible underlying knowledge they may have used for reflection and action. As Block (2000) points out in another context, what someone says in response to data elicitation are merely voices adopted by research participants in response to the researcher’s prompts and questions.

**Acquiring Teachers’ Knowledge Base**

L2 TKB is formed through a combination of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge; how teachers acquire this important component of professional knowledge L2 necessitates additional exploration. A “continuum of teacher learning” (Feinman-Nemser, 2001) and TKB emerges, beginning with an individual’s experiences as a student, developing during pre-service experiences, and evolving throughout the teaching career. The way that L2 teachers were taught greatly influences how they later teach, and L2 teacher preparation begins when future teachers first step into the classroom as young learners (Wing, 1993).

During that “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975), pre-service teachers begin to form beliefs about how L2s are learned and should be taught. Later, as they begin an L2 teaching career, they draw on those early observations and experiences to formulate teaching beliefs (Borg, 2005; Mullock, 2006). Other experiences, such as practice in schools and student teaching, further expand TKT (Munby et al., 2001). Cochran et al. (1993) point out that “TKB develops over time as a result of experience in many classroom settings with many students” (p. 264-265). Acquisition of TKB begins early and continues to evolve through informal observations and professional experiences.

Teacher education can influence pre-service L2 teacher knowledge. Theoretically, TKB develops as pre-service teachers take education courses that inform their L2 teaching beliefs and practices. The effect of teacher education on teacher development, however, is a contentious issue, as mentioned above. Given the divergent beliefs about the role of teacher education, studies of its influence on teacher knowledge are imperative. Is there a difference in TKB between those educated solely in content and those educated in pedagogy as well as content? Few scholars have explored how “TKB differentiates expert teachers in a subject area from subject area experts” (Cochran et al., 1993, p. 263). Grossman (1989) investigated the development of in-service English TKB, comparing teachers who completed English teacher education programs and teachers who completed English content courses without pedagogical emphasis. Those, who did not have teacher education coursework, “found it difficult to re-think their subject matter for teaching” (p. 30). Frameworks for understanding student learning and misunderstandings were presented in pre-professional education courses, and teachers unfamiliar with those frameworks had difficulty interpreting and organizing insights about student understanding. Grossman’s study demonstrated the development of TKB through university coursework in education and the advantage for those who completed that coursework.

These findings are not consistent across all studies comparing the performance of those prepared to teach content to the performance of those who are prepared solely in content.

Elder, Iwashta, and Brown (1995) found that Japanese generalists outperformed expert teachers of Japanese on a test specifically designed to measure language proficiency of teachers of Japanese in
Australia. They are careful to point out; however, that difference in performance may reveal more the inadequacies of the research design than a lack of TKB among the teachers included in the study.

The conflicting results of the preceding studies prompt further investigation of TKT development and the differences in performance between those educated solely in content and those educated in content and pedagogy. Teacher education has been shown to affect teacher performance positively in some instances, although not all. The collection of more conclusive evidence is a necessary step, and a comparative assessment of TKT between those who have had teacher education courses and those who have not is one way to provide that evidence.

CONCLUSION

Kumaravadivelu (2012) rightly emphasized a context-specific framework for the knowledge-base teachers need in order to be effective teachers. Any model of teachers’ knowledge base which do not take into account the particularities of socio-educational milieu in which language teachers are required to teach is abortive due to the fact that a fixed general framework cannot be responsive to the needs of teachers and contextual demands. My point is that prior theoretical knowledge whatever useful it may be cannot be creatively utilized by teachers without actual experience inside the class. Experienced teachers using their theoretical knowledge have more reflection in and on their actions to cope with unexpected practical problems.

References


THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN AN EFL CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF LEARNERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

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Azamat A. Akbarov, Ph.D, International Burch University azamatakbar@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
This research study investigates the place of communicative language teaching in one of the capital Balkan cities in Sarajevo, in Bosnia by exploring attitudes and perceptions of Bosnian EFL students. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data from the target EFL learner groups. The findings of the survey revealed that Bosnian learners have positive views and attitudes toward communicative language teaching. According to Hymes (1972), the goal of language teaching is to improve the communicative competence of learners. That is why, educators should focus on the communication skills of learners rather than their grammar-based knowledge and being able to communicate effectively in the target language is the most important of all skills. However, some external factors, like exam system, high number of students in the classes, can be barriers to implement CLT effectively in different EFL contexts and they force teachers to use traditional methods in language teaching but this presumption is lower or almost unlikely in private education institutions thanks to the amenities. Supporting the view above, the results of survey also reported that EFL learners have favourable beliefs for the use of CLT in their classrooms and they believe that as a foreign language English learning is very important in their country and for their future careers.

Keywords: EFL (English as a Foreign Language), learner beliefs, communicative competence, CLT (communicative language teaching), English Language Teaching.

Introduction
The language teaching methods are substantially needful for the purpose of learning and teaching in every language and CLT approach contrasts sharply with established traditions that emphasize learner knowledge of formal features. Hereby, communicative language teaching is an important theoretical model in the world of ELT and it is accepted and used by a number of educators as one of the most effective teaching approaches. Richard and Rodgers (1986) state the emergence of CLT occurred at the time when language teaching was looking for a change.

CLT was developed in the late 1970s and widely used and applied to ESL contexts. Britain, North America, Australia, New Zealand and other surrounding islands applied CLT in their ESL settings. In these contexts, English language learning does not take place in large class size which impedes pair and group works and on the contrary to traditional approaches, it usually shows up in small classes by welcoming and encouraging collaborative independent learning through pair and group works. Chang (2011) mentions that the main purpose of CLT is to develop learners’ abilities to communicate in a second language context and it represents a change of focus in language teaching from linguistic structure to learners’ need for developing communication skills.

To compensate for the limitations of the traditional language teaching methods, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been introduced in EFL settings to improve students’ abilities to use English in real contexts (Littlewood, 2007). However, in some EFL settings, the theories and practices of CLT have come up against various challenges (Ellis, 1996; Li, 1998; Takanashi, 2004; Yu, 2001). In recent years, educators and especially language teachers in many countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been encouraged to
adopt a method or can be said an approach known as CLT. It advocates the development of communicative competence as a primary goal by means of the extensive use of the foreign language as a means of communication during classroom sessions. Since the concept of CLT is a western idea, seemingly it might be inappropriate to other contexts. That is why it is significant to do a research on the attitudes and perceptions of high school learners towards CLT. Learners’ views of learning cannot be ignored when there is a mismatch between the teachers’ and learners’ beliefs (Schulz, 1996).

Savignon (1997) emphasizes the importance of learner attitudes by explaining ‘if all the variables in second language acquisition could be identified and many intricate patterns of interaction between learner and learning context, success in learning to use a second language most likely would be seen to depend on the attitudes (perceptions) of the learner. Most studies just investigate learners’ attitudes and beliefs about language learning in general, only few of them focus on learner attitudes and beliefs about instructional practices in particular. That is why, Nunan (1993) discusses ‘teachers should find out what their students think and feel about what and how they want to learn’. Additionally, the extent to which communicative components in instructional practices are seen by students as essential for language learning should be considered in making pedagogical decisions.

Competent English users are in great demand in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Europe, where English serves as bridge between people from different cultures and countries as well as a communication tool for the exchange of knowledge and information in the areas of culture, technology and business etc. After the war, Ministry of Education gradually has made some changes in English education policy to raise and increase the learners’ communicative competence in English and it has a pivotal role in language education in Bosnia and Herzegovina so far.

The present research investigated high school learners’ beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the classroom practices they had experienced in their EFL classes.

The specific research questions addressed in this research are:
1. What are Sarajevo College students’ beliefs about English language learning generally?
2. What are Sarajevo College students’ perceptions of the classroom practices they have experienced in their English lessons?
3. What are Sarajevo College students’ attitudes toward such classroom practices?

Method

Participants

Sixty-seven high school students participated in this research and answered the questionnaire which aimed at reflecting their attitudes, perceptions and classroom practices towards CLT in the case of BH. The participants were 12th grade students studying in Sarajevo College in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In selecting the participants, a convenience sampling was employed as all contributors were from Sarajevo College.

Instrument and procedures

A qualitative method was adopted to gather data from high school students. Actually, Savignon and Wang’s (2003) questionnaire was applied to Bosnian context. The questionnaire, which has a total of 48 items, is divided into three parts (Appendix 1). In the first two parts, each involves eleven statements related to perceptions of classroom learning experiences. The first 5 statements relate to form focused (grammar-based) classroom practices but the pair 5 statements relate to meaning-based (communication-based) classroom practices. The last statements of the first part relate to students’ attitudes toward error correction. The last adopted part of the questionnaire involves 28 statements that relate to students’ beliefs about English learning.
Statements 1 to 11 are similar to the eleven statements in first parts of both questionnaires. Besides, statements 12 to 16 refer to beliefs about grammar-focused instruction, statements 22 and 23 are related to pronunciation, Finally, the last three statements are concerned with learner perceptions of the interrelationship between language learning ability and intelligence. All the responses were scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 coded as strongly disagree and 7 coded as strongly agree). The instructions and statements of learner questionnaire were translated into Bosnian and vetted by a Bosnian instructor of English for clarity and accuracy. To make certain of the comprehensibility of the questionnaire, it was administered to a test group of college students and then finalized according to their feedback. The data was interpreted as (1.00-2.19) = strongly disagree, (2.20-3.39) = disagree, (3.40-4.59) = neutral, (4.60-5.79) = agree, (5.80-7.00) = strongly agree.

Results

Table 1 below presents Sarajevo College students’ beliefs about English learning. According to gathered data, students have strong beliefs about practices that engaged students through communication (M = 5.88 / Strongly Agree). On the other hand, there is an agreement about error correction. Sarajevo College students agree that teachers should correct errors in class (M = 4.85 / Agree). As for pronunciation, the data reveals an agreement to consider pronunciation as a measure for being a good learner and good English speaker (Mean = 5.29 / Agree). Moreover, concerning students’ attitudes toward English, the data presents strong beliefs that English learning is important for the people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and English is needed to get a good job, and English education should begin in elementary school (M = 5.93 / Strongly Agree).

Table 1, Beliefs About Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar-based: 1-5 and 12-16</td>
<td>3.62S</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication-based: 6-10 and 17-19</td>
<td>5.88A</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error correction: 11, 20, 21</td>
<td>4.85A</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation 22, 23</td>
<td>5.29A</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward English: 24, 25, 28</td>
<td>5.93SA</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 67  SD = strongly disagree  N = neutral  A = agree  SA = strongly agree

Table 2 below presents Sarajevo College students’ perceptions of the English language classroom instructions they had experienced in their English classes. The mean (2.69 / Disagree) of items one to five indicated that these experiences had not been form-based (grammar-based), i.e. teachers use Bosnian most of the times, and students rarely speak English. Communication was most commonly reported in the classroom activities. Although students reported that their English teachers corrected their errors in class, little correction placed (M = 4.65 / Agree).

