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Foreword.

Welcome to the 4th edition of the Iranian EFL Journal. Both the rate of submissions to our journal and the substantial daily rise in readers is very pleasing..

In the first article, a study by Reza Pishghadam, Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh, & Safoora Navari "...aimed at first collecting the metaphors language teachers created by using prompts, and secondly, identifying and analyzing the metaphors based on the guidelines laid down by Martinez..

In the second paper, Bahman Gorjani, Alireza Jalilifar & Halimeh Mousavi investigated the effect of redundant and consistent stems in multiple-choice vocabulary tests on pre-university students' performance.

Fatemeh Shahamat & Abdolmehdi Riazi carried out an IT study to investigate the use of educational technology in Iranian schools and language institutes to see how frequently different means of educational technology are used at both places. Also, to see whether there are any significant differences across the three levels of proficiency at different language schools in terms of using educational technology.

In our fourth paper by Purya Baghaei, Mohammad Monshi Tousi Ali Akbar Boori, the major goal of this project was to take advantage of this finding and test whether C-Tests constructed out of spoken discourse (dialogues, interviews, etc.) will result in the prediction of listening skill of the test-takers.

Jaleh Hassaskhah researched Gardner's Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory claims that every individual is in possession of one or some of eight types of intelligences and depending on the type of those intelligences, the outcome of their performance might be different.

The sixth paper by Zahra Amirian & Mansoor Tavakoli is an attempt to reveal the generic structure of research articles written and published by English writers as well as Persian writers with the purpose of identifying culture-specific conventions of this genre. The final paper by Ali Issa considers paper thus reports on a study into reflection through peer collaboration

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Title

Metaphor Analysis of Teachers' Beliefs and Conceptions of Language Teaching and Learning in Iranian High Schools and Language Institutes: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This article explores the uses of metaphor to express the various perspectives of language teachers about the process of teaching and learning. Using the Iranian contexts of education, this study aimed at: first, collecting the metaphors language teachers created by using the prompts “A teacher is/should be like a...” and “A learner is/should be like a...”, and second, identifying and analyzing the metaphors based on the guidelines laid down by Martinez (2001). Teachers at high schools and language institutes altogether generated metaphors. Metaphors of high school teachers indicated that they still opt for running their classes under the rules of *behaviourism* while language institute teachers have more tendency towards principles of *cognitivism* and wish to form the bedrock of their teaching paradigm based on *situative* learning concepts.

Key Terms: Conceptual metaphor, High school, Language institute, Linguistic metaphor, Metaphor analysis

1. Introduction

The importance of our belief system in shaping our thought patterns and eventually controlling our behaviour is undisputable. The concepts we form about the world govern our thought and our everyday functioning, from the very mundane activities to the largely intellectual matters. Our conceptual system thus plays an important role in defining our realities of the things happening around us. In their controversial book ‘*Metaphors we live by*’, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical and consequently the way we think, things we experience, our decisions and

actions and whatever we do in everyday life is to a large extent a matter of metaphor. Therefore, one of the channels to find out more about the hidden ideas and insights of the people is through identifying and analyzing the metaphors they express.

Metaphors are defined as “analogies which allow us to map one experience in the terminology of another experience and thus to acquire an understanding of complex topics or new situations” (Ortony & Fainsilber, 1989). Metaphorical language thus helps us to express our abstract and difficult concepts in concrete terms thus, providing a way towards the cognition and affection of teachers. Also, metaphor analysis as a useful research device can provide a systematic profile of the ideas people hold on different entities, attempt to uncover conceptual metaphors and permit reflection and change on the problematic parts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ellis, 2002; Kovecses, 2002; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

Increasing every day, is the number of people who want to learn English effectively in Iran. In fact, learning English in our country like most of other countries in the world has been added to the wish list of many people. The everyday growing need in being able to communicate in English is evident in almost every phase of life. Language learners spend almost 7 years at schools to learn English, spend a certain amount of time in the private language institutes to fulfil their wish of being able to use English in communication. Actually, according to the recent studies it is reported that teaching and learning English in informal contexts (language institutes) have been more successful than studying it in formal contexts (schools) of education in Iran (Pishghadam, 2008). That means that the language learners at language institutes tend to show more interest and achievement than those who study English at schools, the reason to which may concern the current beliefs and concepts the language teachers hold about the whole process of teaching and learning.

