

Iranian EFL Journal



The Iranian EFL Journal Quarterly

March 2009

Volume 3

Iranian EFL Journal



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and

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Iranian EFL Journal



Iranian EFL Journal Press
A Division of Time Taylor International Ltd
Trustnet Chambers
Doosan Towers
Haeundae
Busan
S. Korea

<http://www.iranian-efl-journal.com>

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ISSN (pending)

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Iranian EFL Journal



Welcome to the third Edition of the Iranian EFL Journal. The Iranian EFL Journal is proud to announce it has grown in readership over its relatively short life – supported by the Asian EFL Journal and Linguistics Journal. Readership now totals over 10,000 readers a month in what is becoming a very important source for knowledge and learning into the acquisition of the English language. The Iranian EFL Journal is a major source of accessible on-line information into the study of Second Language Acquisition.

We present seven articles in this edition. In the first article Rahman Sahragard and Afsaneh Baharloo endeavored to investigate the relationship of Iranian EFL learners' fear of success and imposter phenomenon with their academic achievement and language proficiency. They report, based on the results obtained in this study, one can conclude that there is a significant relationship between students' fear of success and their experience of impostorism which indicates that students who fear the outcomes of success feel more like imposters and think that they do not deserve their current position.

In the second article, the learned authors, Reza Pishghadam and Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh investigated the effect of teacher self-disclosure on the speaking ability of the EFL learners. They conclude qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data demonstrated that teacher self-disclosure is effective in developing the speaking ability. In the third article, the aim of author Mohammad Rahimi was to see if it was possible to create positive attitudes in Iranian EFL learners by familiarizing them with the format of a new test and practicing with it. As a result of practicing with the test, the students both developed positive attitudes toward the test as a test of language proficiency and became familiar with the format and content of the test. Consequently, their performance on the test improved.

Khalil Motallebzadeh & Hamed Ghaemi explored the effect of online reading strategies on the choice of offline reading strategies of the participants. The results of their study revealed something special. Based on the statistical results reported in their study, problem solving online reading strategies and compensation (offline) reading strategies were the most significant priorities for language learners while reading in online and offline environments. In the next article, S.A. Razmjoo, R. Sahragard, & M. Sadri aimed at identifying the relationship between multiple intelligences (MI), vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies among the Iranian EFL learners. Behrooz Ghoorchaei & Zohreh Kassaian investigated whether risk-taking, as a personality factor, is related to the speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL students. Finally, authors Firouz Sadighi, Rahman Sahragard, & Seyed Mohammad Jafari, investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension (LC) and their foreign language classroom anxiety.

Our congratulation and thanks go to the authors who have written such authoritative works and helped towards the understanding of English in the Iranian context. And our sincere thanks go to the growing readership of the Iranian EFL Journal

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Title:

Fear of Success, Imposter Phenomenon, Academic Achievement, and Language Proficiency among some Iranian EFL Learners: a correlational study

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Abstract

This study was an endeavor to investigate the relationship of Iranian EFL learners' fear of success and imposter phenomenon with their academic achievement and language proficiency. To achieve the objectives of the study three data gathering instruments were used. The Fear of Success (FOS) Scale of Zuckerman and Allison (1976) was utilized to measure the students' degree of fear of success. Furthermore, the Imposter Phenomenon questionnaire developed by Harvey (1982) was employed. The third instrument was a

truncated version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to measure the participants' language proficiency level. In order to collect the necessary data, the instruments were given to 151 female and male college students majoring in English Literature at Shiraz University. These participants were conveniently sampled. Then the obtained data underwent certain statistical procedures to determine the relationship of fear of success, imposter phenomenon, academic achievement and language proficiency with each other and specify the role of gender and years of university study in each variable. The analysis of the data revealed that there are significant positive relationships between fear of success and imposter phenomenon, as well as, language proficiency and academic achievement. But the findings of this study showed that learners' fear of success and imposter phenomenon did not correlate with their language proficiency and academic achievement significantly. Moreover, the results of the independent t-tests indicated that male and female participants' performances on the three instruments did not differ significantly. In addition, one-way ANOVAs which were run to determine the impact of academic level on each of the variables understudy revealed that seniors outperformed the other levels on their language proficiency. Besides, the findings indicated that juniors significantly differ from the other three groups in terms of their academic achievement. But the results showed that, in this study, students' fear of success and imposter phenomenon were not affected by their academic level significantly.

Key words: Fear of success, Imposter phenomenon, Language proficiency, Academic achievement

Introduction

In recent years, the area of foreign language education has received a lot of attention in terms of factors influencing learning. Among those influential factors are psychological aspects of learning, and the relationship between behavioral traits and different levels or branches of learning a foreign language in disparate contexts such as schools, institutes, colleges, and other environments. Many of typical studies in this field seem to aim at discovering some hidden dimensions of human mind and personality.

Learners are different in their personality features and processes; they receive and process information differently; their personality trait is different and, so is their understanding. It is often argued that a blend of personality characteristics is necessary for people to be successful in their education and career. Educators, researchers, and psychologists have been constantly searching for parsimonious set of variables that predicts patterns of students' behaviors and their relationship to academic achievement.

Personality has been recognized as a determining factor on how people learn (Lawrence, 1997; Myer, McCauley, Quenk, and Hammer, 1998). College students tend to prefer learning environments consistent with their own personality type preferences. Two important concepts that deserve investigation in language teaching and learning circles are fear of success and imposter phenomenon. Fear of success is a psychological trait that keeps most learners from making progress and from achieving their academic goals, especially, in the contexts of foreign language learning and causes learners to have fear of not being able to deal with the outcomes of success. Fear of success is a kind of debilitating anxiety of not being good enough, when one unites all one's talents and virtues for a greater achievement in order to confront and dismiss existing fears in an appropriate manner, while one sets sights on a goal and wants to achieve it at any costs with both sacrifices and rewards (Messina, 2005).

Conroy (2007) believes that fear of failure energizes individuals to avoid failure because of the left aversive consequences of failing. In a similar way Messina (2005) thinks that fear of success is the opposite of fear of failure, in that fear of failure is the fear of making mistakes and losing approval while fear of success is the fear of accomplishment and being recognized and honored.

Imposter phenomenon is another factor that Rothman (2003) defines as a sense of having fooled other people into overestimating one's ability and the fear of being exposed as a fraud. According to Arena and Page (1992) "The imposter phenomenon describes individuals who at times feel as if they are imposters in their chosen profession. Individuals experiencing the phenomenon have a deep feeling that they are fooling everyone" (p. 121). Kleinfeld (2008) also refers to the imposter phenomenon as a catchy term introduced by Clance and Imes (1978) in order to describe an internal experience of intellectual phoniness which may lead to anxiety and feeling of insecurity. In the same

sense, Bernard, Dollinger, and Ramanian (2002) think that the imposter phenomenon is the internal experience of intellectual phoniness in many high achieving people who try to internalize their successful experiences.

Regarding language proficiency, Bachman (1990) believes that the term ' language proficiency' has been used to refer, in general, to knowledge, competence, or ability in the *use* of a language, irrespective of how, where, or under what conditions it has been acquired. Bachman (1990) thinks that ' language proficiency' is essentially synonymous with ' language ability' or ability in language use. Oller (1983) argues that language proficiency is not a single unitary ability, but that it consists of several distinct but related constructs of language proficiency (cited in Bachman 1990), as, Farhady, Jafarpour, & Birjandi (1994) state a language learner can be a listener, speaker or both at a given point in time.

The fourth factor dealt with here is academic achievement. Generally, academic achievement is a term that refers to what students have achieved during a term due to attending and participating in different courses at school or universities. In most studies that aim at investigating students' academic achievement (academic success) either separately or in relation to other factors, learners' grade point average (GPA) is used as the most common indicator of their academic achievement.

Best and Kahn (1989) assume that achievement tests attempt to measure what an individual learner has acquired. Achievement tests are particularly helpful in assessing individual or group status in academic learning. Achievement test scores are used to diagnose strengths and weaknesses and thus can be considered as a basis for awarding prizes, scholarship or degrees. They are also used in evaluating teachers, teaching methods and other factors which can be significant in educational situations.

Some pieces of research have been done to find both the nature of each of these variables either in isolation or together, and the relationship of these traits with different aspects of learning regarding the context of foreign language; however, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study to date has been conducted to look at the influence of fear of success and imposter phenomenon, as potential variables, on language learning and teaching.

Furthermore, Going over the studies in the area of language education, one can easily come to know that many practitioners and researchers have investigated to create the best academic situations in which learners can achieve both their own goals and those of the educational system; as well as helping them to be able to use language efficiently; therefore, academic achievement and language proficiency have been the focus of many studies.

Statement of the Problem

Many psychologists believe that learners' personality traits play an important role in their learning process. Therefore, they suggest that language researchers and practitioners should pay attention to both personality-related factors of learning as well as language-related aspects in learning a foreign or second language (Maleki & Zangani, 2007).

Imposter phenomenon as Clance and Imes (1978) state "is used to designate an *internal* experience of intellectual phoniness that appears to be particularly prevalent and intense among a selected sample" (p. 241).

Similarly as Pavlina (2004) believes, fear of success is an *internal* fear that stops a person from taking a step towards achieving higher goals because of fear of unknown consequences that may result from this success. In addition, a person having fear of success usually has an *internal* conflict because on the one hand s/he may be willing to gain success while on the other hand his/her fear of success will hold him/her back.

Therefore, as it was mentioned, one can notice that both imposter phenomenon and fear of success are factors which are related to the *internal* parts of one's personality. In other words, imposter phenomenon and fear of success are the kind of personality-related aspects which are very influential in learners' process of learning a foreign language.

The present study, hence, aims at investigating the relationship of the psychological characteristics of "fear of success" and "imposter phenomenon" with "academic achievement" and "language proficiency" among foreign language university learners; in other words, studying the relationship between these traits and foreign language learners' "academic achievement" and their "language proficiency" is the purpose.

In order to clarify the points under investigation in this study the following research questions are posed:

- 1) Is there a significant relationship between fear of success and academic achievement?
- 2) Is there a significant relationship between Imposter Phenomenon and academic achievement?
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between imposter phenomenon and fear of success?
- 4) Is there a significant relationship between fear of success and language proficiency?
- 5) Is there a significant relationship between Imposter Phenomenon and language proficiency?
- 6) Is there a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and language proficiency of EFL learners?
- 7) Are there significant differences in the students' degrees of fear of success and imposter phenomenon with regard to their years of study?
- 8) Are there significant differences in the students' performances on language proficiency and academic achievement with regard to their years of study?

Significance

Most of the studies that have been carried out regarding individuals' degree of imposter phenomenon or their fear of success are related to the fields other than EFL / ESL; therefore research in these areas, especially due to the psychological pressure of learning a foreign or a second language exerts on the learners, seems quite urgent.

Since no previous study has been conducted, investigating "fear of success" and "imposter phenomenon" among university learners of English as a foreign language, as well as, considering their relationship with "academic achievement" and "language proficiency", this research can be quite significant and useful in the area of foreign language education. Finding more about the variables under consideration in this study makes both teachers and learners more informed of the learner variables that affect the process of teaching and learning. Hence, the teachers may better help the learners overcome their fear of success and imposter phenomenon as far as they may become debilitating and affect students' self-esteem negatively.

Paying attention to the relationship between learners' proficiency level and their academic achievement on one hand, as well as, certain psychological barriers such as fear of success and imposter phenomenon on the other hand causes a sort of novelty in the field of language research that makes this study look different in the sense that it aims to study those aspects that have not been considered by any language researchers yet.

Furthermore, because of the nature of this study and the variables under consideration and their relationship, the findings of this study can contribute to the body of knowledge of both the field of learning and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL situation) as well as other areas such as sociology and psychology.

Literature Review

Though many studies have been carried out regarding different aspects of foreign language learning and teaching, especially many of which have focused their attention on language proficiency or academic achievement, no previous piece of research has been carried out concentrating on the variables which are under discussion in the present study. Specifically a few studies have investigated fear of success, imposter phenomenon, and achievement either in isolation or their relationship among different groups. The studies which are presented in this part are classified according to their subjects and the variables under their discussion.

Fear of Success and Achievement

Several pieces of research have been carried out to investigate the relationship between fear of success and academic achievement; however, they came into different findings.

Some studies revealed significant relationships between fear of success and academic achievement. For example, Lew, Allen, Papouchis, and Ritzler (1998) aimed at finding the relationship between achievement orientation and fear of success among Asian American college students. One hundred and eighty-five Asian American undergraduates participated in their research. The findings indicated that achievement orientation predicted fear of success; and, social-oriented achievement was related to high fear of academic success.

In another piece of research, Girffore (1978) developed a study to investigate fear of success with regard to its measurement and impacts on college students' academic performance. In his investigation, two experiments were conducted to determine: first, whether fear of success interacts with subjects' expectancies of success to affect performance on exams in college courses; second, whether fear of success can be clearly distinguished from fear of failure; and finally, whether males and females differ on fear of success. He studied 68 subjects and the results of his investigation indicated that fear of success measures were significantly correlated with fear of failure and academic achievement. The results also indicated that males and females did not significantly differ on fear of success.

Studying the relationship between fear of success and achievement Fleming and College (1978) conducted an experiment in which fifty-five black undergraduate college students participated in two one-hour sessions where motive performances scales to measure their course achievements were used. The findings indicated that

Among women of working-class origin, Fear of Success exerted the strongest influence on behavior and inhibited achievement-striving in nontraditional directions. The findings among middle-class women support the prevailing opinion that black women are more achievement-oriented than their white counterparts, but the results for working-class women challenge the findings of earlier studies based upon the original measure of Fear of Success imagery, and suggest that an internalized conflict over achievement and feminine identity may be a salient motivation among some black women (p. 694).

However, other studies proved that no significant relationship can be observed between fear of success and academic achievement. For example, Eme and Lawrence (1976) studied a sample of 78 female and 63 male 9-th grade students to find the relationship between fear of success and academic achievement. The analysis of the collected data from the sample showed that the correlation between fear of success and academic achievement was not significant.

In a similar study Froelich (1996) investigated fear of success among university students. In his study, the sampling included 210 students of whom 83 were males and 127 females. Among the independent variables under consideration were academic

achievement and college classification. The dependent variable was the fear of success scale score. The results of his study showed that females have no more fear of success than males and that the age of the college students as well as their academic achievement were not associated with the fear of success.

Imposter Phenomenon and Achievement

Studying the relationship between imposter phenomenon and high achievement in order to see whether there is a significant relationship between these variables (IP and high achievement), Hirschfield (1982) studied 80 successful career women to see if they attribute their success to internal factors and abilities. The findings suggest that most of the successful career women suffer from imposter phenomenon and they have not identified their ability to be responsible for their career achievements. Therefore, the results emphasized the existence of a positive significant relationship between imposter phenomenon and high achievement.

In a similar study King and Cooley (1995) examined the relationship between achievement orientation and imposter phenomenon among college students. After studying a group of 124 undergraduate students, they found that greater achievement orientation was associated with higher levels of imposter phenomenon and especially, taking the sex variable into account they realized that imposter phenomenon was associated with higher grade point averages for females.

In addition, Bresette, O'Neill, Scapino, Walters, Walsh and Woods (2005) investigated the relationship between imposter phenomenon and academic achievement among high school students. The findings showed that a greater experience of imposter phenomenon significantly correlated with higher academic achievement.

Kumar and Jagacinski (2006) also conducted an experiment to investigate the relationship between imposter fears and achievement goals. They thought that "Both imposter fears and ability-avoid achievement goals are assumed to be grounded in fear of failure and a general lack of confidence in one's abilities" (p. 147). They asked 135 college students to complete the Clance IP scale and measures of achievement. The researchers found out that both imposter phenomenon and achievement were positively

related to test anxiety and negatively related to confidence in one's intelligence; they also came to know that women expressed higher imposter fears than men.

Therefore, the findings of all available studies, in which seeking the relationship between imposter phenomenon and academic achievement had been the purpose, highlight a significant positive relationship between imposter phenomenon and academic achievement.

Fear of Success and Imposter Phenomenon

Fried-Buchalter (1992) studied a sample of 104 mid-level marketing managers to investigate the relationship among fear of success, fear of failure and imposter phenomenon to see the relative consequences of each of these traits on the sample group. In order to measure these issues three questionnaires each of which representing a value for one of those personality traits under the study were given to the subjects. The results showed that fear of failure scores were correlated significantly with the imposter phenomenon representing one's self-estimated intellectual ability and with the fear of success representing the perception that career success has a negative impact on the self. The results also indicated that "fear of success is a construct which involves a neurotic conflict between a strong need to win and a perception that the very success one achieves will result in negative consequences" (p. 377).

Imposter Phenomenon and Other Variables

In order to find out the extent to which family factors may affect one's feeling of impostorism, Want and Kleitman (2005) conducted an experiment in which they examined parental rearing styles as well as objective confidence in relation to imposter phenomenon among 115 participants. Finally, they came to know that imposter feelings were predicted by either parental overprotection or lack of parental care.

Leary, Patton, Orlando and Funk (2000) carried out a piece of research to find out the nature of imposter phenomenon and the way it is manifested. They conducted three smaller studies to test theoretical assumptions with regard to imposter phenomenon. Participants completed measures of impostorism, rated themselves, and indicated how they thought other people regard them. The results showed that "High imposters were

characterized by a combination of low self-appraisals and low reflected appraisals" (p. 725). The second study aimed at determining whether the behaviors associated with the imposter phenomenon are interpersonal strategies. They informed the participants that they were expected to perform either better or worse than they had previously predicted on an upcoming test, then express their reactions. The results indicated that "High imposters expressed lower performance expectations than low imposters only when their responses were public. When expectations for performance were low, participants high in impostorism responded differently under public than private conditions"(p. 725). The third study was carried out to find about the nature of imposter phenomenon. The researchers wanted to see if high scores on measures of impostorism reflect two types of imposters. They believe that imposters are of two kinds: "*true imposters* who believe that others perceive them too positively, and *strategic imposters* who only claim that they are not as good as other people think" (p. 725). However, the results of their study did not support the distinction between the two types of imposters. On the whole findings of their studies indicated that

Although people may experience true feelings of impostorism, these studies suggest that the characteristics attributed to so-called impostors are partly interpersonal, self-presentational behaviors designed to minimize the implications of poor performance (p. 725).

Method

Subjects

The participants of the study consisted of a total of 151 Iranian university students majoring in English Language and Literature. They studied English as a foreign language (EFL) at Shiraz University. There were 113 female and 38 male participants; therefore, the majority of them were female. All students were young with an age range of 18 to 28. The subjects were selected through convenient sampling since random sampling was not much practical for this study; thus, all the students who were willing and present in the administration sessions could participate in the study.

Table 1: The distribution of participants in different academic levels.

Academic Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Freshman	34	22,5	22,5
Sophomore	42	27,8	50,3
Junior	34	22,5	72,8
Senior	41	27,2	100,0
Total	151	100,0	

Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect the data: a) a proficiency test which was a truncated version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL); the test consists of 15 structure items, 15 written expression items and 30 reading comprehension items ; b) the fear of success questionnaire developed by Zuckerman and Allison (1976) which includes 27 items which originally employs a 7-point Likert-type format but in order to help learners better discriminate between the choices a 5-point Likert scale was applied. The choices range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. c) Harvey's (1982) imposter phenomenon questionnaire containing 14 items which originally has a 7-point Likert-type format, but for the sake of the participants distinguishing between the choices more easily, a 5-point Likert-type was employed. The instruments which were used in this study are widely used by researchers of language learning and psychology. The reason for using the Persian versions of the questionnaires was that the researchers wanted to make sure that the learners have no problem in understanding the questions. In this way the language barrier is minimized and understanding may be enhanced. The procedure of back translation was used to validate the Persian questionnaires. Therefore, three English language teachers translated the original questionnaires into Persian and three others back translated the two Persian questionnaires into English. An expert on translation was asked to validate the translated English version. He approved of the similarity between the two versions.

The indices of reliability for both questionnaires and the proficiency test were established using Cronbach Alpha formula. The index for FOS turned out to be .82, for the IP it was .86, and for the proficiency test it was .91 which is very high. In order to study the validity of the

questionnaires a statistical factor analysis was done on IP and FOS data. The result for both questionnaires confirmed construct validity. For space purposes the relevant tables and figures are not presented here. See Baharloo (2008) for a comprehensive treatment of the issue.

Procedure

The students of each academic level had enrolled in two classes for each course; therefore, eight administration sessions were held in order to collect the required data from subjects studying in the four academic levels at Shiraz University. Students were provided with sufficient information about the purpose of the study. In each session the students were randomly divided into two groups. In order to nullify the order effect, the questionnaires and the proficiency tests were distributed among subjects in a counterbalanced way. Therefore, half of each group were given the questionnaires first, and then after they got through them, the proficiency test was given to them, while, the other group answered the proficiency tests first and then went through the questionnaires. The questionnaires were also distributed in a counterbalanced way in each group. In addition, the students were free to ask any questions with regard to the language (word, structure) of the questionnaires to make sure that they did not have any problem with comprehending the items and all statements were clear.

Having collected the prerequisite data the procedure of which was explained above, permission was sought from the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics of Shiraz University to use the grade point averages (GPAs) of the subjects under the study in the current semester as the indicator of their academic achievement.