Table 2. Perceptions of Classroom Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grammar-focused English teaching Učenje Engleskog jezika je učenje njegove gramatike.</td>
<td>3.31D</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 below presents Sarajevo College students’ attitudes towards the English language classroom practices students had experienced in English classrooms. The mean (2.39) of items 1 to 5 shows that Sarajevo College students’ dislike grammar-based (form-based) instruction, English teachers use Bosnian most of the times and students seldom speak English in class, which they disliked. On the contrary, communication-based
(meaning-based) practices (M = 5.99\textsuperscript{SA}) were highly regarded as well as EFL teachers’ correcting their errors in class (mean = 5.73\textsuperscript{SA}).

Table 3. Attitude towards Perceived Classroom Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form-based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Grammar-focused English teaching Volim učenje engleskog jezika fokusirano na gramatiku u mojoj školi.</td>
<td>2.88 D</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sentence drilling and sentence repetition Volim vježbanje i ponavljanje rečenica poslije profesa on času engleskog jezik.</td>
<td>3.01 D</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. English used most of the time Volio bih da profesori engleskog jezika najviše koriste bosanski jezik na časovima.</td>
<td>1.89SD</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most time spent on grammar rules explanation Volio bih da više na času provodimo vježbajući I objašnjavajući pravila gramatike.</td>
<td>2.51 D</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seldom needed to open my mouth. Volim čas engleskog jezika u kojem nemam potrebu govoriti.</td>
<td>1.73 SD</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of Items 1 to 5</td>
<td>2.40 D</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication-based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communication-based teaching practices Volim učiti engleski jezik baziran na komunikaciji.</td>
<td>6.02 SA</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Many activities involving communication Volim aktivnosti u kojima mogu komunicirati sa svojim vršnjacima.</td>
<td>6.06 SA</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communication-focused with grammar explained when necessary Volim da moji časovi engleskog jezika budu fokusirani na komunikaciji sa objasnjenjem gramatike kada je potrebno.</td>
<td>5.94 SA</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Trial-and-error attempts allowed
Volim profesore engleskog jezika koji nam dopuštaju da pokušamo i pogriješimo u komunikaciji na engleskom jeziku.

10. Atmosphere created for the use of English
Volim profesore engleskog jezika koji stvaraju atmosferu koja nas ohrabruje na učenje engleskog jezika.

Mean of Items 6 to 10
Error correction
11. Teachers corrected my errors in class
Volim kada me profesor ispravlja ako napravim grešku tokom govora na engleskom jeziku.

Discussion
In this section, the three research questions are sequentially answered as follows:

1) What are Sarajevo College students’ beliefs about English language learning?

The findings for this research question report Sarajevo College students’ strong beliefs about practices that engaged them in meaningful language production (communication based) as contrary to grammar-based (form-based) instructions. The results of the study revealed that students’ beliefs about communication-based practices might have been affected by their classroom practices. It can be easily interpreted that Sarajevo College students were provided by their English teachers with a range of communicative tasks and activities which engaged them in meaningful language production.

With regard to error correction, there was an agreement that students refused to be corrected by their teachers in classroom and it can be inferred from the findings that EFL teachers shouldn’t correct students’ errors in the classroom. Students expressed an agreement with such statements as: ‘I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English’, and ‘Teachers should correct students’ pronunciation or grammatical errors in class’. Although there was an agreement with these three statements, the mean of 4.85 which is just between neutral and agree, reports that the majority of students showed favorable attitudes towards making mistakes and error correction. It is clear from the table that many of the students were neutral and did not agree with the 3 statements towards error corrections.

Concerning pronunciation, Sarajevo College students regard pronunciation as a measure for being a good student or a good English speaker. Students showed their favorable attitudes towards such statements as ‘A good language learner usually pronounces beautifully’ and ‘A person’s good pronunciation usually indicates good English’. Finally, the findings revealed a strong belief that learning English is important for Bosnian people, English is useful for getting a job, and that English education should begin earlier. It is clear that students are aware of the importance of English in their country in this global world.

2) What are Sarajevo College students’ perceptions of the classroom practices they have experienced?

According to data gathered for the second research question, it is clear that English language teaching was perceived to be communication-based (meaning-based). Furthermore, almost all students stated having
experienced a communicative approach in their EFL classrooms. These findings are consistent with the students’ strong beliefs about practices that engaged them in communication-based instructions. It is obvious that their strong perceptions derive from their steady and strong beliefs. Additionally, students’ high perceptions of communication-based instruction must have been affected by communicative classroom atmosphere they have experienced. Games, role-plays, presentations, pair and group work activities are important to negotiate meaning. Grammar structures were thought to be introduced when the need arose.

3) What are Sarajevo College students’ attitudes towards classroom practices?

The results for the third research question revealed that teaching practices were communication-based, when many activities involved communication, grammar was explained when necessary during communication-focused (meaning-based) activities, and when the classroom atmosphere allowed for the use of English. Sarajevo College students’ attitudes were consistent with their perceptions and beliefs. Even if there was little error correction in the EFL classroom, Bosnian students preferred to have their errors in speaking, pronunciation and grammar corrected. The results are consistent with the data found in the group of Taiwan English language teacher educators reported in Wang (2002).

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that Sarajevo college students hold beliefs which are consistent with different methodological orientations to learning English language and had strong beliefs in the influence on their high perceptions of the meaning-based practices in their classroom. These findings reveal that teachers should take advantage of these strong realistic beliefs, perceptions and favorable attitudes to create learning surroundings useful for developing learners’ communicative competence. All in all, teaching for communicative competence appears to be the appropriate guiding principle of English pedagogy in such settings as Bosnia and Herzegovina where learners and the society as a whole expect and value communicative skills. It can be concluded that students may have experienced communication-based instruction in their school and that oral communication is the major goal of English education in Sarajevo College. Finally, students’ highly regard classroom practices that encourage te EFL learners to use the target language communicatively.

REFERENCES


THE DELAYED EFFECTS OF FOCUSED AND UNFOCUSED WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON USE OF FUTURE PERFECT TENSE BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
The role of (written) corrective feedback (CF) in the process of acquiring a second language (L2) has been an issue of considerable debate among theorists and researchers alike. Although CF is a widely applied pedagogic al tool and its use finds support in SLA theory, practical and theoretical objections to its usefulness have been raised. The study presented here using a pre-test–immediate post-test–delayed post-test design contrasted the effectiveness of focused CF, unfocused CF and a control group (no CF) on the use of future perfect tense. The participants were selected through Quick Placement Test (QPT) from Kish Institute in Tehran, Iran. They then were divided into three groups (two experimental groups and one control group), 20 learners in each group. One experimental group received focused written corrective feedback and the other experimental group received unfocused written corrective feedback. Analysis of the obtained data through ANCOVA revealed that both the focused CF and unfocused CF groups significantly outperformed the control group in both posttest and delayed posttest. However, as focused group did better than unfocused group, it seems that focused CF benefits EFL learners more in learning future perfect tense than unfocused CF does.

Keywords: Focused corrective feedback, unfocused corrective feedback, future perfect, delayed effects

Background
Often a person is judged by the quality of writing, he/she produces. Be at a school, college, workplace or a society, writing has become a vital yardstick to assess one’s knowledge, and intellectuality (Tan, 2008). In many educational settings, teaching writing is examination-oriented, with accuracy as the most important criterion of evaluating students (Amirghassemi, Azabdaftari & Saeidi, 2013). Almost 30% of our communication is accomplished through writing (Pillai, 2012). Therefore, the skills of tactful writing are essential for achieving academic, career and business goals. Unfortunately, today this skill has become a hard work for students who learn English as a second or foreign language because; it requires the simultaneous execution and integration of a many challenging components (Zacharias, 2007). Consequently, teachers have been attempting to help learners to improve their writing quality and increase their motivation for writing tasks. Among

² Corresponding Author
the methods employed to do so is the implementation of corrective feedback. Providing corrective feedback (CF) is a common attempt made by writing teachers in hope of improving their students’ writing (Amirghassemi, Azabdaftari & Saeidi, 2013).

Corrective feedback refers to the responses to a learner’s nontarget like second language (L2) production in L2 acquisition (Afriz, 2012). However, the role of written corrective feedback (WCF) in second and foreign language pedagogy has been a controversial issue among researchers and practitioners (e.g., Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen, 2010). The effect of WCF on L2 writing has been investigated from different points of view, especially in terms of focused and unfocused WCF, direct and indirect WCF, evaluative and formative WCF, the metalinguistic WCF, the WCF medium, L2 teachers, perceptions about WCF, and the person who provides WCF, namely teacher and/or peer (Mohebbi, 2013).

Different corrective strategies have been identified which are explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic information, elicitation, repetition, and translation. All of these techniques are placed in an explicit-implicit continuum (Panova & Lyster, 2002).

According to (Ellis, 2009), WCF can be focused (FWCF) or unfocused (UWCF) based on the focus of the feedback. In the focused one, an L2 teacher implements feedback on pre-determined targeted types of errors and in an unfocused one he or she provides feedback to all or most of the errors in learners writing (Ellis, 2009). This type of CF is also called comprehensive or extensive because it deals with multiple errors.

Various practitioners have considered FWCF and UWCF differently. Some of them believed (e.g., Schmidt, 1994; Ellis, 2005) that focused CF is more effective than unfocused CF, because learners are more likely to pay attention to corrections directed at a single (or a limited number of) error type(s) and more likely to set up a clearer comprehension of the nature of the error and the correction needed. Similarly some others (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2009) supposed that L2 learners can benefit from FWCF more because L2 teachers are assumed to take into account the learners’ readiness and in turn provide selective feedback on one or two targeted linguistic errors at a time. Focused CF is considered as a systematic approach of providing WCF (Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009) and Shaeen (2007) believes that it will not overload L2 learners’ attentional capacity. Under UWCF condition, L2 learners might not be able to process the feedbacks given effectively because of the limited capacity of short-term memory and more importantly, L2 learners might not have enough L2 knowledge to indicate all the WCFs given and revise their manuscripts accurately (Mohebbi 2013). In contrast, some researchers believe that that unfocused CF is more beneficial because it is more authentic than focused CF and there are sound reasons for including it in SLA research agendas as well. Though we acknowledge reasonable grounds for isolating one linguistic feature at a time, there also is a compelling rationale for examining the effects of a particular treatment on various linguistic domains at the same time within the same learning condition. This is because it is only in such a research design that we can truly observe the differential effects of a specific treatment within a given context. (van Beuningen, de Jong, & Kuijken, 2012).

It is worth mentioning that corrective feedback is a long-standing educational practice that can arguably be linked to almost everything we learn (Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010). However, as Williams (2012) rightly pointed out, there is a gap in L2 literature with respect to the differing effects of focused WCF and unfocused WCF on prompting L2 writing. Therefore, the current study was run as an investigation into the debates about the effectiveness of providing focused and unfocused WCF on fostering Iranian L2 learners learning writing. Yet, it limits itself to investigating the problematic aspect of English grammar to Iranian EFL learners that is perfect verb tenses (Liu, 2012).

The study has been specifically designed to address the following questions:

1. Does focused written CF have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense in Iranian EFL learners of English?

2. Does unfocused written CF have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense in Iranian EFL learners of English?
3. Does focused written corrective feedback affect EFL students’ knowledge of future perfect tense any differently than unfocused written corrective feedback does?

4. Is there any significant difference between the delayed effects of focused written and unfocused corrective feedbacks as far as retention of future perfect tense is concerned? A study of the type reported here can contribute to the research of error treatment in the area of writing-to-learn or acquisition of language through more samples of corrective feedback. As previous studies have provided conflicting evidence in relation to the effectiveness of written error correction in improving the accuracy of L2 students, this study may be used to add to the results of the past studies as well as provide justifications for methods and approaches which will be employed in future studies. The study can also give more insights as to the effective role of error correction in writing skills in the process of learning a foreign language and the results of this study valuable to L2 writing teachers in adapting their written error correction technique to the needs of their students.

Related Studies on Corrective Feedback
For decades, questions about errors correction in second language acquisition (SLA) have been hotly debated and gave birth to a great deal of empirical studies. Some of these studies are presented below.

Araghi and Sahebkheir (2014) investigated whether focused CF and unfocused CF could cause any differential effects on the accurate use of the simple past tense between female and male EFL learners. The statistical analysis indicated that the focused group did better than both unfocused and control groups in terms of the accurate use of English simple past tense. The results suggested that focused CF promotes learners’ grammatical accuracy in second language (L2) writing more effectively than unfocused CF. Furthermore, the findings showed that gender did not cause a significant difference over effectiveness of focused and unfocused CF. In their study, Ashoori & Khatib (2014) attempted to delve further into the effects of different corrective feedback strategies on enhancing learners’ writing accuracy both short and long term. To fulfill the purpose of the study, three classes comprising 67 female students in the context of a public high school in Astara, Iran, were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions: direct feedback with teacher student 5 minute individual conference; indirect coded feedback and no feedback. The study lasted for 5 weeks. There were immediate and delayed posttest to measure the writing accuracy of learners both short and long term. The results of the short term test showed the significant superiority of direct feedback in the teacher student individual conference group over the other groups. In contrast, the learners in the indirect coded feedback group were slightly better than the group that received instruction through direct and teacher student conference feedback. This suggested that it was beneficial to make use of direct corrective feedback strategies when the short period mastery of the linguistic structures was needed and indirect corrective strategies were proposed when long term mastery of the grammatical knowledge was the purpose of the educational intervention.

Karbalaei & Karimian (2014) mentioned that despite the dominance of process-oriented approach to writing in recent decades, teachers particularly in Iran contexts did not find it practical. There was also debate regarding the effectiveness of various types of corrective feedback. In addition, the revisions that students made to their compositions as a result of teacher corrective feedback (TCF) were not clearly identified and they were restricted to overall assessment of performance of learners’ writing or the writing product. Therefore, they aimed at identifying the types of teacher corrective feedback based on its form and purpose, investigating the effects of different types of teacher corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners’ writings and determining the types of revisions that the language learners made to their writings as a result of TCF they receive. The findings of the study showed that the most common types of TCF were making a grammar/mechanics comment, giving information/statement, and asking for information/question, respectively. Most of the revisions that learners made to the writings were at the surface rather than the meaning preserving level.

Kassim & Ng (2014) discussed findings from a study investigating feedback efficacy on the accurate use of prepositions by ESL learners in written work over a period of 12 weeks. The study involved two treatment groups and a control group comparing the differential effects of the focused indirect with the unfocused indirect corrective feedback on the uptake and retention measured from the
pretest, immediate and delayed posttests. The study also analyzed the language-related episodes (LREs) occurring in the collaborative dialogue during the treatment sessions to identify the factors affecting uptake and retention of the corrective feedback in subsequent writing tasks. Findings revealed that both treatment groups outperformed the control group in the posttests, but, there was no significant difference between the unfocused and focused corrective feedback groups.

Lertcheva (2014) investigated whether written corrective feedback was effective on L2 learners’ writing. The study examined learners’ noticing of corrected errors and their acquisition of tense and other linguistic forms (articles, spelling, pronouns, vocabulary usage and preposition errors). Nine EFL learners from Potisarn Pittayakorn School, a government secondary school located in Bangkok, Thailand, participated in this study and composed four essays and performed thought-aloud protocols when going through their corrective feedback. Results obtained from the first essay showed that the learners in the no feedback group performed better in terms of tense and other types of linguistic forms, followed by the focused feedback group and the unfocused feedback group. In the revised draft, the learners in the focused feedback group did better in tense in comparison to the unfocused feedback group and no feedback groups. In contrast, in the revised draft the learners in the unfocused feedback group did better in other types of linguistic forms in comparison to the focused feedback group and no feedback groups. The post-test results showed that there were marginal differences in the effects on acquisition on tense and other types of linguistic forms between the focused and unfocused feedback groups, but the delayed post-test results showed that unfocused feedback compared to the focused feedback group actually yielded better long-term acquisition effects.

In a study by Sun (2013) thirty-three students of fourth semester German at the University Kansas participated and the researcher sought to investigate whether focused written corrective feedback (WCF) promoted the acquisition of the German case morphology over the course of a semester. Participants received teacher WCF on five two-draft essay assignments under three treatment conditions: group (1) received focused WCF on German case errors; group (2) received unfocused WCF on a variety of German grammar errors; and group (3) did not receive WCF on specific grammar errors. Combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study found that the focused group improved significantly in the accuracy of case forms while the unfocused and the control group did not make any apparent progress. The results indicated that focused WCF was effective in improving case accuracy in subjects’ writings in German as a foreign language (GFL) context. WCF did not negatively affect writing fluency or students’ attitude toward writing.

Khoshsima & Jahani (2012) investigated the effect of explicit corrective feedback on writing accuracy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners (N = 44) in Hamedan Islamic Azad University. The three most frequent occurring errors in EFL learners’ writing pre-test were chosen to be targeted. Two groups were formed: the explicit corrective feedback group (N = 22), and the control group (N = 20). Paired samples t-tests revealed that both the explicit and control groups increased their writing accuracy in immediate post-test in comparison with pre-test, but Independent t-test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups (p = 0.65). In delayed post-test, there was no significant differences between writing accuracy of explicit and control groups (p = 0.72). Paired samples t-tests indicated that there was no significant accuracy mean difference between writing pre-test and delayed post-test of the explicit group. The writing accuracy gain of the control group in delayed post-test in comparison with writing pre-test was statistically significant.

From the different positions and conflicting findings reviewed above, it can be concluded that WCF is a complicated and multi-faceted subject, which deserves cognitive, affective, pragmatic, and pedagogical exploration. Plenty of studies by different researchers have discussed whether learners should be provided with corrective feedback for their written work or not (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ferris, 2006; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Truscott, 2007). Some studies (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; 2009; Ellis et al., 2008, Ellis, 2009) showed the effectiveness of focused and some others (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Robb et al., 1986) showed the effectiveness of unfocused WCF. Some researchers rejected the idea of written corrective feedback (e.g., Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996). On the other hand, some other researchers (Ferris, 2006, 2010; Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ellis et al., 2008) supported this idea. Accordingly, it seems that it is difficult to portray the effectiveness of WCF. These problems which impeded a good form of agreement on the central problem of feedback efficacy calls for further research. In other words, the diverse f
Findings in the studies discussed here imply that more empirical evidence is needed to inform teachers and researchers in making a resounding evaluation on the effectiveness of different CF options. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the impact of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback on the accurate use of future perfect tense in Iranian EFL learners writing. In the next chapter the methodology for the current study will be completely explained.

Methodology

Design of the Study
Drawing on the research by Ellis et al. (2008) and Sheen et al. (2009), the current study adopted a quasi-experimental design in which there were a pretest, a post test and three groups, two experimental and one control. The design was quasi-experiment because the sampling was convenience.

Setting of the Study
The course of study lasted eleven weeks from mid-November 2014 to mid March 2015. Iranian lower-intermediate students were selected from Kish English language institute in Tehran, Iran. The prerequisite for this course was the completion of previous semesters or placement based on their score on the institute exam. The classes met for 90 minutes each session, three times a week. Students had already been taught New Round Up (Evans & Dooley, 2010) in the previous semesters. The objective of the experiment was improving writing skill of the participants. Students were asked to have no writing activity at home; all activities were done in the classes. Students were not usually corrected during their oral tasks when possibly using future perfect tense (regular and irregular).

Participants
First of all, four classes at a Kish English language institute in Tehran, Iran conveniently sampled for the study. After that, to have homogenized participants a standard language proficiency test, that was, the Quick Placement Test (QPT), was administered to 83 students studying, and 60 of those who scored between 28 and 36, the scores for lower-intermediate, were selected. They were all female learners with their ages ranging from 18 to 27. Then, using match-paired design, the selected students were divided into three homogeneous groups (20 each) two experimental groups– namely, focused and unfocused feedback groups – who received the treatments, and a control group who received traditional grammar teaching instructions.

Instruments
The instruments employed in this study to obtain the data and to check the validity of the proposed hypotheses were the QPT, a pretest, and a posttest.

QPT
In order to make sure about selecting homogeneous participants in experimental groups and control group with regard to their English language proficiency, the researcher administered the QPT as it is designed to give students and teachers of English a quick way of assessing the approximate level of a student's knowledge of English grammar and usage. The test consisted of 60 questions. There were five questions related to their knowledge of different signs and notices used to indicate particular meanings, five cloze passages (25 questions), 20 multiple-choice questions which assessed the participants' knowledge of grammar, 10 multiple choice questions related to the knowledge of vocabulary (see Appendix A). “The entire test items in the QPT have been selected through Cambridge "English for Speakers of Other Languages" ESOL quality control procedures; however, additional steps have been taken to assess the overall reliability of the QPT and the relationship of scores between it and those derived from the paper and pen versions. To date, the test has been validated in 20 countries by more than 6,000 students” (Geranpayeh, 2003). Bailey in “Research Notes” describes key features of the Cambridge tests and evaluates their essential test qualities of validity, reliability, fairness (developmental appropriateness and cultural sensitivity), practicality (administration and scoring), and impact. She concluded that the Cambridge YLE tests are ‘superior tools to most other options for assessing young learners’ on the grounds that ‘they were developed for the EFL learner with their specific learning situation in mind’.
Grammar Multiple-choice Pretest and Posttest and Delayed post test

Three tests, one pretest and one posttest and one delay post test were designed by the researcher. The pretest was run to take up the initial differences among the participants and the posttest and delayed post test were run to find out if the students learned the intended grammatical structure after a short time and delayed longer time. All three tests were identical regarding the number of items (15 items each) and the structure they tested. The items were selected from the paper-based TOEFL test books (Barron, 2001; Cliff, 1986; Longman, 2003), and they tested future perfect tense (see Appendix B). In order to make sure that the items were suitable and reliable, all three tests were piloted against a group of 10 lower intermediate students who had already learned the intended structure. Then the reliabilities of the tests were calculated by measuring Cronbach’s Alfa reliability test, which turned out to be .79 for the pre test and .86 for the posttest and delayed posttest.