Analysis and Results

In order to achieve the goals of this study in seeking the relationship among variables in this specific context, the data gathered were analyzed by the following statistical methods using SPSS software. First, descriptive statistics were calculated. Then, the normality of the collected data was checked to see whether it is normal, since, the data obtained from different groups can be compared with each other in case they are similar with regard to their normality. Then, factor analysis was run to study the validity of the questionnaires. Besides, the reliability indexes of the fear of success and imposter phenomenon

questionnaires were obtained using Cronbach alpha. However, Kurder-Richardson Formula 21 was used to calculate the reliability estimate for the language proficiency test. In addition, Pearson Product Moment formula was used in order to find the correlation among variables under the study. In addition, several ANOVAs were utilized to find the differences among groups.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Different Groups of the Participants on the Language Proficiency Test

Academic Level	No. of Participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Freshmen	34	16	54	41.82	9.14
Sophomores	42	25	58	45.23	8.85
Juniors	34	27	57	44.47	6.99
Seniors	41	43	57	51.36	3.98

The above table shows descriptive statistics for the students' performance on the language proficiency test. The results show that the scores ranged from a minimum of 16 to a maximum of 58, with an average score of 45.96 and a standard deviation of 8.20.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Different Groups on GPA Scores

Academic Level	No. of Participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Freshmen	34	13.25	19.13	17.13	1.23
Sophomores	42	14.47	19.55	17.37	1.21
Juniors	34	13.00	19.12	15.58	1.42
Seniors	41	15.70	20.00	17.25	1.01

According to the results which appear in Table 3, the mean score of the freshmen is 17.13 with a standard deviation of 1.23, meanwhile their scores range from 13.25 to 19.13. The average score of the sophomores is 17.37 with a standard deviation of 1.21 and their scores vary from 14.47 to 19.55. The mean of juniors' GPAs is 15.58 with a standard deviation of 1.42 and their scores range from 13.00 to 19.12. Finally, seniors' average score appeared to be 17.25 with a standard deviation of 1.01 and their GPAs vary from 15.70 to 20. On the whole, one can notice that the juniors seemed to be weaker than

the other three groups with regard to their academic achievement; since the lowest minimum score and the lowest mean belong to this group

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Different Groups of the Participants' Scores on FOS

Academic Level	No. of Participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Freshmen	34	2.14	3.18	2.70	0.26
Sophomores	42	2.07	3.40	2.72	0.29
Juniors	34	2.33	3.22	2.73	0.22
Seniors	41	2.07	3.33	2.73	0.27

With regard to Table 4, the average score of the freshmen is 2.70 with a standard deviation of 0.26 and a range of scores between 2.14 to 3.18 which itself shows a small dispersion. With regard to the sophomores the mean is 2.72, the standard deviation is 0.29 and the scores range from 2.07 to 3.40. Juniors' average score is 2.73 with a standard deviation of 0.22 and the variation of scores is between 2.33 to 3.22 which covers a small range. Finally, the mean score of the seniors is 2.73 and the standard deviation is 0.27 and the scores rang from 2.07 to 3.33.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Different Groups of the Participants' Scores on IP

Academic Level	No. of Participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Freshmen	34	1.78	3.71	2.67	.42
Sophomores	42	1.85	3.71	2.79	.45
Juniors	34	2.14	3.64	2.84	.36
Seniors	41	1.85	4	2.72	.40

The above Table shows that freshmen's average score is 2.67 and the standard deviation of their scores is 0.42, meanwhile, their scores ranged from 1.78 to 3.71. The mean score of the sophomores is 2.79 with a standard deviation of 0.45 and their scores vary from 1.85 to 3.71. Juniors' mean score is 2.84 with a standard deviation of 0.36 and

the scores range from 2.14 to 3.64. Finally, seniors' average score is 2.72 with a standard deviation of 0.40 and their scores ranged between 1.85 and 4. Though the participants' performance on IPS among the four groups seems to be similar, juniors tend to possess the highest degree of IP (mean= 2.84) and the least dispersion (SD= 0.36).

Table 6: One-way ANOVA Results for the Language Proficiency scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1877,219	3	625,740	11,179	,000
Within Groups	8228,543	147	55,976		
Total	10105,762	150			

The results revealed statistically significant differences across the language proficiency of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors ($F=11.179$, $p<0.05$) which show that students' language proficiency tends to increase as a function of years of university study. In order to locate specifically the differences among the four groups, a post hoc (Scheffe) test was run and the results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Scheffe Test on the Language Proficiency Scores

(I) Academic Level	(J) Academic Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Freshman	Sophomore	-3,4146	1,7260	,275
	junior	-2,6471	1,8145	,548
	senior	-9,5423(*)	1,7354	,000
Sophomore	Freshman	3,4146	1,7260	,275
	junior	,7675	1,7260	,978
	senior	-6,1278(*)	1,6425	,004
junior	Freshman	2,6471	1,8145	,548
	Sophomore	-,7675	1,7260	,978
	senior	-6,8953(*)	1,7354	,002
senior	Freshman	9,5423(*)	1,7354	,000
	Sophomore	6,1278(*)	1,6425	,004
	junior	6,8953(*)	1,7354	,002

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

Table 7 clearly shows that seniors out performed the other three groups. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for seniors ($M=51.36$, $SD=3.98$) significantly differs from that of freshmen ($M=41.82$, $SD=9.14$), sophomores ($M=45.23$, $SD=8.85$) and juniors ($M=44.47$, $SD=6.99$). The effect size calculated using eta squared was 0.185. In addition, the results indicate that sophomores and juniors did rather similarly on the test.

Table 8: One-way ANOVA Results for the Academic Achievement scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	75,016	3	25,005	16,740	,000
Within Groups	219,580	147	1,494		
Total	294,596	150			

Table 8 highlights statistically significant differences across academic achievement scores of first, second, third and fourth year EFL students ($F=16.740$, $p<0.05$). In order for locating the difference between groups, a post-hoc (Scheffe) test was conducted. The results of this test are reported in Table 9.

Table 9: Scheffe Test on the Academic Achievement Scores

(I) Academic Level	(J) Academic Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Freshman	Sophomore	-,2381	,2819	,870
	junior	1,5462(*)	,2964	,000
	senior	-,1249	,2834	,978
Sophomore	Freshman	,2381	,2819	,870
	junior	1,7843(*)	,2819	,000
	senior	,1132	,2683	,981
junior	Freshman	-1,5462(*)	,2964	,000
	Sophomore	-1,7843(*)	,2819	,000
	senior	-1,6711(*)	,2834	,000
senior	Freshman	,1249	,2834	,978
	Sophomore	-,1132	,2683	,981
	junior	1,6711(*)	,2834	,000

Table 9 shows that juniors performed worse than the other levels. Post-hoc comparisons revealed that the mean score for juniors ($M=15.58$, $SD=1.42$) significantly differs from that of freshmen ($M=17.13$, $SD=1.23$) sophomores ($M=17.37$, $SD=1.21$), and seniors ($M=17.25$, $SD=1.01$). The effect size calculated using eta squared appeared to be 0.25.

Table 10: One-way ANOVA Results for the Fear of Success scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,014	3	,005	,063	,979
Within Groups	10,646	147	,072		
Total	10,660	150			

Table 10 indicates that there is no significant difference ($F=.063$, $p>0.05$) in degree of fear of success experienced by the four groups of students (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors). Furthermore, the effect size appeared to be very small (eta squared=0.001).

Table 11: One-way ANOVA Results for the Imposter Phenomenon scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,560	3	,187	1,067	,365
Within Groups	25,697	147	,175		
Total	26,257	150			

With regard to Table 11, no significant difference in the imposter phenomenon mean scores of the four groups was observed ($F=1.067$, $p>0.05$). In addition, the effect size turned out to be rather small (eta squared=0.021).

Table 12: Pearson Correlation between Variables

		Language Proficiency	Academic Achievement	Fear of Success	Imposter Phenomenon
Language Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	,533(**)	-,033	,100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,685	,223
	N	151	151	151	151
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	,533(**)	1	,000	-,130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,997	,112
	N	151	151	151	151
Fear of Success	Pearson Correlation	-,033	,000	1	,267(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,685	,997	.	,001
	N	151	151	151	151
Imposter Phenomenon	Pearson Correlation	,100	-,130	,267(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,223	,112	,001	.
	N	151	151	151	151

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

Table 12 reveals a significant positive correlation between the language proficiency and the academic achievement scores ($r=.53$, $p<0.01$), which highlights the idea that EFL students who are more proficient in English language can achieve better in their classes. In addition, fear of success and language proficiency have a slight negative relationship which is not significant ($r=-.03$, $p>0.01$). Besides, Language proficiency and imposter phenomenon do not have a significant correlation ($r=.10$, $p>0.01$). Academic achievement and fear of success appeared to have no correlation ($r=.000$, $p>0.01$); however, academic achievement and imposter phenomenon have a non significant negative correlation ($r=-.13$, $p>0.01$). Finally, the results reported in the Table revealed a significant positive relationship between fear of success and imposter phenomenon

($r=.267$, $p<0.01$), which indicates that those students who experience higher fear of success feel more like imposters.

Discussion

Having reported and presented the findings of the study, the researchers discuss the results, answer the research questions and compare and contrast them with other available and relevant findings found in the literature in this part.

1) Is there a significant relationship between fear of success and academic achievement?

The results presented in Table 12 revealed that students' GPA scores and their performance on the fear of success questionnaire do not have any correlation ($r=.00$, $p>0.05$). This finding is in line with the reports given by Eme and Lawrence (1976) who studied 141 9-th grade students to find the relationship between fear of success and academic achievement. Their analysis of the collected data from the sample showed that the correlation between fear of success and academic achievement was not significant. In addition, Froelich (1996) who investigated fear of success among 210 university students found out that their academic achievement was not associated with the fear of success. However, the result of this study contrasts with the finding of Lew, Allen, Papouchis, and Ritzler (1998) who aimed at finding the relationship between achievement orientation and fear of success among 185 Asian American college students. Their findings indicated that achievement orientation predicted fear of success; and, social-oriented achievement was related to high fear of academic success.

2) Is there a significant relationship between imposter phenomenon and academic achievement?

The results of the present study indicate that a negative correlation exists between students' level of imposter phenomenon and their academic achievement, though this relationship is not significant ($r=-.13$, $p>0.05$). However, in this study the finding contrasts with those of some other studies in which imposter phenomenon and academic achievement significantly correlate. For example, Kumar and Jagacinski (2006) conducted an experiment to investigate the relationship between imposter fears and

academic achievement among 135 college students. The results of their study revealed that there was a significant correlation between the two variables. In addition, Bresette, O'Neill, Scapino, Walters, Walsh and Woods (2005) investigated the relationship between the imposter phenomenon and academic achievement among high school students. The findings showed that a greater experience of the imposter phenomenon significantly correlated with higher academic achievement. Therefore, a positive significant correlation between students' experience of the imposter phenomenon and their academic achievement was observed.

3) Is there a significant relationship between imposter phenomenon and fear of success?

According to the findings of this study, the researcher found a significant correlation between students' fear of success and their experience of imposter phenomenon ($r=.267$, $p<0.05$). The result obtained in this study is consistent with the outcome reported by Fried-Buchalter (1992) who studied a sample of 104 students and found out a significant relationship between fear of success and imposter phenomenon. This finding indicates that students who experience higher degrees of imposter phenomenon fear the negative consequences of success more.

4) Is there a significant relationship between fear of success and language proficiency?

Considering the information presented in Table 12, one comes to know that fear of success and language proficiency do not have a significant correlation. In fact, students' scores on the FOS scale and their performance on the language proficiency test have a slight negative correlation which is not significant though ($r=-.033$, $p>0.05$).

5) Is there a significant relationship between imposter phenomenon and language proficiency?

The results reported in Table 12 let the readers know that there is not a significant correlation between imposter phenomenon and language proficiency ($r=.1$, $p>0.05$). The findings show that students' feeling of the imposter phenomenon and their proficiency in English have a small and non significant relationship.

6) Is there a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and language proficiency of EFL learners?

The results reported in Table 4.23 indicate a significant positive relationship between students' language proficiency scores and their GPAs ($r=.53$, $p<0.05$). The figures show that this relationship is almost strong and its direction is positive, in other words, the more language proficient they are, the better they achieve in their classes. Therefore, the students who scored higher on the language proficiency test had better GPA scores. This finding of the present study is in line with that of Bulter and Castellon-Wellington (2000), but contrasts with Bayliss and Raymond's (2004) study who found no significant relationship between academic achievement and second language proficiency.

7) Are there significant differences in the students' degrees of fear of success and imposter phenomenon with regard to their years of study?

Table 10 indicates that years of university study does not have any impact on the students' fear of success scores ($F=.063$, $p>0.5$), which shows that freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors' experience of fear of success did not significantly differ. Moreover, the results reported in Table 11 revealed that no significant difference in the imposter phenomenon mean scores of the four groups was observed ($F=1.067$, $p>0.05$), in other words, students' years of university study did not affect their feelings as imposters.

8) Are there significant differences in the students' performances on language proficiency and academic achievement with regard to their years of study?

The results obtained from the one-way ANOVA reported in Table 6 revealed statistically significant differences across the language proficiency of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors ($F=11.179$, $p<0.05$). Table 7 indicates that seniors outperformed the other three groups. Post-hoc comparisons showed that the average score for seniors ($M=51.36$, $SD=3.98$) significantly differs from that of freshmen ($M=41.82$, $SD=9.14$), sophomores ($M=45.23$, $SD=8.85$) and juniors ($M=44.47$, $SD=6.99$).

Furthermore, the results of the one-way ANOVA run to see if there were any significant differences in the GPA scores of students at different years of study revealed statistically significant differences across academic achievement scores of first, second, third and fourth year EFL students ($F=16.740$, $p<0.05$). Post-hoc comparisons revealed that the mean score for juniors ($M=15.58$, $SD=1.42$) significantly differs from that of freshmen ($M=17.13$, $SD=1.23$) sophomores ($M=17.37$, $SD=1.21$), and seniors ($M=17.25$,

SD=1.01). Therefore, juniors were less successful than the other three groups with regard to their academic achievement.

Conclusion

Based on the results obtained in this study, one can conclude that there is a significant relationship between students' fear of success and their experience of impostorism which indicates that students who fear the outcomes of success feel more like imposters and think that they do not deserve their current position so they can not stand its negative consequences.

In addition, a profound relationship between students' language proficiency and academic achievement was observed which indicates that those who are more proficient in English can achieve academically better. It was also found that students' academic level neither affects their fears of success nor their feelings of imposter phenomenon.

The outcomes reported in this study suggest support for several implications to provide more efficient teaching and learning situations. Regarding the factors which are of high consideration in post method era, instructors should devote much attention to individual differences as well as reduction of students' affective filters. Having a better portrait of learners' psychological traits and personality, language teachers can create a more convenient environment for students' learning. If language teachers measure learners' fear of success and imposter feelings by means of similar instruments at the beginning of each semester, they will apply more suitable teaching methods by which learners of different styles and personalities will benefit and their self-esteem may increase.

Since the outcome of the present study proves a significant relationship between EFL college students' language proficiency and their academic achievement; therefore, more appropriate courses which aim at improving students' proficiency in language should be included in the curriculum so that students' academic achievement will promote as a result.

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Appendices

Fear of Success Questionnaire

1) I expect other people to fully appreciate my potential.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

2) Often the cost of success is greater than the reward.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

3) For every winner there are several rejected and unhappy losers.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

4) The only way I can prove my worth is by winning a game or doing well on a task.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

5) I enjoy telling my friends that I have done something especially well.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

6) It is more important to play a game than to win it.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

7) In my attempt to do better than others, I realize I may lose many of my friends.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

8) In competition I try to win no matter what.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

9) A person who is at the top faces nothing but a constant struggle.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

10) I am happy only when I am doing better than others.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

11) I think "success" has been emphasized too much in our culture.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

12) In order to achieve, one must give up the fun things in life.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

13) The cost of success is overwhelming responsibility.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

14) Achievement commands respect.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

15) I become embarrassed when others compliment me on my work.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

16) A successful person is often considered by others to be aloof and snobbish.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

17) When you are on top, every one looks up to you.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

18) People's behavior change for the worse after they become successful.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

19) When competing against another person, I sometimes feel better if I lose than win.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

20) Once you are on top, every one is your buddy and no one is your friend.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

21) When you are the best, all doors are open.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

22) Even when I do well on a task, I sometimes feel like a phony or a fraud.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

23) I believe that successful people are often sad and lonely.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

24) The rewards of a successful competition are greater than those received from cooperation.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

25) When I am on top, the responsibility makes me feel uneasy.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

26) It is extremely important for me to do well in all things I undertake.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

27) I believe I will be more successful than most of the people I know.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

Imposter Phenomenon Questionnaire

1) In general, people tend to believe I am more competent than I really am.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

2) I am certain my present level of achievement results from true ability.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

3) Sometimes I am afraid I will be discovered for who I really am.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

4) I find it easy to accept compliments about my intelligence.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

5) I feel I deserve whatever honors, recognition, or praise I receive.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

6) At times I have felt I am in my present career position through some kind of mistake.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

7) I feel confident that I will succeed in the future.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

8) I tend to feel like a phony.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

9) My personality or charm often makes a strong impression on people in authority.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

10) I consider my accomplishments adequate for this stage in my life.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

11) I am certain my present level of achievement results from true ability.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

12) I often achieve success on a project or task when I have anticipated I would fail.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

13) I often feel I am concealing secrets about my self from others.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

14) My public and private self are the same person.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Completely disagree

Iranian EFL Journal



Title:

The Impacts of Teacher Self-disclosure on the Speaking Ability of EFL Learners

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effect of teacher self-disclosure on the speaking ability of the EFL learners. To this end, two groups were selected: Teacher self-disclosing and teacher non-self-disclosing. In one group, teachers were asked to disclose their attitudes, feelings, and experiences on the subject matter and their profession, and teachers in the other

group were not expected to do so. To analyze the data, both the process- turn-taking and T-units- and the product of learning were taken into account. The results indicated that students in the teacher self-disclosing group took more turns speaking, participated more in discussions, and their speaking ability was improved more than students in the other group. Finally, the results are discussed in the context of second language learning, and the outcomes imply that teachers can utilize self-disclosure to minimize stress and anxiety, to maximize personal security in class, to maintain a humanistic relationship with their learners, and to provide them with the proper models of learning.

Key words: Anxiety, Language teaching, Speaking, Teacher self-disclosure

Introduction

“Self-disclosure”-revealing one’s inner self to other people- has long been a site of research in clinical and social psychology, where one can find its roots in existential and phenomenological philosophy. The phrase “self-disclosure” was first introduced into the psychological and communication literature by the work of Jourad and his associate in 1958. Since the publication of Jourad and Lasakow`s (1958) classic research on the self-disclosure, investigators have explored the role of this variable in social and clinical settings. They defined self-disclosure as “the process of making the self known to other persons.” They also claimed that self-disclosure is “an accurate portrayal of the self to others,” and is an “identifying criterion” of healthy personality (1958, p.95). Culbert (1968, p.37) also defined self-disclosure as the “explicit communication of personal information that others would be unable to acquire unless he discloses it.”

According to Jourad and Lasakow (1958) self-disclosure can be done in six content areas: Attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, work (or studies), money, personality, and body. One can divulge his personal information in these areas which may lead to more intimacy and trust between the self-discloser and the audience. In fact, self-disclosure can foster interpersonal relationship, increase perceived similarity, validate reality or normalize experiences, offer alternative ways of thinking and acting, provide appropriate model behaviors for learners, and satisfy the learners who have been self-disclosed.

Applications

A great deal of research findings suggest that self-disclosure is important for marital relationship (Jourad & Lasakow, 1958), leadership (Pino & Cohen, 1971), Family communication (Gilbert, 1976), cognitive learning (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979), testing (Franco & LeVine, 1985), classroom participation (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994), and mental health (Nejat, 2006).

Background of the Study

Since 1981 the term self-disclosure has appeared in the title or abstract of nearly a thousand journal articles, and no doubt in a further number of books, chapters, and conference presentations and so on (Antaki, Barnes & Leudar, 2005). Close scrutiny of the related literature reveals that there is a paucity of research on self-disclosure in classroom situations. Some studies have explored self-disclosure in the classroom by examining students' and other ratings of teaching effectiveness as the dependent or criterion variable and teacher self disclosure as the independent or predictor variable (e.g. Clark, 1978). Other investigators (e.g. McCarthy & Schmeck, 1982) have examined the relation between teacher self-disclosure and measures of student affective, behavioral, or cognitive learning. Goldstein and Benassi (1994) found that both teachers and students reported teacher self-disclosure to be positively associated with students' classroom participation. Referencing the self-disclosure literature, they suggested that "teachers may be able to increase the level of student participation by disclosing professional and/or personal information" (1994, p. 215).

Everybody working in the field of second language teaching surely acknowledges that so many studies have been done on the role of emotional factors in second language learning. In fact, a number of language teaching methodologies exist which specifically address emotional and psychological issues in second language learning (e.g. Suggestopedia), some of which were motivated by Krashen's (1981) claims in the Monitor Model, specifically the part about the affective filter. Since learning a foreign language is full of stress and anxiety, especially for adults, the major aim of these methods is to eliminate psychological barriers in class in order that learners may feel free to express themselves freely, overcoming stress and anxiety.

Significance of the Study

Emotional barriers turn out to be more critical when the context of learning itself is so threatening. English in Iran is considered to be a foreign language, because it is spoken only in class, and it is prestigious to learn English; therefore, most people try hard to acquire it as perfectly as possible. Students start learning English from middle school, taking 8 years studying before getting into university. Iran's system of education in general is centralized, meaning that all decisions are made by the government, and teachers are only there to conform to the rules. Since English learning programs at schools in Iran are not much successful, students have generally negative attitudes towards learning English, feeling that it is too difficult to master it. Classes are generally teacher-centered and students are afforded little room to express themselves. Besides, since some teachers are very perfectionists in English classes, placing a premium on accurate and appropriate use of language, students seldom ask questions for fear of making mistakes. It seems that in such a kind of learning context, overcoming psychological barriers and maintaining a humanistic relationship with learners are of great importance. Thus, teacher self-disclosure can be a good means to help learners to eliminate the psychological barriers and acquire English with facility.

Purpose of the Study

Since no studies to date have investigated the effects of teacher self disclosure on the speaking ability of second language learners, the major purpose of this study is to find out whether teacher self-disclosure has any impacts on the speaking performance of learners.

Participants

A sample of 60 female learners participated in this study, aged between 19 and 29 ($M=18.3$, $SD=3.7$). All of the participants were university students attending a foreign language institute in Mashhad, a city in Northeast of Iran, majoring in different fields of study. They were all intermediate learners of English, studying in six classes ($N=10$ each class).