The grammar tests were deployed over three testing sessions (pretests, immediate post-tests, and delayed post test), each was an error recognition test. It consisted of 15 statements each including one error, which fell into the category of targeted linguistic forms. The test questions for each testing session were not exactly the same in order to avoid the possibility that students might find the answer of their doubts in their private time and did better when they encountered the same question in the posttest. What students did in each test was circling the errors and then gave correct forms. Each item was awarded 1 mark for finding the error and one mark for writing the correct answer. Therefore, the full score for each test was 30 marks.

Data Collection Procedure

The entire study spread over a period of 11 weeks. There was a gap of 3 weeks between the writing Post-test one and the Writing Post-test 2 when the students in all three groups followed their regular classes (i.e. reading in the case of the two experimental groups and oral communication in the case of the control group). During this period, none of the groups received any corrective feedback of any kind.

Schedule for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Writing pre-test: error correction pre-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Task 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feedback on Task 1: task 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feedback on task 2: Task 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feedback on task 3: Task 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feedback on task 4: Task 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feedback on task 5: Task 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feedback on task 6: writing post-test 1: error correction post-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Writing post-test 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six treatment sessions were considered in this study. The students in all three groups wrote the same six narratives in separate lessons, two experimental groups received feedback from the same teacher on each piece of writing, and control group received no feedback.

In this study, the researcher tried to test the effectiveness of two types of feedback on learning of the future perfect tense to lower-intermediate EFL students. For this purpose, in the beginning, and in order to find the appropriate number of students, First 83 EFL learners in four intact classes were conveniently sampled and then to check their homogeneity they were given QPT. Based on the results of the test, 60 students were selected and were divided into three homogeneous groups, two experimental and one control group, 20 each. In the next step, a pretest containing 15 grammatical items was given to them in order to find their current knowledge about the target structure. The items for this test and the posttest were taken from the paper-based TOEFL books. Then, through a pilot study, the tests were evaluated and they were found appropriate and reliable.

After that, the participants took part in their assigned classes. They were divided into two experimental groups. The treatment consisted of six narrative writing tasks. In each task, students were required to write a short essay of around 150 to 200 words on assigned topics (i.e. Write about what you would have done by the year 2020; write about how you perceive the neighborhood will have changed in ten years time; write about how tec
hnology will have affected us by the year 2016). Guidelines on how to construct the narrative of the particular topics were provided in the writing worksheet. Then different kinds of CF (Focused CF and unfocused CF) were given to the experimental groups.

Written CF correction guidelines for the experimental groups are as follow:

1. Unfocused CF:
   This involved correcting future perfect tense errors together with other types of error (e.g., errors articles, prepositions and vocabulary) by indicating and correcting the errors on the student’s stories.

2. Focused CF:
   This was the same as for unfocused except that only future perfect tense were corrected. The aim was to correct a maximum of four future perfect errors involving but this was not possible as some students produced few errors.

The procedure for the control group was the same except that the students received no corrections of their linguistic errors. Instead, they received a simple general comment or question.

Focused written CF was operationalized as (1) indicating the location of errors by circling the errors of only one certain type of the targeted linguistic structures each time (i.e. Checking subject-verb agreement for the first writing assignment, checking number agreement for the second writing assignment, and checking prepositions for the third writing assignment) and (2) providing the correct relevant forms. The errors here referred to three different situations, including the inappropriate omission, the wrong use and redundant use of the targeted linguistic forms.

Unfocused written CF was operationalized as (1) indicating the location of errors by circling the errors of a range of targeted linguistic structures (i.e. checking subject-verb agreement, number agreement and preposition in each writing assignment) and (2) providing the correct relevant forms. The errors here referred to three different situations, including the inappropriate omission, the wrong use and redundant use of the targeted linguistic forms.

The effectiveness of the two different CF was measured in error correction tests over three testing sessions (pretests, immediate post-tests, and delayed post-tests). After carrying out the experiment for one semester, the researcher post-tested the three groups to assess their acquisition of the target structure. The time given to the student to complete the test was 20 minute. After that, the papers were collected and analyzed to find out any possible differences among the three groups involved in the study.

Data Analysis Procedure
To examine the effect of different CFs, the results of the error correction tests over the three testing sessions were obtained and analyzed in a quantitative manner. For this purpose both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. As for descriptive statistics, the mean, standard deviation, as well as minimum and maximum scores were computed. Regarding the inferential statistics, ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) was implemented to compare the performances of the three groups under investigation and test the validity of the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion
For the analysis of the data obtained from the three groups through a pre-test and a post-test, ANCOVA statistical procedure was used, but as using ANCOVA requires checking the normality assumptions, first these assumptions were checked.

Descriptive statistics for experimental group
The descriptive statistics of the participants’ pre-test and post-test scores in experimental groups and the control are presented in Table 1.

Table 4.1
The Descriptive Statistics the Participants’ Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in the Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Vol.6, Issue 3, June 2016
Table 1 presents the experimental and control groups’ descriptive statistics in pre-test and post-test. According to Table 4-1, the mean score of the control group’s pre-test was 12.26, which changed to 13.22 in post-test. On the other hand, the mean score of the unfocused-feedback group in the pre-test was 12.40, which changed to 14.71 in post-test, and the mean score of the focused-feedback group in the pre-test was 12.87, which changed to 16.65 in post-test.

Moreover, Skewness and Kurtosis values for both pretest and posttest were within the ranges of +/- 2 which according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) point to the normality of the data on a descriptive level. However to make sure that the data obtained were inferentially normal as well, normality measure were checked the results of which are summarized below.

**Normality of distribution of test scores**
The distribution of scores for dependent variables should be normal for each value of the independent variable. To check this assumption the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk’s tests were utilized. Table 4-2 shows the results of these tests.

**Table 2**
The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of the distribution of the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretes. Groups</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest. Groups</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
As the table shows, some of the Kolmogrov-Smirnov valuse were significant at P< .05; however, since the sample size was small, Shapiro-Wilk statistics was considered as a better indicator of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Given that the Shapiro-Wilk values were not significant, it could be concluded that the assumption of normality of variables had been observed (P>.05).

After checking normality of scores, in order to investigate the research hypotheses and for the purpose of eliminating the effect of pre-test on students' performance in the post-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run, the results of which are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>184.951a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61.650</td>
<td>50.18</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>15.830</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.830</td>
<td>12.885</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretes.Grops</td>
<td>76.341</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76.341</td>
<td>62.142</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>89.423</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44.712</td>
<td>36.395</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>68.796</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.228</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13595.215</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>253.747</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is shown in Table 3, the row for the pre-test shows that the pre-test was significantly related to the post-test (P-value < 0.05) with the magnitude of .526. The row for Groups is the indicator of the main effect of the treatment on the dependent variable. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant effect of the group [F(2,56)= 36.39, P= 0.00, partial η² = .565)]. As P-value was smaller than 0.05, it could be argued that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest after removing the possible effect of their entry knowledge as tested through the pretest.

Estimated Marginal Means

Although the F-value of 36.39 indicated significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups on the posttest after removing the possible effects of the pretest, the post-hoc comparison tests were run to compare the groups two by two in order to probe the three null-hypotheses raised in this study. Tables 4 and 5 reflect the results of such analyses.

Table 4

Group Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>16.517a</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>16.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>14.682a</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>14.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>13.537a</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>13.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretes.Grops = 12.4625.
Table 5

Pairwise Comparisons (Bonferroni) for the Groups’ Performance
Dependent Variable: Posttest.Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Groups</th>
<th>(J) Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference*</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.969</td>
<td>2.110</td>
<td>2.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.980</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>-1.835</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-2.701</td>
<td>-3.850</td>
<td>-1.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.145</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>-2.980</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-3.850</td>
<td>-4.790</td>
<td>-3.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>-1.145</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.012</td>
<td>-0.278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means
* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Based on the results displayed in Tables 4 and 5 it can be concluded that:
A: There was a significant difference between the performance of the first experimental group (focused feedback) (M = 16.51) and the control group (M = 13.53), (MD = 2.98, P < .05). Based on the results it was concluded that the first null hypothesis as “Focused written does not have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense by Iranian EFL learners of English” could be rejected. This implies that the focused-feedback group has outperformed the control group on the posttest after removing the effect of their entry knowledge as measured through the pretest.

B: There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the second experimental group (unfocused feedback) (M = 14.68) and control group (M = 13.53) (MD = 1.14, P < .05). Based on the results it was concluded that the second null hypothesis as “Unfocused written does not have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense by Iranian EFL learners of English” might be rejected. This implies that the unfocused-feedback group has outperformed the control group on the posttest after removing the effect of their entry knowledge as measured through the pretest.

C: There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the first experimental group (focused feedback) (M = 16.51) and the second experimental group (unfocused feedback) (M = 14.68), (MD = 1.83, P > .05). Based on these results it can be concluded that the third null-hypothesis that “Focused feedback does not affect EFL students’ knowledge of future perfect tense differently than unfocused feedback does” was rejected implying that the former activities affect EFL learners’ learning of future perfect tense more than unfocused feedback activities do.

Now to check our hypothesis about the delayed effects of focused and unfocused feedback ANCOVA was run a second time. However, this required the normality assumptions to be checked for the participants’ score on the delayed post test. These have been presented in tables and graphs below.

Descriptive Statistics
Table 6 shows the descriptive measures for the delayed-posttest scores.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for the Delayed Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Based on the table, Skewness and Kurtosis values for both pretest and posttest were within the ranges of +/-2 which according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) point to the normality of the data on a descriptive level.

Table 7

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk’s Test for Normality of The Distribution of The Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delayed.Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.200*</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfocused</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As the table shows, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov values for the unfocused feedback group and the control group were significant at P< .05; however, since the sample size was small, Shapiro-Wilk statistics was considered as a better indicator of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As the Shapiro-Wilk values were not significant, it was concluded that the assumption of normality of variables had been observed (P>.05). As the obtained scores were normal, we can now run the ANCOVA to see the patterns of differences between the groups on the delayed post test.

Table 8

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>156.221</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52.074</td>
<td>31.346</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>33.149</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.149</td>
<td>19.955</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>43.630</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.815</td>
<td>13.132</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>93.029</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.661</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8533.000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>249.250</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .627 (Adjusted R Squared = .607)
As Table 8 shows, after adjusting for posttest scores, there was a significant effect of the group \(F(2,56)= 13.13, P= 0.00, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .319\). As \(P\)-value was smaller than 0.05, it could be argued that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the delayed posttest after removing the possible effect of their knowledge as tested through the posttest.

Estimated Marginal Means

Following this, the post-hoc comparison tests were run again to compare the groups two by two Table 9 shows the results of such analyses.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable:Delayed.Groups</th>
<th>(I) Groups</th>
<th>(J) Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. (^a)</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference (^a)</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.654(^*)</td>
<td>.457</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td>2.570</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.742(^*)</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.665</td>
<td>3.819</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-1.654(^*)</td>
<td>.457</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-2.570</td>
<td>-.738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.088(^*)</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1.954</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>unfocused</td>
<td>-2.742(^*)</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-3.819</td>
<td>-1.665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>-1.088(^*)</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-1.954</td>
<td>-.222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means

As the results of the pair-wise comparisons indicate, the mean difference between the focused-feedback group and the unfocused feedback group (MD= 1.65) as well as the mean difference between the focused-feedback group and the control group (MD= 2.74) and also the mean difference between the unfocused-feedback group and the control group (MD= 1.08) were all significant at \(P< .05\) which imply the more significant roles of both feedback types on the delayed posttest.

Discussion

4.3.1 Addressing Research Question One

Does focused written CF have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense in Iranian EFL learners of English?

The results showed that the focused CR group outperformed the control group on the posttest. The result of our study was in line with the results of some other studies which would be described below.

Araghi & Sahebkheir (2014) investigated whether focused CF and unfocused CF could cause any differential effects on the accurate use of the simple past tense between female and male EFL learners. The statistical analysis is indicated that the focused group did better than both unfocused and control groups in terms of the accurate use of English simple past tense. The results suggested that focused CF promotes learners' grammatical accuracy in second language (L2) writing more effectively than unfocused CF. Furthermore, the findings showed that gender did not make a significant difference over effectiveness of focused and unfocused CF.

Similarly, in another study by Sun (2013) thirty-three students of fourth semester German at the University Kansas were selected and the researcher sought to investigate whether focused written corrective feedback (WCF) promoted the acquisition of the German case morphology over the course of a semester. Participants received teacher WCF on five two-draft essay assignments under three treatment conditions: group (1) received focused used WCF on German case errors; group (2) received unfocused WCF on a variety of German grammar errors; and group (3) did not receive WCF on specific grammar errors. Combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study found that the focused group improved significantly in the accuracy of case forms while the u
nfocused and the control group did not make any apparent progress. The results indicated that focused WCF was effective in improving case accuracy in subjects’ writings in German as a foreign language (GFL) context.

Addressing Research Question Two
Does unfocused written CF have any significant effect on the learning of future perfect tense in Iranian EFL learners of English?
The results indicated that the unfocused CR group outperformed the control group on the posttest. The result of the prompt study was in line with the results of some other studies. Kassim & Ng (2014) investigated feedback efficacy on the accurate use of prepositions by ESL learners in written work over a period of 12 weeks. The study involved two treatment groups and a control group comparing the differential effects of the focused indirect with the unfocused indirect corrective feedback on the uptake and retention measured from the pretest, immediate and delayed posttests. Findings revealed that both treatment groups outperformed the control group in the posttests.

Addressing Research Question Three
Does focused feedback affect EFL students’ knowledge of future perfect tense any differently than unfocused feedback does?
The results showed that the focused CR group outperformed the unfocused CR group on the posttest. The result of our study was in line with the results of some other studies as described below.

In the same vein, Farrokhi & Sttarpour (2011) aimed at investigating whether direct focused corrective feedback and direct unfocused corrective feedback caused any differential effects on the accurate use of English articles by EFL learners across two different proficiency levels (low and high). The statistical analysis indicated that focused group did better than both unfocused and control groups in terms of accurate use of English articles in both proficiency levels.

In contrast to our result, Vosoughi, Davoudi Sharifabad, and Ghabool (2013) investigated the nature of two corrective explicit vs. implicit feedback typologies: 'Recasting' as implicit and 'Meta-Linguistic Talk' as explicit feedback on the writing performance of a group of 55 female Iranian non-major English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The results showed that feedback treatments significantly improved writing skills in the experimental groups; however, the subsequent post-test Scheffe results did not indicate an exclusive superiority for any of the two feedback types over the other in the two experimental groups (1&2).

Addressing Research Question Four
Is there a significant difference between the delayed effects of focused and unfocused feedback as far as retention of future perfect tense is concerned?
The results showed that the focused CR group outperformed the unfocused CR group on the delay posttest. The result of our study was in line with the results of some other studies which would be described below.

In the same vein, Van Beuningen, Jong, and Kuiken (2011) investigated the effect of comprehensive direct and coded WCF with 268 Dutch secondary schools students ages 14-15 with multilingual backgrounds in the context of Dutch immersion content-based course. Results showed that, on the measure of accuracy, both direct and coded WCF groups equally outperformed the control group and the writing practice group not only in editing but also in a new piece of writing four weeks after the delivery of one-time WCF.

In contrast to our result, Ashoori & khatib (2014) attempted to delve further into the effects of different corrective feedback strategies on enhancing learners’ writing accuracy both short and long term. The results of the short term test showed the significant superiority of direct feedback in the teacher student individual conference group over the other groups. In contrast, the learners in the indirect feedback group were slightly better than the group that received instruction through direct and teacher student conference feedback.

Vosoughi, Davoudi Sharifabad, and Ghabool (2013) research was also in contrast to our result. The study made an attempt to investigate the nature of two corrective explicit vs. implicit feedback typologies: 'Recasting' as implicit and 'Meta-Linguistic Talk' as explicit feedback on the writing performance.
nce of a group of Iranian non-major English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The results showed that feedback treatments significantly improved writing skills in the experimental groups; however, the subsequent post-test Scheffe results did not indicate an exclusive superiority for any of the two feedback types over the other in the two experimental groups (1&2).

Conclusion
This study investigated the extent to which, focused and unfocused written corrective feedback on future perfect tense could help EFL students improve their written accuracy little by little. This study followed the other studies concerning the role of WCF in L2 writing skill. The outcomes revealed that WCF is helpful in improving the performance of language learners in the acquisition of future perfect tense. The findings also showed that focused WCF group outperformed both unfocused WCF and the control group. These results propose that focused and unfocused CF both are helpful in writing accuracy however as focused group did better than unfocused group, it seems that focused CF benefit EFL learners more in learning future perfect tense than unfocused CF does. This study favors CF and showed its effects on future perfect tense accuracy and some other studies were in the line with this study. However, there were some studies which devaluated its effects. As a result and despite various studies for and against the effect of WCF on enhancing L2 writing, a firm conclusion is hard to achieve.

Suggestions for Further Research
Future researchers are recommended working on different kinds of corrective feedback (e.g., direct and indirect corrective) and target grammatical structures (e.g., definite and indefinite articles, perfect tenses, conditionals, active and passive voice, and modal auxiliary verbs, and etc.). The research can be replicated with larger samples in different genders, ages, first and second languages, and proficiency levels. Researchers can study the effect of CF on other aspects of second and foreign languages. Noticing and input enhancement strategies can also accompanied with CF to show any possible effect of them. Moreover, L2 researchers are suggested focusing on the theories of SLA in relation with WCF due to benefiting from possible conceptual frameworks. Longer delayed posttest, can be made about the long-term pros and cons of the three conditions. The development of technology can encourage the researchers studying CF through CALL. This study benefitted from teacher-learner interaction, other studies can examine learner-learner interaction through providing the learners with the opportunities for finding their problems and searching for solutions with the help of their peers.

REFERENCES
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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS’ AWARENESS OF LEARNERS’ LEARNING STYLES IN IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS’ VOCABULARY GAINS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the probable relationship between Iranian teachers’ awareness of students’ learning styles and its impact on their vocabulary enhancement. To this end, 132 female students were randomly selected from Iran Zamin Language Institute after being homogenized. The participants were required, initially, to complete Fleming’s (1987) VARK questionnaire in order for their learning styles to be determined. 35 aural and 35 kinesthetic students were chosen for the study. They were then divided into two groups namely control and experimental groups. Their instructors were assigned to teach them 30 selected vocabulary items over half a semester. To do so, the experimental group teacher was made aware of the students’ learning styles, but the control group teacher was not. The results of the t-test analysis indicated that there exists a statistically significant relationship between teachers’ awareness of students’ learning styles and their vocabulary enhancement.

Keywords: Awareness raising, Learning style, Vocabulary knowledge, Iranian EFL Learners

1. Introduction

Human beings are complicated creatures and are always under constant changes; therefore, we cannot ignore the differences among them, especially from the viewpoint of learning. Definitely, these differences could have some effects on the way of individual learning (Kolb, 1985). When we learn, our senses help us to process information and these different senses make different learning styles (Atkinson, 1991).

Undoubtedly, vocabulary is an essential part of language learning; in other words, the learner can use language more effectively by improving his vocabulary knowledge. Ellis (1992) believed that a learner learns a language through learning words and words relations. He proposes that the first things that learners learn are words and the role they play. Learners initially memorize the words and then, based on their roles which get dominated in their memories, learn sentences. Thus, the investigation of any methods including questioning techniques that might enhance vocabulary learning seems pedagogically fruitful.

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Learning styles are influenced by "learners’ genetic make-up, their previous learning experiences, their culture and the society they live in" (Gunes, 2004, p.10). Learning styles are among the concepts that are posited by researchers to show learners’ differences and varied needs, and it has been shown that all human beings have their own way of learning and that learners do not learn well when that style is neglected. (Guild et al., 1990). We can tailor our teaching techniques to tease out learners’ learning styles by asking visual learners, as an example, to watch movies, using audio equipment for auditory learners and involving kinesthetic learners in role-playing activities. According to Zapalska and Dabb (2002), the ways in which materials are presented and taught and whether or not they are presented in the learners’ preferred learning modalities have a crucial impact on how well a person absorbs the information.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

Words are regarded as the building blocks of any language and there is growing consensus among the experts in the field that a rich command of vocabulary could result in a remarkable betterment of the process of learning a foreign and second language (Allen, 1983; Zimmerman, 1997). Knowledge of a word, in general, includes the knowledge of physical forms (spelling and pronunciation), meanings, word forms, grammatical classes, and styles. Providing a comprehensive categorization of word knowledge, Nation (2001) believed that word knowledge is composed of knowledge of form, meaning and use with their subcategories. Vocabulary learning does not seem feasible without being instructed how to specify different kinds of word knowledge. Vocabulary plays an undeniable role in the development of all language skills. Schmitt (2008) maintained “one thing that students, teachers, materials writers, and researchers can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language (p. 329)”. The importance of the role of vocabulary is undeniable not only in productive skills (writing and speaking) but also in receptive skills (reading and listening).