Instrument

To measure the students' feelings toward teacher self disclosure and its impacts on class participation and discussion, the researcher, based on the self-disclosure questionnaire of (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994), designed a questionnaire which was in fact, a self-report, consisting of 6 items, measuring student perception of teacher self-disclosure, student perception of class participation, and student perception of freedom to participate in class. All items are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to hardly ever (see Appendix).

Since the accent was not on the behavioral measures of self-disclosure and the questionnaire was only a self-report, The author, using the Cronbach's alpha, computed only the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire which was found to be high ($r=.85$).

IELTS

To measure the speaking ability of the learners at the very beginning and end of the term, the speaking module of IELTS (2006) was employed. The test consists of two parts: First, the interviewee is asked to talk about different general topics, then she is expected to ask some questions to elicit information from the interviewer. The students were scored from 1 to 20. The test was used both in pretesting and posttesting. Each interview took around 20 minutes. The inter-rater reliability coefficients, using Pearson correlation were high (pretesting: $r=.89$, posttesting; $r=.91$).

Data Collection

To examine the effect of teacher self-disclosure on speaking ability of learners, six classes were selected (three experimental and three control classes). Three experienced female teachers, who were highly proficient in English, were asked to teach in these classes. Each teacher was teaching two classes, one experimental class and one control class. Data were collected over 3 months, in 21 sessions from September 2006 up to November 2006. The author familiarized the teachers in both groups with the concept of self-disclosure and its functions. Teachers in the experimental classes were asked in each session of the class self-disclose their professional information and their attitudes and feelings including, the way they have learned English, the obstacles they have faced in

learning, and their feelings towards learning English, whether they attribute their success in language learning to task difficulty, intelligence, luck, or perseverance. For example, teacher self-disclosure involved statements such as “ I watched lots of movies while I was learning English.” , “ I think it took four years for me to master English, so don’t worry if you are not much satisfied with the rate of your learning.” , or “ I am not much an intelligent guy, but I learned English, what is important is to study hard.”, or “I remember when I was learning English, at first I made lots of mistakes, so making mistakes is natural part of language learning.”; however, the teachers in the control classes were asked not to divulge personal and professional information. To better understand the nature of the treatments and their effects on the speaking ability of the learners, sessions 2, 3, 11, 12, 18, and 19 were tape-recorded and later analyzed. Besides, students were asked to complete the short questionnaire at the end of the term. To measure the speaking ability of the learners, two raters who had MA in TEFL were asked to score the participants on both pretesting and posttesting.

The book which was taught in all six classes, as the requirement of the institute, was the last four units of *True to Life* by Gairnf and Redman (2001). This book has been designed for the communicative purposes, and it is suggested for the intermediate level learners by the authors.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, all three experimental classes were considered to be one group, called experimental group, and all three control classes were considered to be one group, called control group. Since the participants in the institute, using Oxford Placement Test (OPT) were already classified by the test officers of the institute, and their language proficiency levels were found to be intermediate, the researcher, to ensure the homogeneity of the participants in the speaking ability, used speaking test of IELTS (2006). To closely investigate the impact of teacher self disclosure on the speaking performance of the learners, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done. To be more exact, both process and product of learning were meticulously analyzed. To analyze the process of speaking, the frequency of the times students took turns speaking was computed and to measure the amount of communication, the number of T-units – one

main clause with all subordinate clauses attached to it- was calculated in both groups. To analyze the questionnaire, the mean scores of each section of the questionnaire for both groups were computed. Since the questionnaire was a 5-point Likert-scale, the scores of the respondents ranged from 1 to 5. Since the focus of the qualitative part of the study was on the process and quality of learning, the researcher did not employ any rigid statistics to find out whether the differences between groups in the above-mentioned parts are statistically significant. To analyze the product of learning speaking, two professional raters were asked to administer the test of speaking and score the participants holistically. To avoid any bias, the interviewers were not allowed to know which group is the experimental one and which group is the control one. After computing the inter-rater reliability, t-test was employed to examine the impact of teacher self disclosure on the speaking ability of the learners.

Results

Turn-taking

Table 1 demonstrates the results of the turn-taking during the beginning, middle, and end of the term in each group. While the results indicate a degree of increase in both groups reaching the end of the term, the learners in the teacher self-disclosing group were found to take more turns speaking in class ($f=380$) than those in the teacher non self-disclosing group ($f=246$). These results reveal that the students in the experimental group participated in discussions more than the students in the control group. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that teacher self-disclosure has paved the way for more student participation in class.

Table 1: The frequency of turn taking (TT) in each group during the beginning, middle, and end of the term

Groups	TT in 2 nd & 3 rd	TT in 11 th & 12	TT in 18 & 19	Total
Ex.	69	99	112	380
Con.	71	87	88	246

Amount of Communication

To determine how much students have talked in each class, T- units were calculated. In fact, to specify the amount of the communication in each class the T-units, which were used by all members of each class during the beginning, middle, and end of the term were calculated. As table 2 shows there has been an increase in the number of the T-units used in each group, but the experimental group led the list (332 - 412 - 457), meaning that the learners in the teacher self-disclosing group used more T-units in the classroom or better to say, they talked more than students in the other group.

Table 2: The number of T-units in each group during the beginning, middle, and end of the tem

Groups	T-units in 2 nd & 3rd	T-units in 11 th &12	T-units in 18 &19	Total
Ex.	332	412	457	1201
Con.	341	375	391	1115

Questionnaire

As it was expected, students in the experimental group believed that their teachers self-disclosed themselves more than typical teachers, the students participated more in discussion groups, and they felt free to express themselves and ask more questions (See Table 3). These results reveal that with respect to self-disclosing all teachers in both groups have done their job well, and the independent variable has been introduced appropriately. Therefore, we can claim that any differences in the speaking performance of both groups might be made by teacher self-disclosure.

Table 3: The mean scores of students` feelings toward teacher self-disclosure in both Groups

Group	Teacher self-disclosure	Class participation	Freedom to participate
Ex.	4.1	4.3	3.9
Con.	2.6	2.3	2.5

Speaking test

Table 4 demonstrates the results of t-test with respect to the speaking test in both groups. As the results of t-test reveal, the experimental group outperformed the control group ($t=-2.34$, $p<.05$) in speaking ability. It implies that teacher self-disclosure has played a pivotal role in improving the speaking ability and students in the experimental group have been more successful than those in the control group. Thus, it is right to say that teacher self-disclosure can contribute to mastering speaking ability of the learners.

Table 4: The results of t-test for speaking test in both groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-level
Ex.	30	17.5	2.3	-2.34	58	.02
Con.	30	15.3	2.1			

Conclusions

Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data demonstrated that teacher self-disclosure has been effective in developing the speaking ability. The results are, to some extent, compatible with those of (Goldstein & Benassi 1997) who claimed that self-disclosure increases students participation in class. In this study, students in the teacher self-disclosing group took more turns speaking and had more participation in discussions.

One of the main obstacles in second language learning in EFL contexts is the negative emotional factors, including stress, anxiety, and negative feelings of learners towards learning failures. The situations get more critical when it comes to the speaking ability; in fact face-to-face interaction involves more stress, anxiety, requiring a great deal of self-confidence, especially for adults who might quit learning easily if they may face scores of setbacks, or there exists a lot of pressure on them.

According to the results of this study, teacher self-disclosure is of great importance in success in the speaking ability, especially in the context of Iran. Every body knows that if one likes to master the speaking ability, he or she has to speak the language as much as

possible. But the question which remains to be answered is “Do students feel free to participate in class discussions and express themselves in order to master speaking?” Since there is a kind of formal and depersonalized relationship between teachers and students in Iran, it is natural that while teachers talk about themselves, their feelings, and professions, students feel free to express their own feelings and attitudes toward language learning, to share their learning problems, and to foster a good relationship with their teachers. Cognitive learning happens when emotional burdens have been removed or minimized.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest some implications for second language teaching profession. It is believed that in situations where stress and anxiety are prevalent, and teachers are considered to be authorities in class, teachers first, are expected to be familiar with the concept of self-disclosure, its functions and uses, then try to self-disclose themselves. Besides, this concept is more crucial in situations or cultures where teachers are perfectionists or authorities, or in cultures in which students keep a discreet and respectful distance from their teachers. Since self-disclosure begets self-disclosure, while teachers self disclose themselves, in fact students feel free to express themselves, ask more questions, and pose their language learning problems in class. Teachers, through self-disclosing about their own feelings, attitudes, and experiences can provide students with the appropriate models of learning, students will learn whether they are on the right track of learning, or whether they are learning the way their teachers have learned. Furthermore, teachers can foster a good relationship with their students which might lead to lower stress and anxiety on the part of the learners.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that it does not take gender into account. Future research is required to examine the effect of self-disclosure on both males and females. Future research might be needed to take age into account too. Besides, one more limitation of this study is that it focuses on the teacher-student relationship. Another research might

want to examine the student-student interaction. Another study also is required to investigate the effect of self-disclosure on other language skills.

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Appendix

A. Student perception of teacher self-disclosure

1. Compared to other instructors I have had, this instructor reveals personal information about herself including attitudes and feelings.
2. Compared to other instructors I have had, this instructor reveals professional information about herself including attitudes and feelings about the subject matter.

B. Students perception of class participation

3. Compared to other classes I have had, there is much discussion in this class.
4. Compared to other classes I have had, students ask many questions in the class.

C. Student perception of the freedom to participate in class

5. Compared to other classes I have taken, I feel free to ask questions about course material in this class.
6. Compared to other classes I have taken, I find it difficult to openly express my opinions and feelings in this class.



Title:

**The Effect of Coaching on Test-Takers Attitudes toward and
Performance on C-Test**

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Abstract

Coaching, or teaching to the test, is a method of creating positive attitudes towards a new test in language learners. This positive attitude can increase the validity of the test by helping the learners perform better on it. The aim of this study was to see if it was possible to create positive attitudes in Iranian EFL learners by familiarizing them with the format of a new test, C-test, and practicing with it. It was further attempted to see if this positive attitude would have any effect on the subjects' performance on the test. To this end, two parallel C-tests (one as the pre-test and the other as the post test), along with a questionnaire inquiring the subjects' attitude toward the test, were given to 48 Iranian EFL learners pre-test. After about one month of coaching and practicing with different C-tests, the post C-test and the same questionnaire given to the students at the beginning of the experiment were given to them. The results of the study showed that, as a result of coaching, the subjects' attitude changed positively toward the test. Furthermore, as a result of developing this positive attitude, the subjects had a better performance on the test.

Key words: Attitude, Coaching, C-test, Washback

Introduction

Washback refers to the impact of tests on teaching and learning. It is commonly believed that tests may positively or negatively affect the behavior, attitudes, and motivation of teachers and students. However, as Alderson and Wall (1993) state, "This influence is often seen as negative" (p. 115). For instance, Vernon (1956) asserts that teachers usually disregard the activities not directly related to passing the exams. Prodromou (1995, p. 14) claims, "Abuse of testing occurs when tests invade essential teaching space, when they are not the final stage of a process of learning but become the beginning, middle, and end of the whole process".

On the other hand, some other scholars believe in the positive role of washback in teaching and learning. For example, Wall and Alderson (1993) state that when the aims and activities of textbooks and exams are compatible and teachers follow them, washback can be considered as positive. Elsewhere, Messick (1996, p. 241) asserts, "...for optimal positive washback there should be little if any difference between activities involved in learning the language and activities involved in preparing for the test".

One aspect of washback concerns the attitudes and feelings of the stakeholders- teachers, officials, parents, and particularly, students- and their reaction to the new test. Alderson and Wall (1993) believe that one can see the evidence of washback in the changes pertinent to the behavior and attitudes of the teachers and the learners when one introduces new test to the educational setting. This will result in important educational consequences. In other words, the introduction of any new test to any educational context would affect the students' attitudes, which, in turn, would affect their performance on the test.

Cheng (1998, p. 296), asserts, "students show mixed feelings towards the exam itself, recognizing on the one hand that the exam made them work to achieve good scores but at the same time thinking that exams were not an accurate reflection of all aspects of their study."

Recently, one of the main concerns of language testing research has been exploring how the stakeholders' attitudes toward a new tests or already existing ones,

would affect their behavior. Various studies have investigated this issue with respect to the teachers, learners, and programs (e.g., Kellaghan *et al.* 1982; Smith, 1991; Shohamy *et al.* 1996; Wall and Alderson, 1993; Buck, 1988). In effect, these studies have investigated the consequences of using a certain test in an educational setting.

One way of creating positive attitudes in the students and, thereby, helping them perform better on a test, which, would, in turn, result in the improvement of the test validity, is coaching, or teaching to the test. Luxia (2005) believes by teaching to the test we can create positive washback in learners. Spratt (2005) underlines the role of teachers in creating positive washback by coaching and, thereby, changing the learners' feelings and attitudes.

There are, however, very few studies that have examined deliberate teaching to the test and its effect on the performance and attitudes of the learners. The major studies conducted in this area are limited to investigating the effect of preparing students for high-stake tests such as IELTS and TOEFL or nation-wide exams and inquiring about their opinions and feelings. (Hays and Read, 2004; Burrows, 2004; Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996, to name a few). Some other studies have investigated the relationship between familiarity with a test and its effect on the students' attitudes toward and performance on the test (Bradshaw, 1990 and Taylor, Kirsch, and Eignor, 1999). They have shown that there is a significant relationship between the students' familiarity with the test and their performance on and their attitudes toward the test

Nonetheless, as mentioned before, to date, no study has investigated the effect of deliberate teaching to a new test on changing the students' attitudes and feelings about it and, as a result, their performance on the test. In fact, in order to validate a test, especially when it does not look familiar to the students, they must be introduced to the format of the test in order that they develop a more positive attitudes toward the test. In that case only, can we ensure the validity of the test. As mentioned above, this is a rather neglected area in language testing. The purpose of the present study is, then, to investigate the effect of deliberate teaching to a new test, C-test here, on the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward and performance on the test. This study holds significant particularly in the context of Iran, where the conventional multiple-choice tests are still the major evaluation tools and any other test with a different format seems unimaginable.

The study, then, seeks for answers to the following research questions:

1. Does coaching change the students' attitudes toward the C-test?
2. Does coaching help students improve their performance on the C-test?

Context of the Study

Language testing in Iran is still following the rather traditional discrete point approach. The English proficiency tests at all the educational levels, i.e. high school, university entrance exam, both graduate and under graduate, all consist of reading, vocabulary and grammar sub-sections. Writing and listening are not usually included since listening needs equipments and the scoring of writing is so time consuming for a large number of students. Although both IELTS and TOEFL tests (paper-and-pencil and iBT) are held in Iran, no university or educational setting require of the applicants to take these tests as a prerequisite to start their studies. Most universities have their own tests which are to some extent similar to the paper and pencil version of TOEFL.

Consequently, the Iranian university graduates who have to take such tests as IELTS, Michigan, or TOEFL (iBT) have serious problems with the test format and have to take part in test preparation classes before they take these tests. They usually do not have good attitudes toward these tests due to the novelty of their formats. This will create a negative feeling and attitudes and, as a result, affect their performance for worse. Thus, it seems that the introduction of any new test to the Iranian educational settings requires familiarizing the students with the content and the format of the test in order to create positive attitudes in the learners.

C-test, which is one of the members of the family of integrative tests such as the cloze test and dictation, is a rather unfamiliar test to the Iranian EFL learners. Thus, it seems quite urgent to see if familiarizing the students with both the content and the format of the test can create positive attitudes in them and, thereby, help them improve their performance on it once it is used as a part of a proficiency test.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 48 Iranian University students. They were all EFL sophomores, both males and females, taking a course in Reading Comprehension with the researcher. The results of a placement test (Shiraz University Placement test) given to them at the beginning of the experiment showed that they were at an intermediate level.

Materials

Three tests and a questionnaire were used in the study: two parallel C-tests, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) used to determine the validity of the C-tests, and a questionnaire, adopted from Jafarpur (1995), used to gather the data about the attitudes of the subjects toward the C-test.

The C-tests

In order to construct the C-tests, ten short passages on a variety of interesting subjects and with different levels of difficulty as judged by Flesch Reading Ease readability index (Microsoft word, 2003) were randomly selected from Shabani and Allvar (2004). The readability indices of the texts ranged from 93.7 to 78.4. The passages were then sorted based on their readability index and numbers 1 to 10 were assigned to them in such a way that number 1 was the text with the highest readability level and number 10 the lowest. Then the five texts with the odd numbers were used as the pre-test and those with the even number as the post test. The reason for this procedure was to include texts of different readability levels in each test so that the two tests would be parallel. The average readability index for the first test was 88.84 and that of the second test 87.9. The first and the last sentences of each passage were left intact. Starting from the second word of the second sentence, half of the letters of every second word were deleted. Each text yielded 20 items, providing 100 items on the whole.

Since the number of deleted content and function would affect the difficulty level of the test, the total number of content and function words deleted from the two tests were compared. The pre-C-test yielded 77 content words and 23 function words and the post C-test, 74 content words and 26 function words. This indicates that the two tests were almost similar with respect to the number of content and function words deleted.

In order to ensure the validity of the C-tests as a proficiency test, the two tests were given to a group of 38 EFL majors other than the ones participating in the study. The C-tests were given to the subjects in a counter-balanced manner in such a way that half of the students first took the pre-C-test and then the post C-test and the other half *vice versa*. All the students, then, took a TOEFL test, which is a valid and reliable test of proficiency. The correlation between the pre-C-test and the TOEFL was 0.78, and that of the post C-test and the TOEFL, 0.83, indicating an acceptable criterion-related validity for both tests.

In order to ensure the reliability of the two tests, after two weeks, all the students took both the pre- and post C-test again in a counter-balanced manner. The purpose was to calculate the test-retest reliability of the tests. The reliability index for pre-C-test was 0.93 and that of post C-test 0.90, indicating a high reliability level.

Table 1 represents the features of the two tests.

Table 1. *Reliability and validity indices of the C-tests*

C-Test	Readability index	Content words	Function words	validity	reliability
Pre	88.84	77	23	0.78	0.93
Post	87.9	74	26	0.83	0.90

The questionnaire

The questionnaire used in Jafarpur (1995) was translated into Persian and was used to gather data related to the subjects' attitudes toward the C-test. It consisted of 6 questions about the C-test requiring the students to give a positive or a negative response to each question. There were also three open-ended questions which followed three of the positive/negative questions requiring the students to give further information if their answer to the questions were negative. (See the appendix). In order to ensure the validity of the translated version of the questionnaire, it was given to two EFL university teachers to translate it back to Persian. Then the back-translated versions were compared with the

original English version and the areas of discrepancy were discussed with the two teachers and the Persian translation was modified accordingly. As for the reliability of the test, Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was calculated. The reliability was 0.65 which is an acceptable reliability for a questionnaire with such a low number of items.

Procedure

In the first session of the reading comprehension class, all the participants took the pre-C-test. Having taken the test, they were asked to answer the questions of the questionnaire, too. There was no time limit for completing the C-test and the questionnaire. The Reading Comprehension class met two one-and-a-half hour sessions a week. Then, for about a month (eight sessions), in the beginning of each class, a C-test consisting of one or more passages was given to the students. The passages were taken from different reading comprehension books. The reliability indices of the selected passages were more or less at the range of the readability indices of the pre- and post C-tests. Depending on the length of the tests and the difficulty level of the passages, the students were allowed to spend between 5 to 15 minutes on doing the tests. Since only a limited amount of time could be devoted to the tests in each session, just a few of the C-tests contained 100 deletions (the minimum number of deletion recommended for a C-test). The number of deletions in most of the C-tests ranged from 20 to 60.

In each session, when the students finished the test, the researcher discussed the answers with the students. The students were asked to provide reasons for their answers. For instance if a student had written *book* for the item "bo--," he was asked to explain the reason. Their justifications were as follows: *"I wrote book, because the topic of the passage was library"; or, "because the word geography was used after this item."*

When the subjects failed to give the correct answer, the researcher tried to help them find it by providing clues on the part of speech, meaning, topic, etc. It was tried to help the students learn that, in order to restore the mutilated items, they had to use their knowledge of different language skills and component. This helped them recognize that the C-test, unlike what many believed at the beginning of the experiment, is not just a test of spelling or vocabulary; rather it is a test of general English proficiency.

In order for the subjects to take the C-tests serious, some of the tests were randomly announced as quizzes and were taken home and corrected by the researcher. These tests were then discussed in the following sessions. At the end of the experiment, i.e., after four weeks, the post C-test, along with the same questionnaire used in the first session, were given to the subjects. The students did not know they were supposed to take another complete test and the same questionnaire.

Data analysis

The C-tests, pre and post, were scored through the exact-word method. The two sets of scores obtained were then subjected to a paired t-test to see if there was a significant difference between their means. Besides, the results of the two administrations of the questionnaire were converted into interval data-one to positive answers and zero to negative ones. They were then subjected to a paired t-test to see if there was any significant difference between the overall attitudes of the subjects toward the C-test when taking the pre-test and when taking the post-test. In addition, the percentages of the students' responses to the items of the questionnaires were subjected to the Chi-square test to see if the difference between their attitudes prior to and after the training was significant.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics for the results of the pre- and post C-tests are presented in Table 2. The mean score for the pre-C-test is 73.41 and that of the post C-test, 78.33. The standard deviation for the former is 14.59 and that of the latter 9.10. Furthermore, the range of the scores obtained from the pre-test is 51, whereas that of the post test is 34. The lower range and standard deviation of the post test indicate that the subjects have acted more homogeneously on the post-test. It may be due to the fact that the students have had a better performance on the post test as a result of coaching. Furthermore, the distributions of the scores of the pre- and post C-tests are negatively skewed (-0.14 and -0.32, respectively), indicating that in both cases most of the scores have been higher than the mean score with the post C-test being relatively easier.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for the C-tests*

Descriptives	Pre-C-test	Post C-test
No of items	100	100
M	73.41	78.33
SD	14.59	9.10
Range	51	34
Skewness	-0.14	-0.32

Table 3 represents the results of the t-test run for the difference between the means of the pre- and post C-tests. According to this table, the difference between the means of the two administrations of the tests is statistically significant ($t=2.48$, $p<0.05$). Thus, since, as mentioned above, the mean score of the post test is higher, one can claim that training has improved the subjects' performance on the C-test. In addition, the lower standard deviation and range of the scores of the post test, indicating less dispersion among the subjects, support this claim.