2.2. Aspects of vocabulary knowledge

Generally, academic words could be classified as high-frequency and low-frequency. The words which are found in academic texts are known as academic words. The high-frequency words are the 2000 most commonly used words in a language, and low-frequency words are the other words that are not included in the 2000 high-frequency words. It is important for teachers to teach the high-frequency words and the words most used in the language first so that students can have a basic understanding of the language. The knowledge of the words deriving from the 2000 most frequent English words provides a comprehension of 95% of word use (Nunan, 2003).

2.3. Vocabulary learning

Learners often consider some criteria for selecting, storing, and utilizing vocabulary in different circumstances which influence their vocabulary size, positively or negatively, over time. This reveals the importance of the materials to which they have been exposed. Reading has long been considered as the main source of vocabulary development. “Best practice in vocabulary teaching and learning should aim to reduce this fragility [of vocabulary learning] by providing large quantities of suitably graded input, by providing it across a range of genres and topics” (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 268).

2.4. Learning styles

People learn in different ways. Different style of information processing is one of the major individual differences that affects the formation and acquisition of mental models (Wu, et al., 1998). Students differ in terms of their learning styles and strategies. Brown (2000) defined style as “a term that refers to consistent and
rather enduring tendencies or preference within an individual” (p. 113). According to Kluckhohn and Murray (1953) “every man is in certain respects like all other men, like some other men, or like no other man”.

Of the three schools of thought (e.g., behavioral psychology, cognitive psychology, and constructivism), constructivist view of learning is of more importance here because this school of thought takes into account individual differences. Parallel to this, Chalmers and Fuller (1996) argued that, with the advancement of the constructivist views of learning, many researchers embark on giving a clear picture of individual differences in the way people process information and gain understanding from different constructs.

Students in language classrooms have significantly different learning manners. Some students prefer to think and work alone (reflective learners), others learn better in groups (active learners), some others understand information through linear steps (sequential learners), others take a holistic look at all parts of a problem or situation (global learners), some of them like to learn concrete materials and tend to be practical (sensing learners), some others prefer to learn abstract materials such as theories and their meanings (intuitive learners). And finally, some students learn primarily with a visual element including image or picture (visual learners) or with verbal elements including words or texts (Felder & Soloman, 2001).

Carbo (1981) argued that learners have different learning styles – visual, auditory, read-write, write and kinesthetic; thus, there is no single learning method best for all learners. For example, “a visual learner may remember words after seeing them several times. A kinesthetic learner may desire to feel, touch, or trace over words to learn them. An auditory learner may learn words better when they are pronounced a few times or a read-write learner may best learn by taking notes and reading them.” (Cetin, 2001, p.74) These techniques are useful only when they are used in a proper way and for a proper group of learners. With the help of learning style inventory, teachers can choose the most effective vocabulary teaching activities and materials for their learners.

Learning styles are influenced by "learners’ genetic make-up, their previous learning experiences, their culture and the society they live in' (Gunes, 2004, p.10). Learning styles are among the concepts that are posited by researchers to show learners’ differences and varied needs and it has been shown that all human beings have their own way of learning and that learners do not learn well when that style is neglected (Guild et al., 1990).

Reid (1987) pointed out that learning styles are variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experiences. Reid categorized styles of learning into six types: Visual (learners who prefer seeing things in writing), Auditory (learners who prefer listening), Kinesthetic (learners who prefer active participation/experiences), Tactile (learners who prefer hands-on work), Group (learners who prefer studying with others), and Individual (learners who prefer studying alone).

2.5. Statement of the problem

When we come to the case of teaching and become eagle-eyed enough, we figure out that most teachers ignore such salient factors as individual differences among students particularly their different strategies and styles of learning, hence all students are treated in the same manner. According to Sitt-Gohdes (2001), teachers often teach in a way similar to the way they themselves have been taught. This may lead to the learners’ deep feeling of disappointment since their learning preferences are neglected by teachers. Therefore, given the plethora of studies conducted in the area of instruction techniques and strategies in language classrooms, it is necessary to pay more attention to the learners’ learning styles.

The present study was an attempt to shed light on one of the significant ways of vocabulary retention by Visual, Auditory, Read-write and Kinesthetic (VARK) styles for those who want to have a better cognition of
words. It tried to investigate ways of expanding vocabulary knowledge through the analysis of learning styles adopted by Iranian EFL intermediate students. It also looked into learning vocabulary through VARK styles to explore whether or not these styles can lead to better retention of vocabulary items.

The more teachers are aware of their students’ learning style, the more effective ways they can use in teaching them and helping them become more motivated and enjoy the atmosphere of the class. Some learners might prefer auditory instructions while others feel better when they are taught by visual or kinesthetic styles. Lack of sufficient information with regard to these issues may cause some problems in teaching and learning processes. To shed more light on these issues, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does teachers’ awareness of learners’ learning style improve students’ performance in terms of vocabulary learning?

2. Are there any differences between students’ learning style types and their success in terms of vocabulary learning?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 70 intermediate students who were chosen from among 132 students after being homogenized. They were then assigned randomly into two groups (control and experimental) after their VARK styles were determined. The participants of the study were students learning English at Iran Zamin Language Institute in Zanjan. They shared similar characteristics in terms of socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 13 to 16 years old and they were all females. Their mother tongues were Persian and Turkish. They were at an intermediate level in terms of English language proficiency.

3.2. Instruments and materials

To fulfill the objectives of the study, the researchers utilized certain instruments to measure the participants’ abilities in terms of language proficiency, and knowledge of vocabulary and a questionnaire to determine the participants’ learning styles all of which are described in detail as follows:

(1) The first instrument used in this study was the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (Lynda Edwards, 2007). This test enabled the researchers to select those learners who were compatible with the conditions of the study. This test was employed to assess students’ knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. It also enabled the researchers to have a deeper understanding of the level their participants were at. This test consists of 70 items including 10 multiple-choice and true-false reading items, 10 writing items, and 50 multiple-choice language use items.

(2) The VARK Questionnaire was used in this study in order to determine the participants’ learning style. It was developed by Fleming (1987). The questionnaire was applied to determine the extent to which the participants’ preferred style was visual, aural, read/write, or kinesthetic. The questionnaire consists of 16 randomly arranged sets of multiple-choice questions which deal with four types of learning styles (Auditory, Visual, Read-Write, and Kinesthetic). The reliability of the test, based on Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula, was found to be 0.82.

(3) A pre-test and a post-test were designed based on Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Thirty sentences were chosen on the basis of the target vocabulary from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary
English. The target words were omitted from the sentences and the participants were required to fill in the blanks. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the vocabulary test. The reliability of the vocabulary test turned out to be 0.81 based upon Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula.

(4) Thirty vocabulary items were chosen from *Top Notch Summit A and B* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006). The words were selected based on random topic choice and the researchers chose the ones which were five levels higher than the participants’ real level to consider the novelty of the vocabulary items according to the invaluable comments and suggestions made by professor Nations.

### 3.3. Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted by the researchers. A group of 30 homogenized EFL learners almost similar in terms of age, gender, and language proficiency level were selected to take part in the pilot study. To keep the content of the test confidential, the researchers selected the participants from a different language institute. In addition, to ensure maximum reliability, the researchers tried to create good testing conditions by allotting adequate time, answering all the questions before administering the test, and preventing them from cheating.

### 3.4. Procedures and research design

At the beginning of the study, the OPT was administered in order to homogenize the participants in terms of English language proficiency. A total of 132 intermediate EFL learners were invited to participate in the proficiency test. Subsequently, the VARK questionnaire was administered. Sixty two participants could not attain the minimum score for the intermediate level and they were excluded from the study. The selected participants who were just in Aural and Kinesthetic type (n = 70) were randomly assigned into two equal groups. The groups were pretested using a vocabulary pre-test before the treatment sessions. The reliability of the test, based on Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula, was found to be 0.81. No test was omitted.

The main phase of the study was conducted in the following manner. Learning style questionnaire was given to the participants in order to determine their learning styles. The questions were explained completely in their mother tongue by the researchers to avoid any misunderstandings. In the next session, a written pre-test was given to the participants. Neither the control group nor the treatment group could correctly fill in the blanks. Just two participants of the experimental group could answer a question correctly. Afterwards, 30 target vocabularies were given to the teachers of the both groups and the teaching sessions started.

The teacher of the control group was unaware of the style of participants and she was merely asked to teach the mentioned words in each session. All teaching sessions were meticulously observed by the researchers taking into account all relevant factors including the procedures, teaching methods and conditions. The teacher started her teaching by writing words on the board and then read them aloud for the students. After that, the students were asked to check those words in their monolingual dictionaries and discuss their meanings together. The students repeated the words continually after the teacher. In the end, the students were required to write down the words in their vocabulary notebooks and memorize their meanings. The steps taken by the experimental group teacher varied each session based on the students’ learning styles.

In all sessions, the voices of the experimental group were recorded. At the end of each session, the students wrote how they felt about the process of teaching and whether or not they liked it. Also, they mentioned if they learned in that way better or not. Interestingly, almost most of them were totally satisfied with the procedure and rejoiced in better learning and the enjoyable atmosphere. Finally, the post-test was given. The results were compared with those of the pre-test to discern whether there were statistically significant differences between them.
4. Results

The first research question of this study was meant to explore if teachers’ awareness of learners’ learning style could improve students’ performances in terms of vocabulary learning. In order to find the effects of the treatment on the learners, each group was given two vocabulary achievement post-tests. The descriptive statistics of both of the groups are compared and reported in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of participants’ performance on the post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posttest (Experimental Group)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24.33</td>
<td>2.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest (Control Group)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>2.168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores of experimental and control groups on immediate posttest were 24.33 and 10.30 respectively. Generally, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the immediate post-test. In order to verify the first null hypothesis of the study, a paired sample t-test was run between the scores of the experimental group on pretest and posttest. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Paired sample T-test of experimental group’s pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Sample T-test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning style treatment post-test Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Learning Style-Treatment Post-Test</td>
<td>-8.29</td>
<td>7.979</td>
<td>1.368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the pretest, and posttest scores of the experimental group ($t = 6.06, p < 0.05$). In other words, teachers’ awareness of learners’ learning style improved Iranian EFL learners’ performances in terms of vocabulary learning. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

The second research question of the study was meant to explore whether there are any differences between students’ learning style types and their success in vocabulary learning. An independent sample t-test was utilized between the post-test scores of the students with Kinesthetic and Aural learning styles. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
Independent sample t-test between the scores of Kinesthetic and Aural learners on posttest
Levene’s T-test For Equality of Variances  
t-test for Equality of Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>95% Confidence</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>tailed Difference</th>
<th>Difference Lower Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Sig. t df (2-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-4.65 Equal</td>
<td>36.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-5.35</td>
<td>68 .000</td>
<td>-7.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test variances</td>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of visual and kinesthetic learners in terms of their performances ($t = 5.35, p < 0.05$). In other words, there is a significant difference between students’ learning style types and their success in vocabulary learning.

5. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to lead teachers to notice the importance of learning style type and thus to enhance their awareness in this respect which can, in turn, result in an attempt on the part of teachers to match their teaching style with learners’ learning style. This will assist them in avoiding learning frustration, and creating a satisfactory atmosphere in their classes (Coffield, 2004).

The results of this study are congruent with those of other studies conducted by (McCarthy, 1982; Felder, Silverman, 1988; Coffield et al., 2004) which have emphasized that being aware of students’ learning styles, their motivational attitudes and psychological capacities will help teachers to set and arrange appropriate lesson plans according to the conditions. Another advantage of identifying students’ learning styles is to help them become a self-problem solver. If they know their styles better, they can solve their problems better, and they will be able to control their own lives (Biggs, 2001).

However, this finding of the study was in sharp contrast to those of the studied carried out by (Bateman 1968; Kampwirth and Bates, 1980; McKeachie, 1995; Fritz, 2002). They have claimed that their statistical results have not shown significant differences among the students who were taught based on their styles with the ones who were not.

6. Conclusion

Vocabulary is known as an important part of language learning. EFL learners frequently complain that learning new words in a short time is not really feasible. As a concluding remark, it can be stated that the learning styles used in this study proved to be more effective in L2 vocabulary instruction than other methods at intermediate levels among the participants of the present study. Accordingly, these significant findings were obtained from this study:
The participants in the experimental group, who received instruction based on learning styles, were able to more successfully learn the items. The difference between the experimental group and the control group in terms of vocabulary development was significant. That is, a significant difference was observed between VARK styles in terms of their influences on vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study seems to have been able to show that the use of the VARK styles can largely reduce learners’ problems in the acquisition and retention of L2 words. The findings of this research showed that teachers with a high level of awareness of students’ learning style can help them better in terms of vocabulary learning, and also create a fresh and fun atmosphere in the classroom compared to the teachers without such an awareness level.

This study has some pedagogical implications for all stakeholders such as EFL educational policy makers, material developers and EFL teachers who are open-minded enough to look at ideal teaching methods from a broader perspective. Holding some TTC (Teacher Training Course) classes for teachers, with the purpose of familiarizing them with such an important issue, can lead language learners to be more enthusiastic about learning, and enjoy the atmosphere of the classroom. Thus, the more aware and qualified the teachers are, and the better they can teach, the more the students will achieve.

This study is probably a call for language teachers, practitioners and researchers in the realm of language teaching to pay more attention to L2 vocabulary teaching techniques. The findings may encourage teachers to make a change in their teaching methods. The result may be of value to high-school teachers in an EFL context who are usually faced with the students’ request for information about effective techniques for vocabulary learning. The findings of this study can also help teachers to be informed of different vocabulary teaching techniques and help them choose the most appropriate one for their classes.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the support provided kindly by Iran Zamin Language Institute. We also wish to express our gratitude to the participants of the study for their sincere cooperation.

REFERENCES


THE STUDY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS’ READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY DURING EMERGING ADULTHOOD PERIOD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INTERPERSONAL IDENTITY STATUSES

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ABSTRACT
Accurate specification of identity status provides valuable details regarding individuals’ personality characteristics which can, in turn, play a crucial role in second language acquisition. The driving force behind this sociolinguistic study was the paucity of empirical research on the relationship among interpersonal identity status, gender, and reading comprehension ability during emerging adulthood period. 352 EFL juniors (184 female and 168 male) completed one demographic questionnaire along with an EOMEIS-2 questionnaire, and took four reading comprehension tests. Pearson correlation and two-way ANOVA were run for data analyses. The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between interpersonal identity achievement and reading comprehension scores. The results also indicated that there is a negative correlation between interpersonal identity diffusion and reading comprehension ability and that the relationship between gender and reading comprehension ability turned out to be statistically insignificant given the interpersonal identity statuses of the participants. The findings of this study could have some important implications for educational policy makers.

Keywords: Identity status, Gender, Reading comprehension, Emerging adulthood, EFL learners

1. Introduction
Individuals differ from each other with respect to their psychological, sociological, ethnic, cultural, geographical, economic, and gender diversities. But, due weight has not been given to the impact of psychological and sociological issues on individuals’ performances during their life span. Most of the people tend to be special and unique. Erikson (1963, cited in Kerpelman et al., 2012, p. 1427) stated “Identity is the process by which individuals define themselves as unique individuals”. Nevertheless, it is obvious that identity does not have merely one dimension. According to Johnson et al. (2011), “Identity encompasses the relation between the individual and society” (p. 27) which is the definition given by sociology. Sociology refers the relationships among people and their participation within society (Adams, 1998).

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2. Literature review
2.1. Identity
In the middle of the 20th century, Erikson was a pioneer in the field of identity formation. Gerald R. Adams (1998) believed “Erik Erikson (1968) set forth a theory of ego development to account for the interactions between psychological, social, historical and developmental factors in the formation of personality” (p.3). Based on Erikson’s viewpoint (1968), identity formation is divided into two components: ideological identity and interpersonal identity. Friendship, dating, gender roles, and recreational activities are the four aspects of interpersonal identity domain (Lilly, 2008). Interpersonal identity provides answer to questions like “who am
I and what do I want to do in my life?” (Luyckx et al., 2013, p. 159). Adams (1998) believes “Interpersonal processes focus on the emergence of an autonomous self from that of others” (p. 5). This domain is mainly related to each individual’s performance in social contexts and refers to each person’s connectedness with others.

Marcia, as Wong et al. (2010) claim, was prosperous in introducing the conceptual and methodological ground for studying Erikson’s theory on identity formation. Research in Marcia’s identity status paradigm did not concentrate on the process of identity development, but on the basis of exploration and commitment (as the two fundamental factors in his model). He mainly focused on categorizing individuals into four identity statuses (Zimmermann et al., 2012). Schwartz (2006) maintains “Exploration represents sorting through an array of goals, values, and beliefs, whereas commitment represents the act of choosing and adhering to a specific set of goals, values, and beliefs” (p. 778). Identity achievement consists of high exploration and high commitment, identity moratorium is characterized by high exploration and low commitment, identity foreclosure with low exploration and high commitment, and finally, identity diffusion is composed of low exploration and low commitment. According to different researchers, each level has its own characteristics. A brief explanation for each of them is provided as follows:

Identity Diffusion is mainly considered as the least advanced, the least mature, and the least intricate status. Identity diffused individuals have a lack of concern for their present life, and a lack of interest in their future life (Cote et al., 2002). Based on the research conducted by Njus et al. (2008), they have the lowest level of cognitive ability and have not any purpose or aim in their lives. They prefer their decisions to be made by other people (Yunus et al., 2010).

Foreclosed individuals “adopt someone else’s standards, rules, career choices, religious, beliefs, and so forth without first examining or questioning these ideas” (Schwartz, 2001, p. 13). These people are somewhat rigid and close-minded (Marcia, 1980). According to Njus et al. (2008), they have a low self-concept and low level of cognitive ability. Yunus et al. (2010) posited that they like to rely on others’ advice. In other words, they are “rigid in their thought processes and seek approval at higher rates” (Lilly, 2008, p:10).

Moratorium Status may be accompanied by higher levels of anxiety (Kidwell et al., 1995) and uncertainty (Meeus et al., 1999). According to Luyckx et al. (2005), these people have a low self-esteem and show high depressive symptoms (Yunus et al., 2012). Meeus (1992) believes that the time that individuals spend in moratorium status is less than other stages (Schwartz, 2001).

Identity Achievement is mostly considered as the most complex status with special characteristics such as higher self-esteem and self-confidence (Yunus et al., 2012), mature interpersonal relationships (Dyk and Adams, 1990), higher level of happiness and satisfaction (Everall et al., 2005), and higher give-and-take relationships with parents (Jackson et al., 1990, cited in Cote, 2002). These people are very independent (Yunus et al., 2012). Also, an identity-achieved person is a complex thinker (Lilly, 2008) who is rational and creative.

2.2. Reading comprehension

As “literacy has always been described in terms of being able to read” (Baleghizadeh, 2011: 1669), reading comprehension can be considered as one of the most essential language learning skills. Grabe and Stoller (2001) believe that reading skill is a fundamental means for receiving new information. This skill is equally vital to academic learning as well as lifelong learning (Lee, 2012). Reading comprehension is defined by Rathvon (2004) as “the ability to derive meaning from text” (p. 156). Although acquiring information from reading comprehension texts is seen as a basic activity in language learning, it entails a complex process. As Yugurtcu (2013) asserts “The process of reading comprehension provides a link between thinking, textual content, and the reader’s level of readiness, expectations and objectives of a reading” (p.385). Parallel to this, Lee (2012) states, “reading process is the interaction between what the author has written and the reader’s own background and experience; in other words, this is a cognitive process” (p. 310).

2.3. Emerging adulthood

According to Erikson’s (1968) theory, the creation of an identity is the central developmental task during adolescence. Therefore, it is a focal point in many related studies. Some researchers believe that in this age period “individuals increasingly engage in self-reflective behaviors, seeking to make meaning of themselves in relation to the social world” (Morgan et al., 2012: 1471). However, some other researchers like Berk (2006) believe that adolescent identity formation has its own problems one of which is the fact that “some adolescents seem to have conflicts about their own identity” (Yunus et al., 2010:146). In addition, Meeus et al. (2011) argue that “the identity conflict is resolved between the ages of 18 and 22”. Some researchers like Arnett (2000) propose that although identity development begins during adolescent, it becomes firm and
dense during the ages of 18 and 25. The term “Emerging Adulthood” was coined by Arnett (2000) to refer to this newly invented period in the first year of the 21st century. From Arnett’s (2007) point of view, this time interval (18-25) is considered as a separate life period between adolescence and adulthood and is an “international phenomenon” (Arnett, 2012, p. 239).

2.4. Gender

One of the most important demographic variables which are mostly looked at in a variety of studies is gender. Gender provides essential information about males and females’ physical, mental, and innate abilities. Some researchers like Marcia (1980) and Waterman (1999) believe that the relation between gender and identity development is unpredictable. Anthis et al. (2004) confirmed that “gender differences in identity were much more complex than one believed” (p. 148). Erikson (1968) stated that boys reach the higher levels of identity before girls. Keybollahi et al. (2012) found a reverse result according to which girls reach the higher levels of identity before boys. In addition, Bartoszuk and Pittman (2010, cited in Morgan and Korobov, 2012) found that women were more likely to engage in exploration in the friendship and dating domains than men. Nemlioğlu and Atak (2010), Branch (2001), and Klimstra et al. (2010) found no significant differences between the two genders. Cramer (2000) stated that:

Scholars such as Archer (1989; Archer & Waterman, 1988), Waterman (1982, 1993), and Kroger (1997), reviewing 30 years of identity research, conclude that the identity development of males and females, when looked at from the point of view either of structure or of process, is highly similar. (p. 43)

Similar results were found for the relationship between gender and reading comprehension. Wei-Wei (2009), and Sallabas (2008) believed that girls outperformed boys on reading comprehension exams. Young & Oxford (1997) and Aslan (2009) found no significant difference between the two genders. Ambusaidi and Al-Mahrooqi (2012) carried out a study in Oman and concluded that males got better scores on science-oriented and aggressive-oriented passages while females were better in art-oriented passages and on texts which had an emotional genre.