Table 3. *t-test for the difference between the means of the C-tests*

Mean difference	t	sig
	2.84	0.03

Table 4 demonstrates the difference between the means of the results of the pre- and post-attitude questionnaires. As stated earlier, in order to determine the overall attitudes of the participants toward the C-test, the results obtained from the questionnaires were converted into interval data. In so doing, one point was given to the positive choices and zero to the negative ones. As such, score 6, the maximum possible score, indicated a completely positive attitude, and zero, an absolutely negative one.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics for the results of questionnaires*

	Pre	Post	T
Mean	2.67	4	3.35*
SD	1.40	1.18	

According to Table 4, the mean for the participants' responses to the pre-questionnaire is 2.67, whereas that of the post questionnaire is 4. The standard deviation for the former is 1.40, while that of the latter is 1.18. Since the difference between the two means is significant ($t=3.25$, $p<0.05$), one can claim that coaching has created more positive attitudes towards the C-test in the students. This change of attitudes can explain the improvement in the performance of the Students on the Post C-test.

A chi-square test was run to compare the percentages of the responses given to different items of the pre- and post questionnaire. Results are presented in the appendix. As it is evident from the table in the appendix, in four cases, out of six, can one see a significant difference between the attitudes of the subjects toward the C-test before and after training and in two cases the difference is not significant.

With respect to the first question, more than 85% of the subjects have had a positive attitude toward the C-test as a test of English language proficiency. This number has amounted to 90.9% in the post test. The difference, however, is not significant. This indicates that, even before training, most of the subjects considered this test as a test of English language. The positive answer to this question was quite predictable since the students needed their knowledge of English in order to restore the items. Besides, there are some spelling tests high school exams in which a part of the word, one or two letters usually, is deleted and the students are required to restore them.

However, with respect to the second question, i.e., "Is it a good test?", only about 44% of the participants in the pre-questionnaire have given a positive answer, while about 90% have considered it as a good test after the training. The result of the Chi-square test shows that this difference is significant. Hence, it can be said that training has helped the students develop a positive attitude toward the test. These results might explain why the students had a better performance on the post test. In fact, developing a positive attitude towards the test has helped students perform better on the post test.

Similarly, regarding the third question, i.e., whether the C-test measures English proficiency only or not, the change in the subjects' attitudes is significant (27.3% to 66.4%). A look at the students' answers to question number 4 reveals that in the pre-test, the subjects believed that a C-test measures such aspects as spelling, general knowledge, and intelligence. In response to the post questionnaire, although the majority mentioned that the C-tests measures only their English proficiency, some of the students still believed that spelling and the general knowledge helped them answer the questions. That is why about 35% of the subjects in the post questionnaire gave a negative answer to question 3.

Similarly, with respect to the responses given to question 5, one can see a significant difference between the testees' attitudes before and after training. In the pre-test, only 27.3% of the testees believed that it is a fair test. This number, nonetheless, has amounted to 72.7%. This significant difference implies that the researcher's explanation during the training period, along with the practice the subjects had in taking the tests, may have helped them come to the understanding that this test is fair enough to be used as a measure of one's knowledge of English. This fact can be confirmed by reference to the reasons they have provided in answer to question 6. As mentioned in the table, in the pre-test they mostly believed that it was not a fair test (72.7%) because performance on such a test was based on the testee's background knowledge, guessing, knowledge of spelling, etc. However, in the post-test they believed that it is a fair test of English because it measures one's knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, reading, etc.

As for question 7, too, the difference between the subjects' attitudes in the pre-and the post test is significant. That is, in the pre-test only 22.7% of the students believed in the representativeness of the C-test, whereas in the post test, this number has risen to 59.1 %. Again, as a result of practice with C-test, the testees have recognized that this test encompasses all aspects of the language.

Finally, regarding the eighth question, a low number of the students, at the beginning of the experiment, have stated that they like their acceptance to university to depend on the C-test (13.6%). Although the percentage has increased to 25.5% in the post-test, the difference is not significant. A high number of them have given a negative response to this question both before and after the experiment (86.4% for pre-

questionnaire, and 74.5% for the post questionnaire). Their reasons, as stated in their responses to the last question, are as follows: *"the C-test tests mainly measures the knowledge of vocabulary; it is somehow dependent on guessing and the knowledge of spelling; and the students have insufficient experience with this type of test."* After all, as mentioned above, it was their first time they were taking a test with a format different from the ones they had always seen, i.e., multiple choice test of grammar, vocabulary, and reading; hence, it is very obvious that, to be on the safe side, they did not like to take a new and unfamiliar test as the most important test of their life, even if they considered it as a good test.

Conclusions

The results of the present study showed that, as a result of practicing with the C-test, the students both developed positive attitudes toward the test as a test of language proficiency and became familiar with the format and content of the test. Consequently, their performance on the test improved. Hence, the results of the present study indicate that coaching, if done effectively, can improve the validity of a test by creating positive feelings and attitudes towards the C-test by familiarizing them with the content and format of the test.

Thus, a very important pedagogical implication of the present study is that, when a new test is going to be introduced to an educational setting, first positive attitudes towards to the test must be created in the students by familiarizing the students with the format, content, and, more importantly, the purpose of the test. This will increase the validity of the test by eliminating irrelevant factors such as students' negative reactions which originate from their lack of familiarity with the test format of the test and what it intends to measure.

The study, nonetheless, suffered from some drawbacks. Although the time interval between the pre-test and the post test was relatively short (about one month), the input the students received from their other courses might have contributed to improving their knowledge of English and, as a result, might have partially affected their performance on the post test. In addition, the participants of the present study were all at an intermediate level of proficiency. Selecting the sample from higher or lower levels

could have provided different results.

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Appendix

Subjects' Responses to the Pre- and Post Questionnaires

Question	pre		post		chi-square result
	positive	negative	positive	negative	
1. What do you think of this test as a test of English?	85%	11.4	90.9%	9.1	1.12
2. Do you think it is a good test?	44.2%	54.8	89.8%	10.2	14.66*
3. Do you think this test measures English proficiency only?	27.3	72.7	66.4	33.6	13.09*
4. If not, what else does it measure?	Intelligence, background imagination	spelling, knowledge,	Spelling		
5. Do you think it is a fair test of English?	27.3	72.7	72.7	27.3	12.37*
6. Why so or why not?	<p>It measures background knowledge and guessing; it is based on intelligence; it is not based on any textbook; it measures knowledge of spelling and vocabulary.</p> <p>It measures the knowledge of reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing; it measures spelling.</p>				
7. What do you think of the representativeness of this test?	22.7	77.3	59.1	40.9	17.91*
8. Would you like your	13.6	86.4	25.5	74.5	2.52

acceptance in university
to depend partially on
this test?

9. Why?

Only vocabulary; tests spelling and background
knowledge; just part of English; not everything
included; boring.
needs experience; spelling very important; grammar
and vocabulary more important than other skills

Iranian EFL Journal



Title:

The Relationship between Online Reading Strategies and the Choice of Offline Reading Strategies of Intermediate EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study was conducted with 299 intermediate EFL learners, including juniors and seniors. The purpose was to explore the effect of online reading strategies on the choice of offline reading strategies of the participants. Different types of instruments such as online reading strategies questionnaire, reading strategies questionnaire, TOEFL reading comprehension subtest and online reading comprehension test were employed. As the results of this study revealed, not only is there a significant relationship between online and offline reading strategies but there is also a significant relationship between learners'

online reading strategies and their choice of offline reading strategies. The results also showed that IT literacy could be an effective factor on the learners' online reading ability.

Keywords: Strategic Reading, Online-Reading Strategies, Offline Reading strategies, IT literacy

Introduction

Today, few people would argue with the idea that information technologies have a major impact on how we view schooling, teaching, and learning. They may, however, argue about the kind of impact that we currently feel from the use of technology in our classrooms. As Callahan and Switzer (2001) maintain, opinions range from those who see technology as the driving force for all that will be good about education in the future, to those who see information technology as a force that will destroy education as we now know it, driving us toward all of the negative aspects of consumerism.

The Internet is a global network of networks enabling computers of all kinds to directly and transparently communicate and share services throughout much of the world. Because the Internet is an enormously valuable, enabling capability for so many people and organizations, it also constitutes a shared global resource of information, knowledge, and means of collaboration, and cooperation among countless diverse communities.

Only by clicking on the links you can find out in the Internet information on how it works, how it began, how to web surf, sites that are good for kids to use, for education, key issues that affect your future use of the Internet, who some of the key Internet players are, how to create a web site, legal information, Internet traffic statistics, glossaries of web terms, and just about anything else you might ever want to know, explained in easy to understand language.

The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net," was conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S. government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPANET (Basabe 2004). The original aim was to create a network that would allow users of a research computer at one university to be able to "talk to" research computers at other universities. A side benefit of Arpanet's design was that, because messages could be routed or rerouted in more than one direction, the network could

continue to function even if parts of it were destroyed in the event of a military attack or other disaster.

Today, the Internet is a public, cooperative, and self-sustaining facility accessible to hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Physically, the Internet uses a portion of the total resources of the currently existing public telecommunication networks. Technically, what distinguishes the Internet is its use of a set of protocols called TCP/IP (for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). Two recent adaptations of Internet technology, the intranet and the extranet, also make use of the TCP/IP protocol.

For many Internet users, electronic mail (e-mail) has practically replaced the Postal Service for short written transactions. Electronic mail is the most widely used application on the Net. You can also carry on live "conversations" with other computer users, using Internet Relay Chat. More recently, Internet telephony hardware and software allows real-time voice conversations.

The most widely used part of the Internet is the World Wide Web (often abbreviated as "WWW" or called "the Web"). Its outstanding feature is hypertext, a method of instant cross-referencing. In most Web sites, certain words or phrases appear in text of a different color than the rest; often this text is also underlined. When you select one of these words or phrases, you will be transferred to the site or page that is relevant to this word or phrase. Sometimes there are buttons, images, or portions of images that are "clickable." If you move the pointer over a spot on a Web site and the pointer changes into a hand, this indicates that you can click and be transferred to another site.

Using the Web, you have access to millions of pages of information. Web browsing is done with a Web browser, the most popular of which are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. The appearance of a particular Web site may vary slightly depending on the browser you use. (Lic Leonid Rodríguez Basabe , Lic Antonio Pérez Correa & Lic Julio Antonio Tejera Castillo, 2004)

Learning Languages via Technology

Use of computers in language learning is, contrary to popular opinion, not a very new phenomenon. It dates back to the early 1960s, although it was confined in those days mainly to universities with prestigious computer science departments. (Levy1997:13-46)

In 1980s, however, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was in evidence in a large number of schools in the UK and the rest of Europe. So CALL is a relatively new term, having come into favor in the early 1980s, replacing the older term CALI (Computer Assisted Language Instruction). The term CALI fell out of favor because it became associated with programmed learning, i.e. a teacher-centered rather than a learner-centered approach that drew heavily on behaviorism. Throughout the 1980s, CALL widened its scope, embracing the communicative approach and a range of new technologies.

CALL now includes highly interactive and communicative support for listening, speaking, reading and writing, including extensive use of multimedia CD-ROMs and the Internet. An alternative term to CALL emerged in the late 1980s, namely Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), which was felt to provide a more accurate description of the activities which fall broadly within the range of CALL. It has embraced a range of new technologies and can now interactively support the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. (Brown 1988:6)

The three most popular uses of the Internet for language teaching and learning are electronic mail (e-mail), the World Wide Web, and chat rooms (often referred to in educational circles as MOOs - Multi-user Object Oriented domains). (LeLoup, 1997; Warschauer, 1995)

Email was in use before the Internet as we know it today even existed and is still the most commonly used Internet application. Foreign language teachers can integrate email-based activities into their curriculum (LeLoup & Ponterio, 1997; Warschauer, 1995). For example, international key pal projects that enable students to correspond with native speakers of the target language are easily implemented where participants have the necessary access, equipment, and foreign contacts (Knight, 1994; Shelley, 1996).

The infrastructure requirements for email are minimal, making it the most available of all Internet tools. Distance learning is another curricular area where email is being used (LeLoup & Ponterio, 1997). Today's email software can handle text in a wide variety of languages, can transmit diacritics, and can include word-processed files as attachments. The software also allows us send, receives sound, and images as attachments that enhance the context of the written communication.

While much of the Internet is about the presentation of information, instant communication with other individuals allows an interpersonal exchange with a friend around the corner or around the world. Such real-time communication takes place via several different types of chat, conferencing, and messaging programs. One such application is Internet Relay Chat (IRC), which enables synchronous "conversation" among participants anywhere in the world. Users enter a channel and "talk" by typing messages to all of the other people on that channel; everything that is typed is seen instantly by everyone. Hundreds of channels exist, with names usually reflecting the topics and language discussed. Private closed channels can also be created for use in the classroom.

A chat room is simply a web page which can display typed messages in real time. When several people are logged on to the same chat page via the Internet, each can type short messages of a few words (often with accepted abbreviations) onto an area in the web page. Each message, and replies from the others in the chat room are immediately visible to all the participants as sequential lines (with identification of the writer).

Most chat rooms are unmoderated - that is, there is no-one in control. Some chat rooms, particularly for children and young people, have a moderator who can guide the flow of discussion, rebuke rudeness or profanity, and remove someone from using the chat room if such guidelines are broken. It is important that people wishing to use chat rooms take time to learn the protocol, and what is an appropriate strategy for online witness.

Chat rooms are also a valuable method of sharing faith in cross-cultural situations, even in the 10-40 Window - because there are chat rooms for almost every country, ethnic community and language in the world. (Lic Leonid Rodríguez Basabe , Lic Antonio Pérez Correa & Lic Julio Antonio Tejera Castillo, 2004).

The Internet in the Language Learning Process

With the focus on language, communication, and culture in the national standards for foreign language learning (Standards, 1999), foreign language teachers are continually searching for better authentic materials and providing experiences that will improve their students' knowledge and skills in these target areas. As the Internet has transformed

communication around the world, it is natural that it should play a major role in the foreign language classrooms. We can share all sorts of things with the world, get original documents from anywhere, and interact with people in distant locations as never before. The internet can be used in teaching language as well as learning language. Lic Leonid Rodríguez Basabe, et al, identified some merits of employing the internet in language learning and teaching contexts as follow:

- authentic communication with native speakers
- familiarity with new language culture
- real-time discussions
- interactive exercises
- access to resource banks such as up-to-date reference materials
- access to international TVs, radio programs or/and available shareware and freeware programs
- a think-tank to exchange ideas and experiences
- getting immediate answers to questions
- publishing course materials globally
- encouraging international peer feedback
- developing autonomous, distance and life-long language learning
- a self-study tool

Strategic Reading

Reading is considered as an essential skill for learners of English as a second or foreign language. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English would make greater progress in other areas of language learning. Reading should be an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Often, however, it is not. The average learner's second language reading ability is usually well below that of the first language. This can impede academic progress in the second language. English language teachers and learners face many challenges in the classroom. Teaching students how to utilize the skills and knowledge they bring from their first language, develop vocabulary skills, improve reading comprehension and rate, and monitor their own

improvement are just some of the elements that teachers must consider in preparing for an English language reading class. For the student, learning to read in a second or foreign language is a process that involves learning skills, learning new vocabulary and collocations, and cultivating the ability to transfer these skills from the classroom to the real world, where English may be used. Computers and the Internet play an increasingly important role in the lives of L2 readers around the world. Online reading serves as the source of input for thousands of L2 readers. Leu (2002) points out that “the Internet has entered our classrooms faster than books, television, computers, the telephone, or any other technology for information and communication” (p. 311). With the increased use of computers comes the increased need to train language learners how to read online. Coiro (2003) stresses that “electronic texts introduce new supports as well as new challenges that can have a great impact on an individual’s ability to comprehend what he or she reads.” More and more L2 classrooms are engaging learners in online learning tasks.

Perceptive second/foreign language readers are those who are aware of and use appropriate strategies for learning and communicating in an FL. The purpose of strategy use is to improve performance in the use of ones’ foreign language. Strategies are the conscious actions that learners take to improve their language learning. Strategies may be observable, such as observing someone take notes during an academic lecture and then comparing the lecture notes with a chapter in a textbook in order to understand and remember information better, or they may be mental, such as thinking about what one already knows on a topic before reading a passage in a textbook. Because strategies are conscious, there is active involvement of the EFL learner in their selection and use. Strategies are not an isolated action, but rather a process of orchestrating more than one action to accomplish an EFL task. Although we can identify individual strategies, rarely will one strategy be used in isolation. Strategies are related to each other and must be viewed as a process and not as a single action. The seventh annual International Reading Association survey of key topics in reading research and practice for 2003 includes EFL reading as a hot topic (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2003). Perhaps of even more importance is that the judges rated this as a topic that should be hotter. Also included on the list of hot research topics for 2003 was technology. There is an increased interest in foreign

language reading research and how technology influences reading in various parts of the world.

Ultimately, it is incumbent upon the foreign language teacher to integrate these tools into the curriculum in a pedagogically sound and meaningful way. Clearly, target language communication and cultures are easily accessible through current and emerging technologies, and information about using these resources is readily available online. The intrepid and creative teacher will venture into this virtual realm, find authentic resources, and use them to make the second language learning process supported by the new technology a marvelous and fabulous way to learn.

One of the many problems students face nowadays is not their inability to read but their lack of interest, indifference or rejection of reading. Studies based on reading habits have particularly focused on the importance of the promotion of specific strategies to: capitalize on their interests, make reading materials accessible, build a conducive environment, allow time to read in school, provide significant adult models and use motivational techniques (Bailey, 1999). A severe lack of autonomy by the students as readers in accomplishing the goals of their readings is another problem. As it is stated by Cassidy & Cassidy (2003) too often students approach reading assignments with no idea of why they are studying or what they are supposed to learn relying on what they were told by the teachers. In other words, students are not used to taking control of their own reading and that they are lacking in metacognition, knowledge, and control of the four variables: person, goal, task, and strategies. In order to find solution to these problems and many other problems like these the researchers found online reading as the best way not only to break down the lack of interest, indifference or rejection of reading of students but also to determine the strategies used by students while they are reading online . Reading online might not be as rewarding – or effective – as the printed word, said Coiro (2007). Because the process involves so much physical manipulation of the computer that it interferes with our ability to focus on and appreciate what we're reading; online text moves up and down the screen and lacks physical dimension, robbing us of a feeling of completeness; and multimedia features, such as links to videos and animations, leave little room for imagination, limiting our ability to form our own mental pictures to illustrate what we're reading. Hypertexts (closed systems) present multiple, nonlinear

pathways. Hypertexts extend the range of possible interconnections and pathways between texts. Content hidden beneath multiple layers and connected by links with fewer surrounding context cues (requiring high levels of inferencing). (Coiro, J. 2007)

Author's intertextual connections may be different from the reader's connections, creating more complexity. Online texts are not bound within a closed system with only one organizational structure. Online texts change daily in structure, form, and content. Online texts often contain hidden social, economic, and political agendas not typically found in closed hypertext learning systems. Online texts introduce infinite intertextual connections and intercultural negotiations. (Coiro, J. 2007). Whether there is any difference in the online reading strategies and those of offline or whether the use of online reading strategies can influence the choice of offline reading strategies were the major concerns of the researchers of the present study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The questions to be answered in this research are as follow:

1. Is there any relationship between online reading strategies and offline reading strategies?
2. Is there any relationship between online reading strategies and the choice of offline reading strategies of intermediate EFL learners?

To find answers to the above-mentioned questions, the following null hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is no relationship between online reading strategies and offline reading strategies of intermediate EFL learners.
2. There is no relationship between online reading strategies and the choice of offline reading strategies of intermediate EFL learners

Participants

The participants were selected from among 299 intermediate EFL learners, juniors and seniors studying in Islamic Azad University, Torbat-e-Heidarieh Branch and Sistan and

Bloochestan University. Both male and female students participated in this project, so the role of sex is not considered distinctive. The age of participants ranges from 18 to 25.

Procedures

Data Collection Methods

In order to homogenize the participants, two instruments were employed: a TOEFL reading proficiency sub-test (PBT) and an IT questionnaire (Adapted from Greenwich University Website: available at: [www.staff.bath.ac.uk/pssrj/IRN/LTSN%20questionnaire%20\(Gre\).doc](http://www.staff.bath.ac.uk/pssrj/IRN/LTSN%20questionnaire%20(Gre).doc)). The purpose of this questionnaire, including 58 items, was to distinguish between IT literate participants and those with no or low level of IT literacy.

Having been selected as the target group, the participants were given an (offline) reading strategies questionnaire. Hee Jin Bang and Cecilia Guanfang Zhao developed this instrument, which consisted of 64 items, in (2007). This questionnaire consisted of seven categories naming as Compensation, Social, Textual, Metocognitive, Cognitive, Memory and Affective. In addition, the participants were given a 32- item online reading strategies questionnaire consisted of three main categories of Global Reading strategies, Supporting Reading strategies and Problem Solving Reading strategies. (Kouider Mokhtari and Ravi Sheorey, 2003). The last phase of this project was administering an online reading comprehension test (available at: www.Dialang.org) at the computer laboratory of the universities. This test consisted of 30 reading comprehension items.

Data analysis and Discussions

Analyzing the results of the study using SPSS (ver. 15), the reliability indexes of online reading strategies questionnaire and (offline) reading strategies questionnaire were estimated through Cronbach's Alpha as 0.753 and 0.704, respectively. This shows a relatively high reliability.

In order to investigate the relationship between online reading test and TOEFL reading subtest a correlation coefficient was calculated between the two test scores (see tables 1).

Table 1. Correlation coefficient between TOEFL reading comprehension and online reading Comprehension tests

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Participants
TOEFL RC test	36.24	4.950	305
Online RC test	24.85	5.182	175
Correlation coefficient	$\rho = 0.428$	$p\text{-value} = 0.000$	

As shown in table 1, a direct linear relationship ($\rho = 0.428$) is approved between these two tests at the 0.01 significant level ($p\text{-value} = 0.000$). As this correlation coefficient is in the positive direction, a direct linear relationship between the two variables i.e. the scores of online reading test and TOEFL reading subtest is witnessed. In other words, an increase in online reading test scores can cause a rise in the scores of TOEFL reading test and vice versa.