2.5. Statement of the problem

According to Edwards (1985), sociolinguistics “is essentially about identity, its formation, presentation and maintenance” (p. 3). Thus, the main focus of this study is on the social aspects of language learning, particularly EFL learners’ differences in terms of their levels of identity status, their genders, and their reading comprehension abilities. By and large, the present study had two main purposes. The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between four levels of interpersonal identity status and reading comprehension. The second purpose was to determine the relationship between reading comprehension and gender based on interpersonal identity status. Then, five research questions were formulated:

1. Is there any significant relationship between interpersonal identity diffusion and reading comprehension?
2. Is there any significant relationship between interpersonal identity foreclosure and reading comprehension?
3. Is there any significant relationship between interpersonal identity moratorium and reading comprehension?
4. Is there any significant relationship between interpersonal identity achievement and reading comprehension?
5. Is there any significant relationship between gender and reading comprehension on the basis of interpersonal identity status?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Three hundred and fifty-two undergraduate EFL bilingual (Persian and Azeri) learners participated in this study. They were chosen from Islamic open universities and state universities in Zanjan and Tabriz, Iran. 184 of them were female (52.3%) and 168 of them were male (47.7%) with an age range of 18-25 (age mean = 22.8) in their emerging adulthood period. They were all junior students and had passed half of their credits successfully the majority of which were related to reading comprehension courses.

3.2. Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study:

3.2.1. Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-II)

As for the assessment of identity status of the participants, the Revised Version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-II) was employed. Bennion & Adams (1986) tested their questionnaire on a sample of 106 college students and confirmed its reliability and validity. Rahiminejad (2001) conducted a study in Iran and concluded that the questionnaire was both reliable and valid. Many other empirical studies including the studies done by Allison and Schultz (2001), Streitmatter (1989), and Bennion and Adams (1986) had already proved the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.
3.2.2. A demographic questionnaire

The students were required to complete a demographic questionnaire which was administered at the same time as the administration of the EOMEIS-II. This questionnaire gathered background information about the participants’ gender, age, marital status, language(s), residence, their fathers’ education, their mothers’ education, and their parents’ occupations.

3.2.3. TOEFL (Reading Comprehension Test)

Golkar and Yamini (2007) believe that a standardized way of evaluating the level of language proficiency of non-native speakers of English is TOEFL. So, four standardized multiple-choice reading comprehension tests were chosen from Longman TOEFL test (Phillips, pp. 505, 401, 395, & 324). The test was composed of 40 multiple-choice questions.

3.3. Procedures

In order to make sure that the reading texts were suitable for the target samples, a pilot study was conducted. 10 students (5 girls and 5 boys) with almost similar characteristics to the target samples (age mean = 22.2) were selected. Item facility (M = 0.61), and item discrimination (M = 0.64) were calculated for all the items. No item was deleted as they all had acceptable indices. The internal consistency of the four reading passages turned out to be 0.73 which was estimated by Cronbach Alpha.

All four hundred participants were required to answer the questions in both demographic and EOM-EIS-II questionnaires. They also took the selected four reading comprehension tests. These reading comprehension tests helped the researchers, in the first place, to determine the participants’ homogeneity. The individuals whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean were found appropriate for this research. It is noteworthy that those who did not answer the questionnaires completely were excluded from the study. In the end, three hundred and fifty-two people were selected as the participants for the current study.

3.4. Statistical analysis

In order to test the hypotheses of the study, most of the calculations were done with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 20). The Cronbach Alpha was computed to determine the internal consistency of EOMEIS-2 questionnaire, as well as the reading comprehension tests. To determine the level identity of each of the individuals, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for the four stages of interpersonal identity status. Moreover, the relationship between the participants’ identity statuses and their reading comprehension achievements was calculated through Pearson Correlation Analysis. Also, two-way between-groups ANOVA was utilized to determine whether gender (as the moderator variable) had any statistically significant effect on reading comprehension levels given the interpersonal identity statuses.

4. Results

4.1. Identity status membership

The EOM-EIS-II questionnaire used in this study contained 32 items, with 8 items reflecting each of the four identity statuses (diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement). Four domains of interpersonal identity status (friendship, dating, gender roles, and recreational activities) were taken into consideration as well. A six-point Likert scale was employed to measure the responses from strongly disagree (A) to strongly agree (F). Items marked as “strongly disagree” had a value of one and the “strongly agree” responses had a value of six. So, based on Adams’ (1998) view, each individual was assigned to a particular status if his scores on the corresponding status scale passed one standard deviation above the mean. Laghi et al. (2013) asserted “when respondents scored one standard deviation above the mean on two (or more) identity statuses we assigned them to the lower of the two (or more) identity statuses” (p. 484). In addition, participants with scores falling lower than one standard deviation above the mean on all four statuses were scored as the low-profile moratorium. Solomontos-Kountouri et al. (2008) stated “As these people seem to waver between different options, they resemble the moratorium status” (p. 248). He also mentioned that pure moratorium and low-profile moratorium could be considered as a single moratorium status.

The score of each participant obtained through EOMEIS-II questionnaire determined the level of their identity status. The mean and the standard deviation for achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion statuses were alternatively (M = 33.87, SD = 5.09), (M = 27.26 & SD = 5.86), (M = 22.22 & SD = 6.37), and (M = 22.35 & SD = 6.84). The internal consistency which was calculated by Cronbach Alpha for the four identity statuses proved to be 0.72. In addition, 58% of the participants turned out to be in achievement status. Although, compared to American and European countries, this amount is not very good especially in this period of life,
it is acceptable for Asian countries. 18.8% of the participants fell into moratorium status (both pure moratorium and low-profile moratorium), 7.1% fell into foreclosure status, and 16.1% fell into diffusion status.

4.2. Preliminary analyses of reading comprehension tests
The scores of the main two reading comprehension passages (the second and the third reading texts) were computed for 352 male and female EFL learners (184 girls, 168 boys, age mean = 22.8). The mean and standard deviation were calculated, too (M = 13.75, SD = 3.2). The distribution of reading comprehension scores was relatively normal among the participants. The internal consistency of these two passages was 0.72, which was estimated by Cronbach Alpha.

4.3. The relationship between interpersonal identity status and reading comprehension
One of the main goals of this research was to determine the relationship between identity diffusion status and reading comprehension scores. In order to find an answer to the first research question, Pearson Correlation analysis was run. The results indicated that a significant negative correlation existed between reading comprehension and interpersonal identity diffusion (r = -.543, p < .05). The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). Then, diffused identity status, as demonstrated in Table 1, was associated with lower reading comprehension scores.

Table 1
Correlation between reading comprehension scores and diffusion status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total score of Reading</th>
<th>Total score of Diffusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total score of Reading</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>-.543**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score of Diffusion</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation -.543**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (1-tailed)

This study also tried to investigate the relationship between identity moratorium and reading comprehension. As the probability was greater than .05, there was no significant relationship between these two factors (r = .128, p > .05). No significant relationship was found in foreclosure status, either (r = -.052, p > .05). The relationship between identity achievement and reading comprehension was examined, too. A significant positive correlation existed between reading comprehension and interpersonal identity achievement (r = .680, p < .05). As shown in Table 2, the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed) meaning that achieved identity status was associated with higher reading comprehension scores.

Table 2
Correlation between reading comprehension scores and achievement status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total score of Reading</th>
<th>Total score of Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total score of Reading</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>.680**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score of Achievement</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .680**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

4.4. The relationship between interpersonal identity statuses, gender, and reading comprehension
The other goal of this research was to examine gender differences of emerging adults with respect to reading comprehension, based on interpersonal identity status. As there were one dependent variable (reading comprehension), but two independent variables (gender and interpersonal identity status), the two-way between-groups ANOVA was run. Levene’s test showed that the probability was greater than 0.05, then it could be assumed that the variances were relatively equal. It was also demonstrated that the main effects of interpersonal identity status and gender factors were not significant on reading comprehension scores [F (3,
Figures 1 and 2 also confirmed that no significant differences existed between the performances of the two genders.

Moreover, Figure 3 below shows the percentages of the two genders based on their levels of identity status. Although no statistically significant differences existed between the two genders, some minor results were obtained. As some researchers like Graf et al. (2008), and Meeus et al. (2011) have found more females were in identity achievement status than males, the findings of this study also confirmed their findings (males: 54.3% & females: 60.6%). The findings of this study regarding the number of individuals in moratorium were congruent with those of the study by Yunus et al. (2012) according to which the number of female individuals in moratorium was more than males (males: 8.6% & females: 27.7%). In a study conducted by Ahamed et al. (2011), they asserted that males were more in foreclosure status than females. This study also confirmed their results (males: 10.8% & females: 6.06%). Cakir et al. (2005), Soenens et al. (2005) and also Meeus et al. (2011) concluded that males were more in diffusion status than females. Similarly, this study obtained the same result (males: 26.06% & females: 9.09%).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of interpersonal identity status on EFL learners’ reading comprehension ability. A significant negative relationship was found between identity diffusion and reading comprehension. Individuals, who were located in identity diffusion, got the lowest scores on reading comprehension tests. The important fact is related to the percentages of foreclosure status (i.e.16.5% foreclosed individuals). This percentage is too high in emerging adulthood period. As everything seems meaningless for foreclosed individuals, they have a feeling of emptiness within them. On the other hand, the results of the present study indicated that those who reached identity achievement status outperformed the others (those in other three identity statuses) in terms of reading comprehension ability. Then, individuals (more than half of the participants) in identity achievement status got the highest scores on reading comprehension tests.

It is worth mentioning that 89% of the achieved individuals liked their field of study and liked to continue their studies. This finding is congruent with the conclusion made by Yunus et al. (2012) based on which those
who reach identity achievement have a plan for their future life. They are aware of their abilities and disabilities as well as their future plans. It can be concluded that these people can be better teachers because they have a plan, higher self-esteem, higher self-confidence, and higher cognition. As Cacioppo et al. (1996) have stated cognition refers to each person’s willingness to logical thinking. Cognition helps us to make an appropriate decision for our future life based on our previous experiences. Njus et al. (2008) and Lee’s (2012) also found that those people who get higher scores on reading comprehension and enjoy a higher identity status have a high level of cognitive ability. It goes without saying success in learning a second language is not feasible without a high level of motivation. Identity achieved individuals can be better English teachers because they are motivated enough; they can overcome learning barriers and consequently can motivate their students. Another line of research can determine whether or not similar findings are attained if the study is replicated in English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts.

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