A correlation coefficient was also estimated between the two study questionnaires: online reading strategies and (offline) reading strategies, to examine their relationship. As indicated in table 2, the correlation coefficient between online reading strategies and offline reading strategies was 0.524. This shows the existence of a liner relationship between the two questionnaires at the 0.01 significant level ($p\text{-value} = 0.000$). Since this correlation coefficient is positive, the relationship is positively directed and therefore it can be concluded that statistically there is a meaningful relationship between online reading strategies and offline reading strategies. Thus the first null hypothesis as there is no relationship between online reading strategies and offline reading strategies of intermediate EFL learners was rejected.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient between online reading strategies questionnaire and offline reading strategies questionnaire

	Mean	Standard deviation	Number of Participants	Number of items
Offline RSQ	1.211	0.469	305	64
Online RSQ	4.036	0.0631	175	32
Correlation coefficient	$\rho = 0.524$		p-value = 0.000	

Table 3 shows a correlation matrix developed for the study reading tests and strategies questionnaires.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient between reading tests and strategies questionnaires

	Online RSQ	Offline RSQ	TOEFL RT	Online RT
Online RSQ	1	0.524	0.624	0.551
Offline RSQ	0.524	1	0.410	0.054
TOEFL RT	0.624	0.410	1	0.428
Online RT	0.551	0.054	0.428	1

* P-value = 0.000

Also as indicated in table 3, the existence of a meaningful linear relationship ($\rho = 0.551$) is verified at the 0.01 significant level (p-value =0.000) between online reading strategies questionnaire and online reading comprehension test. Therefore, it can be concluded that due to the similar nature of the two variables i.e. reading, online reading strategies questionnaire directly targets the strategies employed while reading online.

The correlation coefficient between offline reading strategies questionnaire and TOEFL reading comprehension subtest, as found in table 3, was estimated ($\rho = 0.410$) which shows a positive linear relationship and is acceptable at the 0.05 significant level (p-value =0.000). Therefore, it could be concluded that all offline readers employed reading strategies, regardless of the type of strategies used.

Meanwhile, the correlation coefficient between reading strategies questionnaire and online reading comprehension test is reported as ($\rho = 0.054$) which shows no meaningful linear relationship between these two variables at the 0.05 of significant level

(p -value =0.851). This result shows that there is a significant difference between the nature of online reading test and paper-based reading test (offline reading test).

Analyzing the items in the online reading strategies questionnaire, learners reported the use of a variety of strategies while reading online. An interesting finding in data analysis was that most readers while reading employed problem-solving strategies including adjusting reading rate, rereading difficult text, and pausing to think about what one is reading (see table 4). As shown in table 4, problem-solving component of online reading strategies questionnaire was used more frequently by the participants while reading online. Following this component come global reading strategies and supporting reading strategies, respectively.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of online reading strategies questionnaire's components

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Items
Global RS	4.011	0.610	11
Supporting RS	3.951	0.647	12
Problem Solving RS	4.150	0.636	9

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of offline reading strategies questionnaire's components

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Items
Compensation	1.27	0.615	5
Metacognitive	1.226	0.448	5
Cognitive	1.225	0.398	19
Social	1.171	0.598	11
Textual	1.203	0.367	14
Memory	1.213	0.424	7

According to table 5, most offline readers employed compensation reading strategies including rereading or repeating the words or phrases that some body doesn't understand, increasing or decreasing the speed of reading, and trying to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases from context. Here, social reading strategy is employed the least.

Comparing the descriptive results for the two reading strategies questionnaires (tables 4 and 5), it is revealed that compensation strategies in offline reading strategies questionnaire and problem solving strategies in online reading strategies questionnaire are chosen by most participants. The compensation strategies employed by the readers in the paper-based test (offline reading test) such as rereading or repeating the words or phrases that they didn't understand, and increasing or decreasing the speed of reading were also used by the same readers when they read in the online environment (online reading test). These strategies, however, are called problem solving reading strategies when they are used for the online reading comprehension. Since the types of strategies including in the category of compensation strategies are identical to those which are under the category of problem solving strategies and their mean scores are the highest mean (compensation: 1.27, problem solving: 4.15) among their own groups, therefore it can be concluded that those strategies which are used by the readers in the offline

environment are also employed by them in the online environment i.e. the difference in the nature of offline or online doesn't have any influence on the type of strategies employed by the readers. As a result statistically there is a relationship between online reading strategies and the choice of offline reading strategies. Thus, the second null hypothesis as there is no relationship between online reading strategies and the choice of offline reading strategies of intermediate EFL learners was rejected.

Comparing the results of IT literacy questionnaire and participants' reading comprehension scores, it can be concluded that those with higher IT literacy had better performance on online reading test (see table 6).

Table 6. Correlation coefficient between IT literacy questionnaire and online reading test

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Participants
IT literacy questionnaire	46.57	5.150	305
Online RC test	24.85	5.182	175
Correlation coefficient	$\rho = 0.629$		p-value = 0.000

As shown in table 6, there is a significantly positive correlation ($\rho = 0.629$) between learners' IT knowledge and their performance on online reading test. Therefore, it goes without saying that IT literacy is a prerequisite for online reading.

Conclusions

Since the nature of offline and online reading is different, most language experts deem that the types of strategies employed by the students in these two environments should be completely different Coiro (2007). However, the results of the current study reveal something special. Based on the statistical results reported in this study, problem solving online reading strategies and compensation (offline) reading strategies are of the most priorities for language learners while reading in online and offline environments. As

mentioned in the results section, these two main categories of strategies by themselves include same sub-strategies in details. Therefore, we can conclude that the learners, whether consciously or unconsciously, use same types of strategies while reading, regardless of the environment in which they are reading! Language teachers should be aware of this phenomenon and concentrate their teaching reading strategies merely on these sorts of strategies since they are of main concern for language learners.

Perhaps the greatest outcome of this research is the importance of problem solving online reading strategies for foreign language learners. This strategy type plays a more important role in EFL reading instruction than perhaps we have previously considered. When classroom teachers engage their learners in online learning tasks, strategy awareness and training becomes essential. EFL reading teachers can focus learners' attention on the problem solving reading strategies identified in the online reading strategies questionnaire to help learners improve their online reading ability. The pioneering study by Cooper and Kiger's (2003) argued that teachers needed to be more aware of the instructional environment in which they are teaching. The data from the study reported here suggest that the distinctions between online readers in the context of Iran are not very great. In addition, according to the findings of the present study, we may need to reconsider whether it is helpful to look at potential differences in learning environments of EFL learners, especially when the learners are engaged in online learning. According to the results of this study, IT literacy can positively affect learners' success during online reading comprehension tests. This study also maintains that the problem solving strategies while reading online would play an important role in EFL learners' reading ability. This suggests an equally important position for the teaching of different types of online reading strategies in the classroom.

Like all other studies, the current research is not simply without limitations. Since the population utilized for this study is solely limited to Iranian EFL learners, we can mention the most important restriction included in this study can be related to the over-generalizability factor. Further studies are also suggested on the same point. In order to witness whether the results of the study are generalizable for all EFL learners or not, researchers in all over the world can replicate the study with different populations and in different countries.

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Iranian EFL Journal



Title:

On the Relationship between Multiple Intelligences, Vocabulary Learning Knowledge and Vocabulary Learning Strategies among the Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

The present study aimed at identifying the relationship between multiple intelligences (MI), vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies among the Iranian EFL learners. The participants were senior students at Shiraz Azad University majoring in English Language Teaching. More specifically answers to the following research questions were sought: Is there any relationship between MI and vocabulary learning knowledge (vocabulary breadth) among the Iranian EFL learners? Which type of intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of vocabulary learning knowledge? Is there any relationship between types of strategies and the MI types? To this end, three kinds of instruments were used in this study: Nation's Levels Tests (2001), Schmitt's vocabulary learning strategies (1997) and an MI questionnaire whose construct validity was checked through principal factor analysis. The data were analyzed both descriptively inferentially. The findings of the study revealed that there is a relationship between MI and vocabulary learning knowledge. Furthermore, among different domains of intelligence, linguistic and natural intelligences make statistically significant contribution to the prediction of vocabulary learning knowledge. Moreover, stepwise multiple regression analysis confirmed the same finding. Concerning the relationship between MI and vocabulary strategies, the results indicate that among 5 categories of strategies, determination, social and memory strategies have a significant relationship with several domains of MI. Seemingly, the results are context-bound not universal.

Key Words: Vocabulary learning knowledge; Vocabulary breadth, Vocabulary learning Strategies; Multiple intelligences; Linguistic, Spatial, Logical, Musical, Bodily, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalistic, Existential intelligences

Introduction and Background of the Study

Through the centuries, many philosophers and scientists have viewed human intelligence as being a single capacity that one is born with and that cannot be altered. Traditionally, standardized Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and aptitude tests, based on verbal fluency, wide vocabulary, and computational skills, were used as instruments to measure intelligence. But these tests cannot measure the value of a product or one's Inadequacy

with traditional IQ tests has led to the development of a number of alternative theories, all of which share the belief that intelligence is a "multifaceted" and "complex" capacity. Therefore, multiple intelligences theory is distinguished from the other theories by its breadth, its scientific basis and its educational implications. (Hoerr, 2001).

Multiple Intelligences (MI) is a theory of intelligence put forth by the American psychologist, Gardner, who viewed "intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to create fashion products that are valued in one's own culture or society". (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, pp. 4-9). This definition challenged the traditional psychological view of intelligence as a single capacity that drives logical and mathematical thought. Instead it proposed that all individuals possess at least seven independent ways that in combinations enable people to understand and to perceive the world and to express themselves (Gardner, 1983; Gardner, 1999, pp. 41-43).

Gardner (1983) suggested that all individuals have personal intelligence profiles that consist of a combination of seven different intelligence types. In 1997, Gardner added an eighth intelligence type to the list, namely, natural intelligence, and two years later a ninth type, existential intelligence, was added, too. He claimed that different intelligences rarely operate independently; they are used at the same time and tend to complete each other, though he does not believe the list is necessarily complete. (Gardner, 1999, pp. 41-43).

L2 researchers have proposed different but complementary frameworks to define vocabulary knowledge. For example, Chappell (1998) argued that vocabulary knowledge contains four dimensions: 1) vocabulary size; 2) knowledge of word characteristics; 3) lexicon organization; and 4) process of lexical access. Henriksen (1999) suggested that lexical competence should contain three dimensions: 1) precision of knowledge; 2) depth of knowledge; and 3) receptive and productive knowledge. And the last framework suggested by Qian (1999 & 2002) indicated that vocabulary knowledge consists of four dimensions: 1) vocabulary size; 2) depth of vocabulary knowledge; 3) lexical organization; and automaticity of receptive-productive knowledge. Based on these frameworks, the two major aspects of vocabulary are depth and breadth. Depth of vocabulary refers to how much learners know about the meanings of the words they are familiar with, along with the connections that exist among the word meanings including

the synonymy, polysemy, and collocations of the words. The breadth of a learner's word knowledge (also referred to as vocabulary size) is the number of words whose meaning the individual has at least some familiarity with.

In the following sections, the intelligence types as conceptualized by Gardner (1999 & 1993), practical studies done on MI, vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies are presented and described.

Gardner's Categories of Intelligence

Linguistic/Verbal Intelligence

Gardner has described Linguistic intelligence as the ability to use words and language, and sensitivity to meaning and order of words. Moreover, it is the capacity to use language to express one's ideas and opinions, and to accomplish certain goals as well as the ability to master foreign language.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Gardner described logical/mathematical intelligence as the ability to think and to analyze problems logically, as well as to understand logical patterns, categories, cause and effect relationship in the world and to use inductive and deductive reasoning. Those who have high logical-mathematical intelligence are curious about the world, how things work. They learn best through reasoning and problem solving process.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Gardner identified visual intelligence as the ability to think in images or pictures and visualize objects from different dimensions. People with high visual intelligence picture ideas and solutions to problems in their mind. They have the ability to understand relationship between images and meaning and to recognize the relationships of objects in space, and they are good in visual arts, sculpture, architecture, geometry and photography.

Musical/rhythmic intelligence

Musical intelligence is the ability to recognize tones, rhythms and musical patterns also, the capacity to understand and express oneself musically. This capacity involves not only auditory learning but also the identification of patterns through all the senses.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

It is the ability of using one's body or parts of the body to solve problems. People with high bodily intelligence, express themselves through body, use body language to communicate, walk or travel around classroom or home, have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. Such people believe that "action speak louder than words".

Naturalist Intelligence

Naturalist intelligence is the ability to recognize and classify objects. This intelligence has to do with nature, nurturing, classification. Such people learn through classifications, categories, hierarchies

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability of feelings, values and attitudes. Having an understanding of yourself, of knowing who you are, what you can do and where you are. People with intrapersonal intelligence have a realistic sense of their own strengths, weaknesses, moods, goals and motivations. They have

Interpersonal Intelligence

This intelligence is concerned with perception of other people's feelings and it is the ability to understand other people's motivations, intentions, desires and interactions with others. Interpersonal individuals are usually extroverts. They typically learn best by working with others and often enjoy discussion and debate. According to Gardner, "in the day-to-day world, no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal intelligence".

Existential Intelligence

Gardner (1999) considered existential intelligence as the intelligence of understanding in a large context or big picture. It is the capacity to tackle deep questions about human

existence, such as the meaning of life, why do we die, what is my role in the world, this intelligence seeks connections to real world and allows learners to see their place in the big picture, see their roles in the classroom, society and the world or the universe. Table 1 summarizes eight types of intelligences.

Table 1.1. Summary of the Eight Intelligences (Giles, Pitre, Womack, 2003)

Intelligence Area	Strengths	Preferences	Learns best through:	Needs:
Verbal / Linguistic	Writing, reading, memorizing dates, thinking in words, telling stories	Write, read, tell stories, talk, memorize, work at solving puzzles	Hearing and seeing words, speaking, reading, writing, discussing and debating	Books, tapes, paper diaries, writing tools, dialogue, discussion, debated, stories, etc.
Mathematical/ Logical	Math, logic, problem-solving, reasoning, patterns	Question, work with numbers, experiment, solve problems	Working with relationships and patterns, classifying, categorizing, working with the abstract	Things to think about and explore, science materials, manipulative, trips to the planetarium and science museum, etc.
Visual / Spatial	Maps, reading charts, drawing, mazes, puzzles, imagining things, visualization	Draw, build, design, create, daydream, look at pictures	Working with pictures and colors, visualizing, using the mind's eye, drawing	Video, movies, slides, art, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated book, trips to art museums, etc.
Bodily / Kinesthetic	Athletics, dancing, crafts, using tools, acting	Move around, touch and talk, body language	Touching, moving, knowledge through bodily sensations, processing	Role-play, drama, things to build, movement, sports and physical games, tactile experiences, hands-on learning, etc.

Intelligence Area	Strengths	Preferences	Learns best through:	Needs:
Musical	Picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms, singing	Sing, play an instrument, listen to music, hum	Rhythm, singing, melody, listening to music and melodies	Sing-along time, trips to concerts, music playing at home and school, musical instruments, etc.
Interpersonal	Leading, organizing, understanding people, communicating, resolving conflicts, selling	Talk to people, have friends, join groups	Comparing, relating, sharing, interviewing, cooperating	Friends, group games, social gatherings, community events, clubs, mentors/ apprenticeships, etc.
Intrapersonal	Recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, understanding self	Work alone, reflect pursue interests	Working alone, having space, reflecting, doing self-paced projects	Secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices, etc.
Naturalistic	Understanding nature, making distinctions, identifying flora and fauna	Be involved with nature, make distinctions	Working in nature, exploring living things, learning about plants and natural events	Order, same/different, connections to real life and science issues, patterns

Practical Studies Done on MI

In this part, some of the major studies conducted with respect to MI theory and its applications are presented.

Mettetal, Jordan and Harper (1997) investigated the impact of a MI curriculum in an elementary school. They used observation and survey for data collection. On the basis of their analyses of the data, three themes emerged “(a) students, teachers, and parents had very positive about the concept of multiple intelligences; (b) they had positive with regard to school-wide implementation, including flow time, activity room, and enrichment clusters; and (c) classroom implementation of MI concepts was uneven across classrooms” (p. 115). The researchers highlighted the importance of MI in changing the attitudes of both teachers and students.

Kornhaber (1999) investigated three alternative assessments for identifying students who are different in terms of their gift. Each of these assessments was based on the MI theory. The analysis of qualitative data indicated that "no assessment met all eight criteria; each met a different subset of the eight" (p. 143). Kornhaber concluded that enhancing equity for under-served students is a very important goal.

Snyder (2000) sought to determine the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement of high school students. The results of the study suggested that the majority of high school students benefited from Tactile/Kinesthetic intelligence and were global learners. The researcher concluded that an awareness of how students learn is in fact indispensable to successful classroom.

Chan (2001) conducted a study to “assess the variability of the use of a self-report checklist identifying aspects of giftedness in a sample of 192 Chinese secondary students from a multiple intelligences perspective” (p. 215). In order to compare the students, their IQs, creativity, and leadership characteristics were also assessed. It was found that participants perceived the seven intelligences almost as distinct abilities. However, “the self-estimates of the various intelligences did not generally predict the conventional measures, suggesting that the seven intelligences and the conventional measures provided independent and possibly complementary information on aspects of giftedness” (p. 251). Finally, the significance of developing profiles of strengths and weaknesses from an MI perspective for programming and identification purposes was discussed.

Kallenbach and Viens (2002) conducted a study across different adult literacy contexts. The data were collected through on-site observations, qualitative interviews, and lead to high levels of adult learner engagement; (2) choice-based activities increase students' confidence regarding learning; and (3) connecting MI reflections activities to broader learning goals is important.

Loori (2005) conducted a study in which the differences in intelligences preferences of ESL male and female students are investigated. Ninety international students at three American universities took part in this study. The results showed that “there were significant differences between males' and females' preferences of intelligences. Males preferred learning activities involving logical and mathematical intelligences, whereas females preferred learning activities involving intrapersonal intelligence.” (p. 77).

Vocabulary Learning Knowledge

Vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether first, second, or foreign. The role of the vocabulary in language learning and communication is pointed out by

psychologists, linguists and language teachers (Avila & Sadoski, 1996; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

According to Seal (quoted in Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.296), "words are perceived as the building blocks upon which knowledge of the second language can be built. In the same direction, on the importance of vocabulary, Sener (2005) reiterated Wilkin's famous saying that without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.

Researchers no longer view vocabulary as having only one dimension. Instead, they believe that vocabulary learning knowledge should be regarded as a multidimensional construct (Qian & Schedl, 2004). Moreover, the scholars emphasized the idea that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication. Communication breaks down when people do not use the right words (Allen, 1983).

Based on the multifaceted nature of word knowledge; different researchers have provided a variety of word knowledge frameworks. Read (1993), Wesche and Paribakht (1996) and Qian (1999) stated that vocabulary knowledge, at least, contains two dimensions, namely, vocabulary breadth which is also known as size or quantity of vocabulary knowledge (that is related to the present study) and depth of vocabulary knowledge.

According to Nation (2001, quoted in Nassaji, 2004) breadth of vocabulary knowledge has been used to refer to the quantity or number of words learners know at a particular level of language proficiency.

Qian (1999) gives the definition of these two primary dimensions, breadth as the quantity or the number of words of which a learner has at least some superficial knowledge of meaning. The depth dimension is an aspect of word knowledge including spelling, pronunciation, meaning, frequency, register and morphological, syntactic and collocational properties. In other words, breadth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words learners know, and depth of vocabulary knowledge has to do with how well learners know a word.

Tests of vocabulary size have been shown to predict success in reading, writing, and general proficiency as well as academic achievement, whereas other types of vocabulary tests as yet have not (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004).

Tschirner (2004, p. 27) points that: "an important predictor of efficient reading and of academic success in general, is vocabulary size."

Hui (2004, p. 477) in his research paper concludes that: "without enlarging vocabulary size, students do not have real reading ability and communicative competence."

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The learners bring to the language-learning situation a wide spectrum of individual's differences. Moreover; learners employ different strategies when dealing with language learning in general and vocabulary acquisition in particular. It is believed that students resort to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies in order to compensate for the inadequacy of their lexical knowledge. Hence strategies improve different aspects of one's vocabulary knowledge.

Learning strategies are steps taken by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage and retrieve of information (Oxford, Crookall, 1989). Oxford and Nyikos (1989) pointed that learners enhance their autonomy, independence and self-correction, by means of using appropriate learning strategies, including vocabulary ones, which enable them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Regarding the studies reviewed, the researchers' main concern in the present study is investigating the relationship between multiple intelligences, vocabulary learning knowledge, as an aspect of learner's word knowledge, and learners' vocabulary learning strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the current study is to investigate whether there is any relationship between MI, vocabulary knowledge (breadth) and vocabulary learning strategies among the Iranian EFL learners. The second objective deals with whether any intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of vocabulary learning knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies.

Research Questions

More specifically, answers to the following research questions are sought:

1. Is there any relationship between MI and vocabulary learning knowledge (vocabulary breadth) among the Iranian EFL learners?
2. Is there any relationship between MI and vocabulary learning strategies among the Iranian EFL learners?
3. Which type of intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of vocabulary learning knowledge?
4. Which type of intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of any category of vocabulary strategies?

Method

This section introduces the participants, specifying how, where and in what ways they were selected. Moreover, the instruments used for data collection including the vocabulary levels test, the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire and the multiple intelligences questionnaire, are presented. In addition, the data analyses along with the procedures made use of will be elucidated.

Participants

The sample of participants in the present study was initially 100 senior students majoring in English Language Teaching at Azad University Shiraz branch in the spring semester of 2006/07. After the scores of vocabulary levels tests were obtained, those students whose scores were within two Standard Deviations (SDs) minus and two SDs plus the mean were selected and the rest were excluded. Moreover, out of remaining test-takers, 50 were excluded due to the fact that they did not cooperate answering the three questionnaires. The final test-takers were 47 (84% females and 16% males) students (ranged in age from 20 to 24) who participated voluntarily in the study.

Instruments

A couple of questionnaires and a test were used in this study as the following: the vocabulary levels test (VLT), the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire and the multiple intelligences questionnaire.

The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)

Nation's Level Test (2001) which is a revised version of Nation's VLT (1990) by Schmitt *et al.* (2001) was used to measure the participants' receptive vocabulary size levels. This test consists of four general vocabulary tests establishing vocabulary levels of 2000, 3000, 5000, 10000 and the test of the Academic Word List (AWL), determining knowledge of words used frequently in academic writing. In addition, a receptive 1000 word test also taken from Nation (2001) was included in the study. Each level consists of 60 words and 30 definitions in groups of six and three and in 10 clusters. Test takers matched the words to the definitions. To leave some room for performance errors, the passing rate for each test was set at 90%. This means three errors were accepted as passing the test. In 1993, Schmitt revised the VLT and wrote three additional versions. The authors administered versions of the VLT to 801 English learners to explore its validity and reliability. The reliability of the test was calculated using Cronbach alpha (above 0.91) for all the levels sections, and the covariance figures were satisfactory, being above 0.90. (The Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the two complete equivalent tests was 0.95).

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

Vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire designed by Schmitt (1997) to recognize the type and frequency of the strategies, was used in this study. This test includes 5 categories, including: (Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive) and consists of 58 items with five-Likert Scale, ranging from (1= scarcely used, to 5= always used). As reported by Schmitt, the test is both reliable and valid. The reliability of the test was calculated using Cronbach alpha. The index of reliability (0.81) indicates that the test is reliable.

Multiple Intelligences Questionnaire

The Multiple Intelligences questionnaire based on Gardner's nine domains (linguistic, logical, visual, music, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, natural, and existential intelligences) was used. This questionnaire which is a combination of two MI tests, including Nail's (2002) MI tests of Ned production (that have been translated into French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish) and multiple intelligences inventory (McKenzie, 1999) was used in this study. This questionnaire contains 90 items with a five-Likert Scale ranging from 1 (this is not like me at all) to 5 (I'm always like this) that covers 9 categories of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory. It takes about 30 minutes on average to complete 90 multiple-choices and there was no time limit. The original English version was translated into Persian to ensure that the participants easily follow its items and then it was translated back into English to ascertain that the translated version has the same interpretation. The reliability of the test was calculated using Cronbach alpha. The index of reliability (above 0.90) indicates that the test is very reliable. To ascertain the construct validity of the items and to determine the underlying variables (factors) that account for the correlations among observed variables principal factor analysis was used. The results of factor analysis demonstrate that there are 9 factors or constructs, or in another words, 9 segments of intelligence.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data were collected in two sessions. In order to motivate the participants to take the test and the questionnaire seriously, the objectives of the study were explained to the participants and to avoid misunderstanding, all the instructions were given in Persian. However, participants were free to ask questions due to probable misunderstandings. First, Nation's Level Test (2001) was given to participants to determine their vocabulary thresholds. Then, vocabulary strategies and MI were used. After collecting the data, a number of descriptive (mean + Standard Deviation, SD) and inferential analyses (Correlation + Multiple Regressions) were conducted on the data.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are presented and discussed. The descriptive analysis of the participants' multiple intelligences, vocabulary breadth, and vocabulary strategies are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Multiple Intelligences	47	231	381	322.74	32.953	-.351	-.004
	47	1000	5000	2702.13	930.519	.813	1.445
Vocabulary Strategies	47	128	253	174.55	29.465	.560	-.294

This table provides information regarding, mean, standard deviation (STD), skewness and kurtosis. The skewness value provides an indication of the symmetry of the distribution. Kurtosis on the other hand provides information about the peakedness of the distribution. Skewness and kurtosis values of 0 or near 0 are normal. The skewness value of MI is negative which is indicative of the idea of clustering of scores at the high end (right-hand side of a graph). The skewness value of vocabulary and strategies is positive, indicating positive skewedness (scores are clustered to the left at the low values). The kurtosis value of MI and strategies is negative; indicating a distribution that is relatively flat. Kurtosis of vocabulary is positive which shows that the distribution is rather peaked (clustered in the center towards, left-hand).

Table3.2. Pearson correlation between vocabulary & MI

Variables	MI	Vocabulary
MI	1	.319*
Vocabulary	.319*	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

With respect to the relationship between the participants' MIs and vocabulary knowledge (breadth), both in terms of the strength and direction of the relationship, Pearson Correlations was used. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Although the "r" value is not too great, however,

the significance correlation cannot be ignored. As Hatch and Lazarson (1991) stated, "a correlation in the .30s or lower may appear weak, but in educational research such a correlation might be very important" (p. 442).

Table 3.3. Multiple Regressions for Types of Intelligences and Vocabulary

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
Linguistic Intelligence	.323	2.293	.027
Logical Intelligence	.283	1.979	.054
Spatial Intelligence	-.190	-1.301	.200
Musical Intelligence	.095	.641	.525
Bodily Intelligence	.096	.647	.521
Interpersonal Intelligence	-.063	-.422	.675
Intrapersonal Intelligence	.144	.975	.335
Naturalistic Intelligence	.313	2.209	.032
Existential Intelligence	.243	1.683	.099

In order to predict the value of dependent variable that is size of the vocabulary (breadth), from a number of independent variables (MI), and to see which variable is the best predictor of dependent variable (vocabulary), multiple regression analyses were used. As Table 4.3 illustrates, linguistic and natural intelligences with significant value of .027 and .032 respectively, make unique and statistically significant contribution to the prediction of vocabulary learning knowledge (size). (.027<.05 .032<.05.).

Table 3.4. Step wise Multiple Regression between MI & Vocabulary

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
Linguistic Intelligence	.323	2.293	.027

Excluded Variable

Variables	Beta In	t	Sig.
Natural Intelligence	.221	1.464	.150

Predictors: Linguistic Intelligence

Dependent Variable: Vocabulary breadth

Excluded Variable: Natural Intelligence

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine among two intelligences (linguistic and natural) which one makes the stronger unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable. As Table 4.4 illustrates, among two intelligences (linguistics and natural intelligences), linguistic intelligence (beta = .323) makes the stronger unique contribution to explaining the vocabulary breadth and it is a stronger predictor for vocabulary learning knowledge. And natural intelligence with a Beta value of .212 in the stepwise multiple regression was excluded.

Table 3.5. Stepwise multiple regression between MI & Determination strategies

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
Bodily Intelligence	.310	2.191	.034

Excluded Variables

Variables	Beta IN	t	Sig.
Linguistic Intelligence	.217	1.552	.128
Logical Intelligence	.177	1.184	.243
Spatial Intelligence	-.143	-.879	.384
Musical Intelligence	.129	.766	.448
Interpersonal Intelligence	.160	1.061	.295
Intrapersonal Intelligence	.176	1.250	.218
Naturalistic Intelligence	.142	.992	.326
Existential Intelligence	.176	1.202	.236

Predictors: Bodily Intelligence

Dependent Variable: Determination Strategies

Schmitt (1997) classified vocabulary learning strategies into 5 categories (determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive). In order to predict the relationship between dependent variable (each category of strategies) from a number of independent variables (multiple intelligences) and to see which variable is the best predictor of dependent variable (strategies), stepwise multiple regression analyses were run.

As Table 3.5 illustrates, among different segments of MI, bodily intelligence makes the largest unique contribution (beta = .310) to the prediction of determination strategies, and the other types of intelligence were excluded.

Table 3.6. Stepwise multiple regression between MI & Social strategies

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
Naturalistic Intelligence	-.296	-2.076	.044

Excluded Variables

Variables	Beta In	t	Sig.
Linguistic Intelligence	.001	.010	.992
Logical Intelligence	.004	.026	.979
Spatial Intelligence	-.083	-.517	.608
Musical Intelligence	.148	1.029	.309
Bodily Intelligence	.191	1.339	.188
Interpersonal Intelligence	-.027	-.183	.855
Intrapersonal Intelligence	.217	1.511	.138
Existential Intelligence	.024	.112	.911

Predictors: Natural Intelligence
 Dependent Variable: Social Strategies

As Table 3.6 illustrates, among different segments of MI, natural intelligence makes the largest contribution (beta = .296) to the prediction of social strategies (in negative direction) and other intelligence types that cannot predict social strategies were excluded.

Table 3.7. Stepwise multiple regression between MI & Memory strategies

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
Interpersonal Intelligence	.288	2.015	.050

Excluded Variables

Variables	Beta In	t	Sig.
Linguistic Intelligence	-.061	-.381	.705
Logical Intelligence	-.113	-.777	.442
Spatial Intelligence	-.158	-1.073	.289
Musical Intelligence	.163	1.021	.313
Bodily Intelligence	.145	.956	.344
Intrapersonal Intelligence	.171	1.176	.246
Naturalistic Intelligence	-.021	-.142	.888
Existential Intelligence	.045	.299	.766

Predictors: Interpersonal Intelligence
Dependent Variable: Memory Strategies

As Table 3.7 presents, among different segments of MI, interpersonal intelligence makes the largest contribution (beta = .288) to the prediction of memory strategies, and other intelligence types were excluded.

In summary, the results indicate that among 5 categories of strategies, namely, determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive, 3 of them (determination, social and memory strategies) have stronger relationship with bodily, natural and interpersonal intelligences, respectively. Despite the fact that the "r" value is not that high, however, the significance correlation cannot be ignored. Moreover; the results

indicate that none of the intelligence types can predict cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Finally, correlations were run in order to find the amount of relationship (go-togetherness) among Iranian candidates in terms of vocabulary learning strategies and each type of multiple intelligences (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8. Spearman Correlation between MI and 5 categories of Strategies

MI	Determination	Social	Memory	Cognitive	Metacognitive
Ling	.236	-.101	.146	.184	.077
Log	.297*	-.054	.037	-.038	.196
Sp	.093	-.126	-.045	.042	.061
Mus	.222	.085	.238	.073	.095
Bod	.313*	.148	.172	.185	.139
Intra	.106	.128	.189	.091	.142
Inter	.179	-.139	.284	.143	.091
Nat	.156	-.197	.075	.155	.078
Exi	.231	-.157	.125	.192	.183
Determin	1	.434**	.464**	.373**	.612**
Social	.434**	1	.597**	.444**	.524**
Memory	.464**	.597**	1	.622**	.646**
Cognitive	.373**	.444**	.622**	1	.689**
Metacog	.612**	.524**	.646**	.689**	1

As Table 3.8 illustrates, there is a significant relationship between bodily and logical intelligences with determination strategies. Moreover; 5 categories of strategies have significant relationship with each other. However; there is no significant relationship between other strategies and intelligence types. Moreover, Pearson correlation analyses were used to determine whether there is any significant relationship between so-called variables. In order to be more precise, a number of separate correlations between each segment of MI and each strategy (58 strategies) were done. AS such, separate Tables in Appendix A show the correlation between each strategy and each type of intelligence.

Conclusion

The present study intended to investigate the relationship between vocabulary learning knowledge, vocabulary learning strategies and multiple intelligences among the Iranian EFL learners at Shiraz Azad University, Shiraz, Iran. As such, in the conclusion section of the study, the main research questions presented in the first section will be answered one by one.

1. Is there any relationship between MI and vocabulary learning knowledge (vocabulary breadth) among Iranian EFL learners?

There is a relationship between MI and vocabulary learning knowledge; Even though the "r" value is not great in the educational setting, such a correlation might be very important.

2. Is there any relationship between MI and vocabulary learning strategies?

Finally, correlations was run in order to find the amount of relationship (go-togetherness) among Iranian candidates in terms of vocabulary learning strategies and each type of multiple intelligences. There is a significant relationship between bodily and logical intelligences with determination strategies. Moreover; 5 categories of strategies have significant relationship with each other. However; there is no significant relationship between other strategies and intelligence types. Some strategies are used more and some less frequently than others. Also, some strategies have no relationship with different domains of intelligence; furthermore the relationship of social strategy is in negative direction. These results indicate the ignorance of the importance of these strategies especially, social strategy in Iranian educational systems and may conclude that learners do not use most of the strategies and they are not aware of the importance of these strategies.

3. Which type of intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of vocabulary learning knowledge?

Stepwise multiple regressions show that verbal/linguistic intelligence is the greatest predictor of vocabulary learning knowledge. Regarding the linguistic intelligence as a best predictor of vocabulary makes sense and it seems reasonable, because this intelligence has to do with words and skills of reading and writing.

4. Which type of intelligence or combination of intelligences is the best predictor of any category of vocabulary strategies?

Stepwise multiple regressions indicate that among 5 categories of strategies (determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive) determination, social and memory strategies can be strongly predicted by bodily, natural and interpersonal intelligences, respectively; that is bodily and interpersonal intelligences are found as positive predictors of determination and memory strategies, while the natural intelligence is found to be as a negative predictor of social strategies. Although the "r" value is not great, however, the significance correlation cannot be ignored. Moreover; the results indicate that none of the intelligence types can predict cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Implications of the Study

MI model has provided us with the opportunity to look differently at curriculum, instruction, and assessment. MI pedagogy provides opportunities for authentic learning based on student's needs, interests, and talents. The multiple intelligence classroom acts like the real world. Students become more active, involved learners. Students should be standing up, moving around and discussing with each other what they are learning while learning it.

Based on this study it is hoped that teachers become more aware of the differences among students. Thus, teachers must take into account these differences and the materials should be taught in different ways. If these conditions are fulfilled, the students have more opportunities to learn and to understand the materials being taught. If they do not comprehend the material in one way, they might comprehend it in another way. Thus, their achievement is likely to improve.

Teaching materials in a variety of ways enable students to make the most of their intellectual strengths and even to work toward correcting or at least compensating for their weaknesses. Multiple intelligences are the paths to learning and teachers can see in their students many different paths to learning to meet their needs and interests in the classroom and society. The ultimate goal of MI theory is to increase students

understanding. The value is, in expanding the possibilities to build our children's strengths and to introduce them to skills that lead to happy, successful lives.

In a nutshell, the findings of the present study are very helpful to educators in the field of language teaching, in general. In particular, the results of the study can serve to help the board of education at universities as well as institutes nationwide to take measures so as to consider and enhance different types of intelligences and strategies among the students and consequently deal with the existing problems which students across the country experience in language learning.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the study for their care, time and meticulous comments. We would also like to express our special thanks to Dr. Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh, the Senior Associate Editor of the Iranian EFL Journal, for his contribution.

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Appendix A

Pearson correlation between MIs and strategies

	S2	S14	S51
LING I Pearson Correlation	.335	-	.295
	*	*	*
Sig. (2-tailed)			
N	.022	.047	.044
	47	47	47

	S2	S5	S14
LOG I Pearson Correlation	.303	.291	-
	*	*	*
Sig. (2-tailed)			
N	.038	.047	.015
	47	47	47

	S32
TVIS Pearson Correlation	-
	.406**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
N	47

	S2	S3	S7	S19	S29
MUS I Pearson Correlation	.299 *	.417 **	- .305 *	.369 *	.347 *
Sig. (2-tailed)					
N	.041 47	.004 47	.037 47	.011 47	.017 47

	S4	S10	S29	S32	S36	S39	S45
BOD I Pearson Correlation	.301 [*]	.301 [*]	.297 [*]	-.301 [*]	.345 [*]	.323 [*]	.297 [*]
Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.040	.043	.040	.018	.027	.043
N	47	47	47	47	47	47	47

	S3	S21	S29	S51
INTER I Pearson Correlation	.363	.349	.346	.295
Sig. (2-tailed)	*	*	*	*
N	.012	.016	.017	.044
	47	47	47	47

	S22	S23	S27	S29	S31	S32	S37	S38	S56
INTR A I Pearson Correlation									
Sig. (2-tailed)									
N									

	S4	S13	S14	S32
NAT I Pearson Correlation	.306*	-.310*	-.327*	-.360*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.034	.025	.013
N	47	47	47	47

	S1	S13	S14
EXI I Pearson Correlation	.292*	-.313*	-.295*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.032	.044
N	47	47	47

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Iranian EFL Journal



Title:

The Relationship between Risk-taking, Fluency and Accuracy in the English Speech of Iranian EFL Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether risk-taking, as a personality factor, is related to the speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL students. For this purpose, 74 Iranian EFL students took the OPT (Oxford placement test) test of English language proficiency. Out of this number, 50 students who were homogeneous in terms of English language proficiency, carried out the picture description task and filled out the Persian venturesomeness Subscale of Eysenck's IVE questionnaire. The subjects were divided into 3 groups of high, medium and low risk-takers. Then the non-parametric test of Kruskal-Wallis was run using SPSS 13. The results showed that there was not a

statistically significant relationship between risk-taking and speaking fluency; however, high risk-takers were more fluent than low risk-takers, and medium risk-takers were the optimal group in terms of speaking fluency. Also, it was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between risk-taking and grammatical accuracy in speaking. The medium risk-takers were the optimal group in terms of grammatical accuracy in speaking. The findings have some implications for language pedagogy and language testing.

Key words: Risk taking, Speaking fluency, Grammatical accuracy

Introduction

With the increased emphasis on communication in the world today, an oral command of EFL is, and will remain for no doubt, the objective of language teaching all over the world. Speaking a language fluently has been the ultimate goal in learning a language. Despite the frequent use of the term “fluency” in language pedagogy and language testing, as well as in many fields of applied linguistics, it seems that there is no consensus concerning what is understood by the concept (Chambers, 1997).

Although the broad concept of fluency makes it hard to define, the same broadness leaves little doubt as to its significance in communicative methodology in modern times. This emphasis however should not send grammatical accuracy into oblivion. As Lazaraton (2001) mentions teachers now are expected to balance a focus on accuracy and fluency.

Fluency has been defined differently and used as a substitute for a group of aspects of proficiency. Despite the lack of precision in use, the construct of fluency has been defined and investigated in the field of language learning and has been the subject of theoretical and empirical inquiry.

There is no doubt that speaking ability involves being able to produce speech both accurately and fluently. In a communicative context, grammatical accuracy can be argued to be secondary if the message is understood. Yet students need a grammatical base in order to generate their own language as opposed to reproduce set phrases of others (Pachler & Field, 2001). Ellis (2003) underlines the importance of accuracy in

speech and suggests that we should lay equal importance to both fluency and accuracy, as stressing any one may jeopardize the other.

Research in the area of speaking is still in its infancy (Bell, 2003). As students' success in speaking ability is determined by both their fluency and accuracy and considering the fact that the concept of fluency is one of the aspects of second language use least thought about and least researched (Van Patten, 1998) this study is going to deal with the issue of speaking fluency. Moreover, attempts are made to investigate accuracy as the challenging issue associated with fluency. Furthermore, the link between individual factors and language learning has always been appealing to researchers in the field. Personality factors have been shown to affect educational attainment (Crozier, 1997). The problem with studies on personality factors in the area of EFL/ESL learning however is that there is often no theoretical basis for predicting which personality variable will be positively or negatively related to which aspect of L2 proficiency (Ellis, 1994). Risk-taking is an important personality factor in language learning (Brown, 1994). It involves "a situation where an individual has to make a decision involving choice between alternatives of different desirability; the outcome of the choice is uncertain; there is possibility of failure" (Beebe, 1983, p. 39). If students' problems in speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy can be linked to risk-taking it will revolutionize methods of teaching speaking, since teachers can do nothing to change students' IQ but they can for sure help their students achieve optimal level of risk-taking. Thus, the present study aims at investigating the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between risk-taking and speaking fluency of Iranian EFL students?
2. Is there any relationship between risk-taking and grammatical accuracy in the English speaking of Iranian EFL students?

Speaking Fluency in L2

In the literature on language teaching and testing, fluency mainly refers to productive language performance and as Riggenbach (1991) contends is an important criterion by which non-native performance can be judged. Various definitions of the term fluency have been proposed. Brumfit (1984) argues from a definition of fluency as natural

language use and defines the aim of fluency activity in the classroom as to develop a pattern of language interaction in the classroom which is as close as possible to that used by competent performers in the first language. The definition given above is so broad and as Hedge (1993) notes covers all the language skills. Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) however believe that fluency is a feature of productive skills of language: *In second and foreign language teaching, fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication which includes : a) the ability to produce written and/ or spoken language with ease. b) the ability to speak with a good but not necessarily with a perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar. c) the ability to communicate ideas effectively. d) the ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties” (pp. 141- 42).*

Lennon (2000) argues that “a working definition of fluency might be the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing” (p. 26). Wood (2001) mentions that fluency in second language is largely a function of pauses and hesitations and their connection with pragmatics and structure. He further states that if we define fluency to be distinct from other aspects of oral proficiency, we should consider temporal variables in speech such as pauses, rate of speech, hesitations, fillers, etc. In an attempt to gain more insights into the temporal aspects of fluency, Riggensbach (1991) carried out a study in which samples of speech produced by ESL learners were judged by experts on fluency and then were analyzed for quantitative variables such as speech rate, phonation-time ratio, mean length of runs, and number and length of pauses. The results of the study showed that fluency ratings are affected by the quantitative variables. There has been a remarkable agreement in the literature on the following temporal variables in the study of fluency: rate or speed of delivery, pauses and the length of fluent runs between pauses.

Broad and Narrow Senses of Speaking Fluency

Hedge (1993) notes that the term fluency has two meanings: the first which has commonly been understood in language teaching materials and assessment procedures is the “ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation” (p.275). This definition of fluency is in line with Thornbury’s (2000) reference to fluency as autoimmunization of language system.

The second meaning is that of natural language use which is likely to take place when speaking activities focus on meaning and its negotiation, when speaking strategies are used.

Chastain (1988) believes that fluency is one of the students' abilities in categories related to oral communication. He states that *Communicative fluency is related to ease, logical continuity, and naturalness of delivery. Lack of fluency is characterized by hesitance, constant restatement, groping for the correct utterance, and so on*" (p. 397). Contrary to Chastain, Lewis (1999) has taken the concept of speaking fluency not as a component of speaking ability (i.e. not the narrow sense) but as the speaking ability itself. Also, Harmer (2001) considers the broad sense of fluency when he mentions that the ability to speak fluently presupposes the knowledge of language features (i.e. connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation language), and the ability to process information and language "on the spot" (p. 269).

Grammatical Accuracy

In learning a language we are concerned with two types of grammar, spoken and written. Until recently the grammar presented to learners of English was based entirely on written grammar and it is only recently that spoken grammar has found a place in language teaching (Thornbury, 2000). Different definitions for accuracy have been put forward in the literature. Yuan and Ellis (2003) mention that "Accuracy concerns the extent to which the language produced conforms to the target language norms" (p. 2). Richards, Platt & Platt (1992) also define accuracy as "the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences" (p. 142). Byrne (as cited in Lan, 1994) defines accuracy more precisely when he says that accuracy refers to the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors which affect the phonological, syntactic, semantic or discourse features of a language.

With regard to the importance of grammatical accuracy in EFL pedagogy, it should be mentioned that in the mid to late 1970s some teachers turned away from accuracy issues in favor of providing natural language activities in the classroom. This overemphasis on fluency resulted in learners who were able to produce "fairly fluent but barely comprehensible language" (Brown, 2001, p. 268).

Grammatical Accuracy and L2 Speaking

Accuracy and L2 speaking is mostly dealt with in the literature in the area of tasks and planning. A number of studies have investigated the effect of planning on accuracy of L2 speech which will be discussed below:

Pre-task planning: Ellis (1997) found that pre-task planning resulted in increased accuracy in the use of regular past tense in oral narratives in English. On the other hand Wendel (as cited in Ellis & Yuan, 2004) and Yuan and Ellis (2003) found that pre-task planning did not have any effect on accuracy in the learners' narrative productions. Mehnert (1998) investigated the effect of different amounts of planning time on second language speech. She found that accuracy of speech is improved with only one minute planning time and did not improve with more planning time.

On-line planning: Yuan and Ellis (2003) mentioned that in this type of planning, learners use the time to formulate the message more carefully and monitor the output of the formulation. They found that on-line planning led to greater accuracy in oral productions. Studies done by Wendel (as cited in Ellis & Yuan, 2004) and Yuan and Ellis (2003) have shown that while pre-task planning enhances fluency, on-line planning contributes to greater accuracy. This suggests that there is a trade-off between accuracy and fluency.

Another avenue of research regarding accuracy and speaking concentrated on whether communication in L2 would lead to gains in accuracy or not. Long (1983) stated that when learners have the opportunity to negotiate communication breakdowns, the interactional modifications which arise in the discourse make grammatical features salient, as a result they can be acquired. However, there is empirical evidence that contradicts what Long has proposed. Schmidt (as cited in Ellis, 1997) for instance found that a learner of English who went into an English speaking community for three years failed to have much gain in grammatical accuracy although his overall communicative abilities in English improved to a great extent. Moreover, some researchers (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1990) found that communicative methods of language teaching did not result in error-free English even in simple structures.

Fluency vs. Accuracy

Language proficiency can be defined in terms of fluency and accuracy. If a learner has mastered a language successfully, it means that he or she can produce it both accurately and fluently (Harmer, 2001). An earlier proponent of the distinction between accuracy and fluency was Brumfit (1984) who made a contrast between fluency-oriented and accuracy-oriented activities. The first one, as he said encouraged spontaneous language use and genuine communication while the latter focused on form and attempted to elicit error-free language.

Research in the area of second language acquisition and cognition shows that the human information processing resources are limited and that where learners have difficulty attending to all aspects of language, trade-offs must be made (Derwing & Rossiter, 2003). Skehan and Foster (1997) carried out a study in which they measured oral fluency, accuracy and syntactic complexity. The results showed that learners can not attend equally to all the three aspects of performance. According to Richards et al. (1992) fluency is sometimes contrasted with accuracy, which refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. Also, Larsen-Freeman (1986) makes a distinction between accuracy and fluency when he says that “in communicative language teaching students’ success is determined as much by their fluency as it is by their accuracy”(p. 129). Likewise Ellis (2003) makes a boundary between fluency and accuracy when he suggests that we lay equal importance to both of them as stressing any one may jeopardize the other.

Contrary to those who believe in the distinction between accuracy and fluency, there are people who either do not believe in the distinction or believe in the existence of overlap between the two concepts. For example, one of the earlier proponents of the non-distinction between accuracy and fluency is Leeson (as cited in Brumfit, 1984). He said that fluency is the ability of a speaker to produce indefinitely many sentences conforming to the phonological, syntactic and semantic exigencies of a language on the basis of finite exposure to the finite corpus of that language. A study done by Kormos and Denes (2004) showed that fluency is not just a temporal phenomenon. They found that accuracy played a major role in fluency judgments. Similarly, a study carried out by Riggensbach (1991) suggests that judgments of fluency embrace linguistic accuracy as well.

Measurement of Fluency and Accuracy in L2 Speaking

Measures of speaking fluency differ according to different definitions proposed by scholars in the field. According to Kormos and Denes (2004) there exist four approaches to delineating the measures of fluency in L2 speech. The first type of research is concerned with the temporal aspects of speech production. The second type of research combines temporal variables with the investigation of interactive features (e.g. topic initiations, substantive comments, the amount of speech produced, etc.). The third group of research takes into account the phonological aspect of speech production as well. Finally, they contend that recent studies on fluency have included the analysis of formulaic speech in L2 speech.

Different measures have been used to refer to accuracy. Some researchers like Crookes (1989) and Wigglesworth (as both cited in Yuan & Ellis, 2003) have examined how accurately specific grammatical features (like article) are used while others use more generalized measures such as the proportion of error free clauses relative to the total number of clauses (e.g. Kormos & Denes, 2004).

Holistic rating is a common way in testing students' speaking ability. Aside from quantitative measurement of fluency, there have been studies in which fluency is measured using a likert scale. Chastain (1988) for instance has designed a scale for rating fluency which ranges from poor to superior. In holistic rating of speaking, a rater exercises his or her subjective judgment. Although this type of rating has the disadvantage of not being objective, its reliability can be ascertained through having two or more testers mark the testees separately (Walker, 1990) and asking the testers "to grade according to very explicit criteria" (Ur, 1996, P. 135).

Risk- taking

Risk-taking is defined in the dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics (Richards et al., 1992) as "a personality factor which concerns the degree to which a person is willing to undertake actions that involve a significant degree of risk" (p. 317). Also, Brown (2001) mentions that self-confidence and language ego lay the ground work for risk-taking. Three types of risk-taking have been identified in the literature: high,

moderate, and low. Cognitive developmental theories of human motivation, implicitly or explicitly predict that moderate risk-taking can have beneficial cognitive and motivational effects (Clifford & Chou, 1991). It also provides highly valued information about one's ability (Trope, 1980) and encourages positive response to error making and failure (Kim & Clifford, 1988). Kogan and Wallach (1967) claim that people with high motivation to achieve are moderate, not high risk-takers. They like to be in the center. They do not take wild risks and avoid situations where there is no win. They also avoid getting involved in low risk situations. According to Gage and Berliner (1988) people with high achievement motivation select tasks which are of moderate risk. On the other hand those with low achievement motivation select tasks of either high or low risk. Kogan and Wallach (1967) believe that people with high need for approval are likely to take courses of action which are extremely risky. They might not modify risk-taking behavior even if it leads to failure.

Risk-taking and Learning

Risk-taking is said to be an important characteristic of successful second language learning, because learners must be willing "to try out hunches about the new language and take the risk of being wrong" (Richards et al., 1992, p.317). Many studies have been carried out on risk-taking and learning. What follows is the result of some of those studies. Ely (1986) found that people who were willing to take risks in a language class were more likely to participate in the classroom. Evensen and Bednar (as cited in Jonassen & Grabowsky, 1993) found that high risk-takers reported greater perceived depth of communication. In a study done by Clifford (1990) it was shown that students chose more difficult problems when the number of points offered increased with the difficulty of the problem and when a risk-taking task was presented within a game or practice situation. In the Iranian EFL context Kiany and Pournia (2006) found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between risk-taking and syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy in either descriptive or expository writing. However they found that low risk-takers tended to make fewer errors in descriptive and expository writing compared to high and moderate risk-takers. Also, they found that the moderate and high risk-takers tended to use more complicated T-units in their expository

writing than low risk-takers. It should be mentioned that T-unit is concerned with the length and complexity of sentences in a written text.

Risk-taking and the Language Instructor

A number of researchers have stressed the importance of getting the learners to take calculated risks in attempting to use language (e.g. Brown, 2001; Kiany & Pournia, 2006). Brown (2001) suggests the following ideas so that a classroom reflects the principle of risk-taking:

1. "create an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages students to try out language, to venture a response, and not wait for some one else to volunteer language.
2. provide reasonable challenges in your techniques-make them neither too easy nor too hard.
3. help your students to understand what calculated risk-taking is, lest some feel that they must blurt out any old response.
4. respond to students` risky attempts with positive affirmation, praising them for trying while at the same time warmly but firmly attending to their language” (P. 63-4).

Clifford and Chou (1991) have mentioned that to encourage moderate academic risk taking, teachers will need to modify the nature and focus of reinforcement practices. Internal and task relevant rewards must be substituted for task irrelevant rewards, and the focus on errorless learning must be replaced with a focus on moderate risk-taking, tolerance for error making and error correction and skill development. Also, they mention that the embellishment of game contexts with the addition of fantasy and appeal to curiosity may enhance intrinsic motivation and thus increase academic risk-taking. They further mention that high informational feed back is expected to elicit greater risk-taking than is low informational feed back. Feed back with high future value (e.g. feed back on tasks that will be reencountered) will prompt higher risk-taking than feed back with low future value. Jonassen and Grabowsky (1993) state that the following instructional conditions can help students to become less cautious and take more risks:

- *“using group working to facilitate trust, and discussions among groups.*
- *Encouraging creativity.*

- *Using the strategies to facilitate the fears of being imperfect:*
 - a) *setting more reasonable goals.*
 - b) *dividing large tasks in to smaller ones.*
 - c) *developing support systems to handle stress.*
 - d) *giving rewards for small accomplishments.*
- *Using multi-modal counseling*
 - a) *practice tasks.*
 - b) *helping students organize and plan activities.*
 - c) *talking about fears and feelings.*
 - d) *helping students make decisions and develop problem-solving skills.*
 - e) *using other students as models, sharing their experiences.*
- *Challenging and encouraging risk-taking:*
 - a) *making the success probability for each alternative clear.*
 - b) *minimizing the imposed external constraints.*
 - c) *providing greater pay-off for greater risks.*
 - d) *providing a relaxing and non-threatening environment.*
 - e) *providing an environment that is tolerant of error-making and supportive of error correction.*
 - f) *making formative activities (such as practice exercises and skill building. activities) for more plentiful than summative activities that are used to determine grades; making these formative activities optional, relevant, varied and of a playful nature.*
 - g) *allowing retake exams for summative evaluations” (pp. 412-13).*

Research Methodology

Participants

The Participants of the study in the preliminary stage of the research were 74 Iranian EFL students with the age range of 18-27. They were freshman students at the University of Isfahan. After the administration of the OPT test of language proficiency 54 students were qualified to take part in the main stage of the study. Out of this number 50 students participated in the picture description task and were given the risk-taking questionnaire developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006) (see Appendix A & B).

Instrumentation

Some tests and scales were used as the instruments to measure different variables of the study. (1) OPT test of language proficiency was administered to come up with a homogeneous number of subjects in terms of language proficiency. (2) The Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE questionnaire was used in order to determine the subjects' levels of risk-taking. (3) a picture description task was given in order to elicit the subjects' speech samples. (4) The scales for fluency and accuracy used in this study were the subscales of fluency and accuracy of the oral proficiency scale developed by Farhadi et al. (1994). Both the fluency and accuracy scales have 6 levels with corresponding behavioral statements. The highest and the lowest score in each scale is 6 and 1 respectively. The reliability of the scales was checked by using correlational procedures. The intra-rater reliability for fluency was shown to be .89 and that for accuracy was shown to be .85 (see Appendix E).

Procedures

First, the OPT test was administered. The exam papers were scored and the scores were scattered over a normal distribution diagram with the mean of 70.47 and the standard deviation of 8.12. Those who got one standard deviation above and below the mean were considered outliers and were excluded from the study. This was done to make the subjects homogeneous in terms of English proficiency. 54 subjects had been qualified to carry out the picture description task out of which 50 subjects were given the picture description task and the venturesomeness questionnaire. Based on their scores on the risk-taking-test, the subjects were divided into three groups of high, medium and low risk-takers if they fell above +0.5 SD, in ± 0.5 SD or below -0.5 SD respectively. The normality of the distribution of scores was also ascertained through Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The speech samples were tape-recorded and taken for further analysis. It should be mentioned that as a pilot study, the venturesomeness questionnaire had been first given to a group of 20 students. This was done in order to lessen the problem of test administration.

Data analysis

The study has used the ex post facto design because there has been no treatment. There has been one independent variable with three levels and two dependent variables. Risk-taking with three levels of high, medium and low was the independent variable and speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy were the dependent variables. In this study, various statistical analyses including both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for different purposes. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations have been used throughout the study in order to check the underlying assumptions of the statistical procedures applied in the study. One of the researchers made a holistic rating of the students' fluency and accuracy in speaking. The bands assigned by the rater for fluency and accuracy were analyzed statistically and the desirable intra-rater reliability for both fluency and grammatical accuracy was obtained. As stated earlier, the intra-rater reliability estimates were found to be .89 for fluency and .85 for accuracy (see Appendix E).

To answer the research questions, inferential statistical procedures were applied. One sample K-S tests were run throughout the study to check the normality of distributions (see Appendix D). We had one independent variable with three levels and two dependent variables; Moreover, the scores on fluency and accuracy were not normally distributed (p value is below .05 as shown in Appendix D); thus, Kruskal-Wallis which is the non-parametric equivalent to the one way between groups ANOVA (see Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991) was used to find out the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Results

To answer the first research question, Kruskal-Wallis was used to compare the mean ranks of the risk-taking subgroups. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Mean ranks of fluency scores on Kruskal-Wallis test

Ranks			
	RISKLEVEL	N	Mean Rank
FLUENCY	1.00	14	25.18
	2.00	18	28.86
	3.00	18	22.39
	Total	50	

The above table shows that there are differences among the mean ranks of fluency scores of the three groups. To see whether the differences are statistically meaningful or not, the following table should be examined.

Table 2. Results of Kruskal-Wallis test for fluency scores

Test Statistics ^{a,b}	
	FLUENCY
Chi-Square	2.037
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.361

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: RISKLEVEL

As Table 2 shows the Chi-square value (2.03) is less than the critical value of 5.99 for the df of 2 and the p value of .05. In other words, it shows that there is no relationship between risk-taking and speaking fluency. The Table also depicts this by illustrating the fact that the p value (i.e. .36) is above .05. This means that there was not a significant relationship between risk-taking and speaking fluency of Iranian EFL students. It should however be noted that there is a trend of difference in the sense that high risk-taking subjects performed better than low risk-taking subjects and that the medium risk-taking subjects performed better than other groups in terms of fluency, even though such differences were not statistically significant.

As stated earlier, the second research question seeks to investigate the relationship between risk-taking and the grammatical accuracy of the participants. Kruskal-Wallis was used to compare the mean ranks of the risk-taking subgroups to see whether the differences among the mean ranks were statistically significant or not. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Mean ranks of accuracy scores on Kruskal-wallis test

Ranks			
	RISKLEVL	N	Mean Rank
ACCURACY	1.00	14	21.82
	2.00	18	31.89
	3.00	18	21.97
	Total	50	

As shown in Table 3, there are differences among the mean ranks of accuracy in speaking of the three groups. To see whether these differences are statistically meaningful or not we need to closely investigate the findings in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Kruskal-wallis test for accuracy scores

Test Statistics ^{a,b}	
	ACCURACY
Chi-Square	7.090
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.029

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: RISKLEVL

As Table 4 shows the Chi-square value (7.09) is more than the critical value of 5.99 for the df of 2 and the p value of .05. This shows that there is a significant relationship between risk-taking and grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL students. The table also depicts this by illustrating the fact that the p value (i.e. .02) is below .05.

Discussion

The results showed that there was not a significant relationship between risk-taking and speaking fluency of Iranian EFL students but there was a significant relationship between risk-taking and grammatical accuracy in speaking of the participants. The mean rank of fluency scores in high risk-taking group is larger than that in low risk-taking subgroup. This shows that there is a trend that high risk-takers perform better than low risk-takers. Also, as shown in Table 1, the moderate risk-takers were shown to be the optimal group far as the fluency in speaking is concerned. Also, it was found that the mean rank of

accuracy scores in moderate risk-taking subgroup is more than the mean ranks in high and low risk-taking subgroups.

The findings are in line with Oxford and H.D. Brown (as cited in Oxford 1999) that "it is more useful for language learners to take moderate but intelligent risks" rather than taking extreme or no risk at all (p. 63). They also tend to accord with Jonassen and Grabowsky (1993) 's statement that "much documentation exist that encourages moderate risk-taking for the empowerment and creative development of the students especially in academic settings"(p. 408).

By means of comparing the mean ranks of high and low risk-taking groups on fluency and accuracy we find that high risk-takers speak more fluently than low risk-takers (25.18 vs. 22.39). In contrast high risk-takers speak less accurately than low risk-takers (21.82 vs. 21.97). Also, by comparing Table 1 and Table 3 we find out that the score of medium risk-takers on fluency is lower than their score on accuracy (28.86 vs. 31.89). Thus, it could be argued that this finding is to some extent in line with Skehan and Foster (1997) who found that learners can not attend equally to all aspects of oral performance. They believe that because human information processing resources are limited, there must be a trade-off between the measures of fluency and accuracy. Therefore, if teachers want their students to practice fluency in speaking, they should expect that accuracy level might go down. Similarly, if teachers want their students practice accuracy in speaking, they should expect decrease in the level of fluency.

As EFL teachers we can encourage the students to develop an optimal level of risk-taking by integrating appropriate techniques in our teaching and also by providing opportunities so that all students experience success and improvement. As suggested by Brown (1994) very high-risk-takers as they dominate the classroom with wild gambles need to be tamed by the instructor, but most of the time our concern will be to encourage students to make guesses and to value them as persons for their risk-taking.

Moderate risk-takers were shown to be more accurate than low risk-takers, thus if teachers want their students to overcome fossilization of grammatical errors they need to encourage students to take risks and try out the new language. This finding echoes Beebe 's (1983) statement that fossilization, or the relatively permanent incorporation of certain patterns of error, might be due to a lack of willingness to take risks.

Conclusion

To sum up, the results of this study showed that the differences among the risk-taking subgroups' mean ranks on the measure of accuracy in speaking were statistically significant while on the measure of fluency they were not. High risk-takers tended to speak more fluently but less accurately than the low risk-takers. Moreover, the results of the study showed that the medium risk-takers spoke more fluently and accurately than both high and low risk-takers.

The results of the study may have implications in teaching speaking. Teachers in conversation classes can be recommended to encourage their students to have an optimal level of risk-taking because if they avoid risk-taking they become "stalled by anticipated criticism from others or by self-criticism that they themselves supply. When they do not have enough practice, their language development becomes seriously stunted" (Oxford, 1999, p. 63). Furthermore, as stated earlier, if EFL teachers want their students to practice fluency in speaking, they should expect that accuracy level might go down and vice-versa.

The results may also have implications in the realm of assessing speaking. In assessing the speaking ability of students, teachers should not focus only on their students' weaknesses and perceived deficits because as mentioned in the book entitled "English as a second language, an elementary guide to implementation" (1996) "constant focus on students' weaknesses or inferred deficits, seriously undermines the students' self-esteem, risk-taking abilities and confidence in his or her own learning abilities" (p. 57). Moreover, it can be suggested that teachers assess the speaking ability of students during the course and avoid grading them solely based on summative exams. This can encourage learners to take risks and improve fluency as well as accuracy in speaking.

Finally, the findings of the study may have implications for material developers. Materials should be developed in a way as to enhance students' risk-taking. For example, the materials can focus on students' strengths and interests.

Few studies have been carried out on the notion of risk-taking and its influence on EFL students' language ability in general and speaking ability in particular; therefore, there are several areas of potential research. In the present study, the relationship between risk-taking and EFL students' ability in speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy was

investigated. Other research studies can be done to investigate the relationship between risk-taking and other language skills and components (listening, reading comprehension, vocabulary, etc.). The interaction of age, gender and risk-taking that was left untouched in the present study is another potential area that can be handled in further research.

There were some limitations for this study. First, fluency and accuracy in speaking were measured based on students' performance on a picture description task. This is a limitation of the study because as Farhadi et al. (1994) mentioned oral interview is the most face valid test of speaking. Also, oral interview is the most commonly used test of speaking (Harris, 1969; Chastain, 1988; Hughes, 2003). Second, fluency and accuracy have been assessed using holistic rating. This is a limitation of the study compared with studies like Cucchiarini, Strik, and Boves (2002) and Cucchiarini, Strik, and Boves (2000) who measured fluency based on quantitative measures and Kiany and Pournia (2006) and Kormos and Denes (2004) who assessed accuracy based on quantitative measures.

Acknowledgements

We are immensely grateful to the instructors and students at the University of Isfahan especially Mr. Mohammad Ali Ayatollahi who provided invaluable help and encouragement in the data collection. Also, we would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of Iranian EFL Journal for their insightful comments on the earlier draft of the article.

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Appendix A. Persian version of venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE questionnaire (Kiany & Pournia, 2006)

پاسخگوی محترم: لطفاً گزینه ای را که در مورد شما صدق میکند، علامت بزنید.

همیشه =1	2=بیشتر اوقات	3=گاهی	4=به ندرت	5=هیچ وقت
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5	4	3	2	1	از اسکی روی آب لذت می برم.	1
5	4	3	2	1	در موقع خرید به جای اینکه مارکهای جدید را به امید یافتن جسی بهتر امتحان کنم ترجیح می دهم مارکهایی را انتخاب کنم که میدانم قابل اعتمادند.	2
5	4	3	2	1	از خطرپذیری لذت می برم.	3
5	4	3	2	1	از پرش با چتر نجات(چتربازی) لذت می برم.	4
5	4	3	2	1	فکر می کنم پیاده طی کردن مسافتهای طولانی و جلوی اتومبیلهای در حال عبور را گرفتن برای مجانی سوار شدن راه خیلی خطرناکی برای مسافرت است.	5
5	4	3	2	1	شیرجه زدن در استخر از روی تخته بلند شیرجه را دوست دارم.	6
5	4	3	2	1	از تجربیات و احساسات جدید و هیجان انگیز استقبال می کنم حتی اگر تا حدودی ترسناک و غیر متعارف باشند.	7
5	4	3	2	1	دوست دارم چگونگی پرواز با هواپیما را یاد بگیرم.	8
5	4	3	2	1	درک افرادی که جان خود را به خاطر کوهنوردی به خطر میاندازند برایم مشکل است.	9
5	4	3	2	1	انجام کارهایی را که تا حدودی ترسناک هستند دوست دارم.	10
5	4	3	2	1	ترجیح میدهم تدریجاً وارد آب سرد دریا شوم تا اینکه یکباره درون آن بپریم و یا درون آن شیرجه بزنم.	11
5	4	3	2	1	از هیجان اسکی بازی با سرعت خیلی زیاد در شیب یک کوه بلند لذت می برم.	12
5	4	3	2	1	غواصی کردن را دوست دارم.	13
5	4	3	2	1	از سریع رانندگی کردن لذت می برم.	14
5	4	3	2	1	غارنوردی را دوست دارم.	15
5	4	3	2	1	از شغلی که تا حدودی با خطر همراه است دوری می جویم.	16

Appendix B. English translation of Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE questionnaire (Kiany & Pournia, 2006)

Please mark the choice which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Ⓐ = Always Ⓤ = Usually Ⓢ = Sometimes Ⓡ = Rarely Ⓝ = Never

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 1 | I enjoy water skiing. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 2 | I usually prefer to stick to brands I know are reliable, rather than trying new ones on the chance of finding something better. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 3 | I enjoy taking risks. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 4 | I enjoy parachute jumping. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 5 | I think hitch-hiking is too dangerous a way to travel. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 6 | I like diving off the high-board. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 7 | I welcome new and exciting experiences and sensations, even if they are a little frightening and unconventional. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 8 | I like to learn to fly an airplane. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 9 | I find it hard to understand people who risk their necks climbing mountains. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 10 | I like doing things that are a little bit frightening? | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 11 | I prefer to enter cold sea water gradually rather than diving or jumping straight in? | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 12 | I enjoy the sensation of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 13 | I like to go scuba diving. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 14 | I enjoy fast driving. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 15 | I like to go exploring in caves. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |
| 16 | I am put off by a job involving quite a bit of danger. | Ⓐ Ⓤ Ⓢ Ⓡ Ⓝ |

Appendix C. Scales for Accuracy and Fluency (Modified from Farhadi et al., 1994: 239-240)

Scale for Accuracy

6	Almost no error
5	Few insignificant errors only
4	Occasional petty errors but no problem with understanding
3	Frequent errors occasionally interfere with meaning
2	Constant errors interfere with understanding
1	Severe errors make understanding virtually impossible

Scale for fluency

6	Fluent and effortless speech like a native speaker
5	Natural and continuous speech with pauses at unnatural points
4	Fluent speech with occasional problems
3	Frequent problems hinder fluency and demand greater effort
2	Slow speech, hesitant, and sometimes silent
1	Virtually unable to make connected sentences

Appendix D. One sample-k-s tests for OPT, Risk-taking, Fluency and Accuracy scores

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		OPT
N		74
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	70.4730
	Std. Deviation	8.12779
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.088
	Positive	.049
	Negative	-.088
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.757
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.615

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		RISK
N		50
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	50.8000
	Std. Deviation	11.34793
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.084
	Positive	.084
	Negative	-.070
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.593
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.874

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		FLUENCY
N		50
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.3200
	Std. Deviation	.86756
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.223
	Positive	.204
	Negative	-.223
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.580
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.014

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		ACCURACY
N		50
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.4200
	Std. Deviation	.75835
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.350
	Positive	.350
	Negative	-.250
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2.476
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Appendix E. Intra-rater reliability for fluency and accuracy scores

The intra-rater reliability for fluency scores

Correlations

		fluency	fluency2
Spearman's rho	fluency	1.000	.896**
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	50	50
	fluency2	.896**	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	50	50

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

The intra-rater reliability for accuracy scores

Correlations

			accuracy	accuracy2
Spearman's rho	accuracy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.855**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	50	50
	accuracy2	Correlation Coefficient	.855**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	50	50

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

Iranian EFL Journal



Title:

Listening Comprehension and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among Iranian EFL learners

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension (LC) and their foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Furthermore, it scrutinized the role of gender and years of university study on LC and FLCA. To achieve such goals, eighty Iranian EFL students (40 males and 40 females), majoring in English Translation at the Abadeh Azad University participated in this study. They

included freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Two research instruments were used in this study: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) — reflecting three types of anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation— and listening comprehension portion of Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL test (Philips, 2001). The results revealed that the relationship between FLCA and LC was negative and significant. That is, the higher the level of FLCA these students experienced, the lower the score they obtained on the LC test and vice versa. This result indicates that FLCA interferes with foreign language listening comprehension. Likewise, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the level of listening proficiency contributes to the years of university study. That is, the level of LC proficiency increases as a function of years of university study. Considering the FLCA and years of university study, no relation was found. In addition, in this study females were found to be more anxious than males in listening settings.

Key words: Listening comprehension, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, English as a Foreign Language Learners

Introduction

In second language acquisition, Listening comprehension (LC) has been regarded as a long-neglected language skill due to the oversimplified assumption that a learner's ability to comprehend spoken language would develop entirely on its own in an inductive way, through repetition and imitation (Jung, 2003; Vandergrift, 2004). However, listening skills have come into fashion over the last two decades and have been addressed by methodology text writers and publishers, such as Asher's Total Physical Response, Gattegno's Silent Way, and Lozanov's Suggestopedia. In addition, this recognition has resulted in an increase in the number of listening activities in the student textbooks. Although a great deal of attention has been devoted to listening skills in recent years, comprehension gaps (i.e. comprehension problems) often occur and special efforts to deduce meaning are required. Different factors may influence learners' listening comprehension and lead to listening problems; for example, features of the listening text, characteristics of the speaker, and learner strategies (Brown, 2001). In addition, affective

factors can compound listening comprehension problems. One problematic affective variable that EFL learners experience in listening comprehension is the negative kind of anxiety called “debilitating anxiety” because it harms learners’ performance in many ways, both directly through worry and self-doubts, and indirectly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language (Oxford, 1998, p. 60). Krashen (1976) mentioned that listening is also anxiety provoking when the input is incomprehensible. Listening anxiety may function as an affective filter, one component of Krashen's Monitor Theory which "prevents input from being used for language acquisition" (Beebe, 1983, p.39). Nagle and Sanders (1986) proposed that a breakdown of the comprehension process might occur when there is "anxiety about failure to understand or being accountable for a response" (p. 21). Asking students whether they became tense during classroom listening activities, Eastman (1991) suggested that those who claimed to be apprehensive while listening scored lower on a listening test than those who claimed to concentrate.

In line with the arguments went above this study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ listening comprehension (LC) and their foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Furthermore, it scrutinized the role of gender and years of university study on LC and FLCA. More specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

- 1) Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ foreign language classroom anxiety and their listening comprehension?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between males and females in their performance on the LC test?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between males and females in terms of their foreign language classroom anxiety?
- 4) Is there a significant difference among learners with different years of university study in terms of their performance on the LC test?
- 5) Is there a significant difference among learners with different years of university study in terms of their foreign language classroom anxiety?

Method

Participants

The participants were 80 students majoring in English Translation at the Abadeh Azad University. With respect to years of university study, the participants consisted of freshmen (10 males and 10 females), sophomores (10 males and 10 females), juniors (10 males and 10 females), and seniors (10 males and 10 females). The participants were conveniently sampled as going through randomization was not practical.

Instruments

The two instruments used to collect data from the subjects included: a) the listening comprehension portion of Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test (Philips, 2001) for determining listening comprehension proficiency level of the students; b) an anxiety questionnaire (the Persian version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986). The reliability index of the LC test was 0.73, which is high enough to be satisfactory. The internal consistency of the Persian version of FLCAS administered in this study, which was measured through Cronbach alpha, was .92.

Procedure

Prior to the initiation of the study, the students were informed about the purpose of the study to demonstrate that the study would be of value to the participants as well as to the entire field of EFL instruction and learning. The participants were also provided with the necessary information about what they were required to do in the study. The current study was conducted in two stages during one of the class meetings of the participants with the approval of their instructors. In the first stage, LC test was administered in the classroom. In the second stage, the FLCAS was distributed among the participants. The confidentiality of the results was ascertained. There was no time limitation for the completion of the questionnaire.

Results

The data gathered on the characteristics of the subjects under study were analyzed by the following statistical methods, using version 15.0 of SPSS for windows, which is a special software package developed for statistical analysis in the social sciences.

1) The reliability index of the FLCAS questionnaire as well as that of the LC test was obtained using Cronbach alpha.

2) A Pearson correlational analysis was run to test the correlation between FLCAS and LC test scores.

3) T-tests and ANOVAs were run to detect the effects of gender and years of university study on LC and FLCAS.

A descriptive statistics analysis of the LC obtained is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the LC scores.

No.of participants	No.of items	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
80	30	2	21	9.14	4.6

As can be observed in table 1, the participants' scores on the test ranged from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 21, with an average score of 9.14 and a standard deviation of 4.6. Based on the range (19) and the SD (4.6), the scores are slightly spread along the horizontal axis. The analysis of the scores of different groups of the participants on LC test revealed the descriptive statistics presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for different groups of the participants on LC

	N	Mean	SD
Freshmen	20	5.65	3.12
Sophomores	20	8.00	2.94
Juniors	20	10.15	3.86
Seniors	20	12.75	5.08

According to the LC test results, the mean of participants increases as the years of university study goes up. Table 3 displays descriptive statistics for males and females' scores on the LC test.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for two sexes on the LC test

	N	Mean	SD
Males	40	9.98	5.14
Females	40	8.30	3.87

As can be seen in this Table, the average score of males is 9.98 with a standard deviation of 5.14 and that of females is 8.30 with a standard deviation of 3.87. Descriptive statistics for the FLCAS scores are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

No. of participants	No. of items	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
80	33	55	144	97.06	20.398

As can be seen in the Table above, the scores ranged between 55 (the score indicating the lowest anxiety level in this study) and 144 (the score indicating the highest anxiety level in this study), with an average score of 97.06. Quite a wide variability in the scores is shown by the large standard deviation (20.398). Table 5 reveals the descriptive statistics for different groups of the participants' scores on FLCA.

Table5: Descriptive statistics for different groups of the participants' scores on FLCA

	N	Mean	SD
Freshmen	20	100.20	17.37
Sophomores	20	93.20	22.76
Juniors	20	99.25	22.47
Seniors	20	101.15	20.25

According to the results of FLCAS questionnaire, the mean score of the freshmen is 100.20 with a standard deviation of 17.37 and that of the sophomores is 93.20 with a standard deviation of 22.76. Juniors' average score is 99.25 and the standard deviation of their scores is 22.47. Finally, the mean of the seniors' scores is 101.15 and the standard deviation of their scores is 20.25. Table 6 displays descriptive statistics for males and females' scores on FLCA.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for two sexes on the FLCA Scale

	N	Mean	SD
Females	40	102.08	20.38
Males	40	92.05	19.39

As can be seen in this Table, the average score of females is 102.08 with a standard deviation of 20.38 and that of males is 92.05 with a standard deviation of 19.39. To determine the possible effect of gender on LC and FLCA scores, two independent t-tests were run. Table 7 presents the results of the t-test for the LC scores.

Table 7: T-test results for the males and females' scores on the LC test

	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig
females	40	8.30	3.87	1.646	78	.104
males	40	9.98	5.14			

The results reported in Table 7 reveal no significant difference between males and females' listening comprehension scores ($t=1.646$ $p> 0.05$). This means that males and females have performed similarly on the listening comprehension test. Table 8 summarizes the results of the t-test for the males and females' scores on the FLCA questionnaire.

Table 8: T-test results for the males and females' scores on the FLCA Scale

	N	M	SD	T	Df	Sig
females	40	102.08	20.38	2.25	78	.027
males	40	92.05	19.39			

As far as the impact of gender on FLCA scores is concerned, the results showed a statistically significant difference between the males and females' scores ($t=2.25$ $p< 0.05$). In fact, female students experienced significantly higher level of foreign language classroom anxiety than males. This indicates that females were more anxious than male participants. To determine the role of years of university study on the LC and FLCA scores, two one-way ANOVAs were conducted separately. Table 9 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA for the LC scores.

Table 9: One-way ANOVA results for the LC scores

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	550.638	3	183.546	12.445	.000
Within groups	1120.850	76	14.748		
Total	1671.488	79			

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), using years of university study as the independent variable and the scores on the LC test as the dependent, revealed statistically significant differences across the LC scores of first, second, third, and fourth-year students of English ($F=12.455$, $p< 0.05$). That is, students' LC scores appeared to increase as a function of years of university study. In order to locate the difference

between the four groups, a post hoc (Scheffe) test was run. The results show that seniors outperformed other levels except juniors by moderate to large margins. Juniors' performance was distinct just from the freshmen. Moreover, the results show that freshmen and sophomores performed rather similarly on the test. Table 10 summarizes the results of the one-way ANOVA for the FLCA scores.

Table 10: One-way ANOVA results for the FLCAS scores

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	633.738	3	211.246	.498	.685
Within groups	32234.950	76	424.144		
Total	32868.687	79			

Table 10 reveals no significant difference ($F=.498$ $p> 0.05$) in level of foreign language classroom anxiety experienced by the four groups of students— freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. To ascertain the relationship between the LC and FLCA scores, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. Table 11 shows the results of the correlational analysis.

Table 11: Pearson correlation between LC and FLCA scores

	LC	FLCA
LC Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.268*
N	80	80
FLCA Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.268*	1
N	80	80

The results displayed in this Table show a significant negative correlation between the FLCA and the LC scores ($r= -.268$, $p< 0.05$), which indicates that students who experienced higher FLCA had lower LC scores than those who experienced lower FLCA.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, the research questions presented in this article are dealt with one by one. Each question will be answered based on the findings of the study.

First, the results indicated that years of university study plays a significant role in LC scores. It can be concluded that the level of Iranian EFL learners' LC score is affected by years of university study. This appears reasonable as the result of the increase in years

of study the students become more knowledgeable and develop more strategies to understand spoken message. The results also indicated that gender does not play a significant role in Iranian EFL students' LC scores. This result is consistent with outcomes reported by other researchers who investigated the relation between listening comprehension and gender. For example, Markham (1988) found no significant difference between male and female ESL students in their level of listening comprehension. Feyten (1991) looked at university students of French and Spanish failed to find a significant relationship between gender and any foreign language proficiency measure. Bacon (1992) looked at university students of Spanish and failed to find a significant relationship between gender and listening comprehension. Kariminian (2001) studied the effect of speakers' and listeners' gender on listening comprehension among Iranian EFL learners, also found no significant difference between males and females in their level of listening comprehension.

Second, a significant negative correlation between FLCAS and LC was found in this study. This correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. It can be concluded that the higher the level of FLCA, the lower the level of LC and vice versa. As the level of anxiety increases the individual may lose concentration, may experience difficulty in hearing, speaking, etc. So, the result of this study supports previous established beliefs. This finding is in line with reports given by other researchers who investigated the relation between foreign language anxiety and listening comprehension. For example, Ganshow et al. (1994) in a study involving listening, reading, and speaking and their relation with language anxiety ascertained that low anxious and average-anxious students tended to present better speaking and listening skills than high-anxious students. Kim (2000) found statistically significant negative correlation between proficiency in English language listening (as measured by a TOEFL examination) and foreign listening anxiety (FLLAS). Elkhafaifi (2005) also found a negative correlation between FLLAS and listening comprehension scores, which indicates that the students who reported higher listening anxiety had lower listening comprehension scores than the students who reported lower anxiety.

Third, the results indicated that gender plays a significant role in FLCAS. In this study, females were found to be more anxious than males. This finding echoes similar

findings reported in research concerning the relation between FLCA and gender. For instance, Cheng (2002), who investigated English writing anxiety in Taiwanese learners, discovered that females were significantly more anxious than males. Elkhafaifi (2005), who investigated Arabic listening anxiety in Anglophone students, also discovered females tended to be more anxious than males in general Arabic anxiety. However, in this study the results contrasts with some other studies in which no significant relation between language anxiety and gender was observed. For example, Aida (1994) found no significant gender difference in language anxiety. Similarly, Dewaele (2002) indicated that gender did not correlate significantly with communicative anxiety in either French or English as a foreign language. The results also showed that years of university study does not play a significant role in Iranian EFL learners' FLCA. This finding is in line with the outcomes reported by other researchers who investigated the relation between foreign language anxiety and years of university study. For example, Tahriri (2003) who studied the relation between language anxiety and self-esteem among Iranian EFL learners found no significant relationship between anxiety and the level of students. Similarly, Mohammadi (2007) also found that different years of university study did not play a significant role in the participants' level of foreign language classroom anxiety. However, this finding contrasts with the reports given by other researchers. Onwuegbuize et al.'s (1999) subjects, who were studying foreign languages at three different levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), experienced an almost linear rise in anxiety as years of study advanced (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors). Cheng (2002), who explored anxiety in the writing skill in Taiwanese students of English, noted a similar case. In this study there were no statistically significant differences in writing anxiety as level of proficiency advanced, but students' anxiety did increase with the years of study, freshmen appearing to be the least anxious and juniors to be the most anxious about writing in English.

Pedagogical Implications

With respect to the results of the present study, a number of pedagogical implications can be provided which might prove useful for language instructors, especially helping

them to reduce students' level of tension and anxiety in the classroom during listening tasks.

First, language instructors should identify those students who experience high level of FLCA. The FLCAS questionnaire developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) is a reliable and valid measure, which can be used by language teachers to achieve this goal. As a result, they can reduce the anxiety-provoking factors on the basis of their awareness of the students' emotional state and lessen their feelings of failure, insecurity, embarrassment, and worries to the extent possible. Accounting for the presence and the role of anxiety in listening comprehension is an appropriate way to provide students with more effective instruction. Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that two options are available for instructors with respect to anxious students: "1) they can help students learn to cope with anxiety-producing situations; 2) they can make the learning context less stressful" (p.131). Horwitz et al. argue that the teacher should first acknowledge that FL anxiety exists before resorting to any of these options. Teachers should not always attribute students' performance to their lack of knowledge. It is possible that anxiety is at work and thus hinders students' adequate and appropriate performance.

Second, instructors should encourage their students to acknowledge their anxiety and discuss it openly in the classroom. Sharing common feelings of nervousness or frustration with the group may lead to obtaining creative ways of solving the problem for the whole class. A teacher who deals with anxious students should be aware that apprehensive learners may underestimate their ability (MacIntyre et al., 1997). Samimy and Tabuse (1992) suggest that learners often bring fears and anxieties with them to the FL classroom, especially in the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). A discussion of how to study the language may be helpful, especially for freshmen and sophomores who may not have enough language learning experience.

Third, teachers should provide positive feedback at every step of listening instruction. As Sheerin (1987) indicated, recurring failure can produce vague but accumulated fear about listening, resulting in a "real psychological barrier to effective listening" (p. 129). Thus, successful listeners should receive appropriate encouraging feedback after finishing each exercise, while unsuccessful learners need to recognize and

to practice to overcome their weakness with warm support from instructors. Practically speaking, guidance of this kind requires more time and effort from L2 teachers. However, by providing such scaffolding, teachers will give students tools that will allow them to feel they have some control over their listening comprehension.

Fourth, another way to address the anxiety that occurs in listening is to help learners become more sensitive to their strategy use and metacognitive beliefs. If teachers pay attention to listeners' "process" instead of just to aural-comprehension examination derived "product", they can better identify their students' basic difficulties. For example, such student activities as introspective reporting or testing of their own guessing processes are methods a teacher might employ to develop awareness of how and why students develop debilitating anxiety.

Fifth, another implication of the present study is that affective factors seem to play a more important role in the performance of females. Thus, it can be concluded that language instructors should be aware of this difference and pay more attention to the emotional state of females in their classroom to keep the balance.

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Appendix

HORWITZ ET AL.'S (1991) FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE

Directions:

Below is a list of statements referring to feelings you may or may not have toward learning and speaking a foreign language. Read each statement, and then circle the description that reflects the amount that you agree with it. Note:

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = neither agree nor disagree D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

- 1.) I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language.
SA A N D SD
- 2.) I *don't* worry about making mistakes in language class.
SA A N D SD
- 3.) I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
SA A N D SD
- 4.) It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
SA A N D SD
- 5.) It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
SA A N D SD
- 6.) During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. SA A N D SD
- 7.) I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
SA A N D SD
- 8.) I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
SA A N D SD
- 9.) I start to panic when I have to speak without preparing in language class.
SA A N D SD
- 10.) I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
SA A N D SD
- 11.) I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
SA A N D SD
- 12.) In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
SA A N D SD
- 13.) It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
SA A N D SD
- 14.) I would *not* be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
SA A N D SD

- 15) I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
SA A N D SD
- 16) Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
SA A N D SD
- 17) I often feel like not going to my language class.
SA A N D SD
- 18) I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
SA A N D SD
- 19) I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
SA A N D SD
- 20) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
SA A N D SD
- 21) The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
SA A N D SD
- 22) I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
SA A N D SD
- 23) I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
SA A N D SD
- 24) I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
SA A N D SD
- 25) Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
SA A N D SD
- 26) I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
SA A N D SD
- 27) I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
SA A N D SD
- 28) When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
SA A N D SD
- 29) I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
SA A N D SD
- 30) I feel very overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
SA A N D SD
- 31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
SA A N D SD
- 32) I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
SA A N D SD
- 33) I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepare in advance.
SA A N D SD