Therefore, it seems that one avenue to scrutinize the behaviour and mostly- used approach of teachers is to delve into the beliefs and ideas they hold about their way teaching. Williams and Burden (1997) affirmed that the teachers' ideas about teaching and learning can have serious impacts on their selected approach and behaviour in the classroom. The same notion can be applied to the ideas they hold about themselves, their learners and the whole process of language teaching and learning. Therefore, due to the

significant role of metaphors in uncovering people's conceptions and beliefs, conducting a metaphor analysis of the teachers' stated metaphors seems to yield promising results concerning the current problems of L2 education in Iran.

2. Background of the Study

2.1. Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics

Unlike traditional views that considered metaphor as decorative figure of speech which was fundamentally ornamental in nature and was utilized to understand literary texts, the contemporary theory of metaphor gives more credit to the cognitive function of metaphor. In fact, as Lakoff (1992) claims, in classical theories, metaphorical expressions were just seen in the realm of literature and poetic language, leaving no space for metaphor in the everyday conventional language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor in the contemporary theory as understanding one conceptual domain (the target domain) in terms of another conceptual domain (the source domain) which leads to the identification of a conceptual metaphor.

In fact, Lakoff and Johnson took the idea that metaphors represent a view or model of an aspect of the world a step further what was supposed they do, having just literal meaning (Cameron, 2003). This basic idea of them that metaphor acts as a mental operation by which we understand the world through mapping from known domains to unknown domains, and that some conceptualizations are metaphorically structured in our minds (Lakoff, 1993), made the starting point for a 'cognitive theory of metaphor' and thus has generated much studies on the link between metaphor and thought.

That is perhaps why the best way to understand what actually happens in the minds of a community is through the *language* they use, since 'the conceptual system underlying a language contains thousands of conceptual metaphors' (Lakoff, 1993, p.22) and the conceptual expressions show 'how metaphors manage to play a significant role in learning and understanding concepts' (Cameron, 2003, p. 8). Metaphor in this way is in fact analyzed in the realm of cognitive linguistics.

Developed chiefly by the linguist George Lakoff, the philosopher Mark Johnson, and the literary critic Mark Turner, cognitive linguistics is believed to offer a new method for examining, identifying and explaining the function of metaphor in language (Hart, 1995). According to Gibbs and Cameron (2007), cognitive linguistics suggest that conceptual metaphors influence the ways people perceive and talk about various abstract notions including emotions, politics, advertising, scientific theories, the self, computer science, morality, learning, problem-solving, and many more. Thus, due to the fact that our conceptual system, in terms of how we think and act, is metaphoric in nature, most of our everyday talk contains a considerable number of metaphorical expressions.

In fact, cognitive linguistics, with the proposition that our only access to reality is through our internal mechanism or our cognitive system, considers the ‘cognition’ as the function that describes both the representations of what happens in the world and the rules that govern them. The medium through which the cognitive linguists can find out the representations of reality in each person’s mind is through ‘language’ they use and most importantly by the ‘metaphors’ they employ to develop their concepts. Thus, conceptual metaphor as the core and content of human thought, acts as the source of structures that exist in the language and shape the basis of a culture’s most unconscious fundamental ideology (Hart, 1995).

One of the unique features of the contemporary cognitive theory of metaphor is the distinction it makes between ‘conceptual metaphors’ or metaphorical concepts on one hand, and ‘linguistic metaphors’ or metaphorical expressions on the other hand (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In this distinction, conceptual metaphors refer to those abstract notions such as ARGUMENT IS WAR and LOVE IS A JOURNEY while linguistic metaphors are the actual linguistic phrases that realize or instantiate those notions in different ways. According to the convention of cognitive linguistics (Kovecses, 2002), conceptual metaphors are presented in upper case and linguistic metaphors in italics.

Accordingly, our everyday talk is originated based on our beliefs and conceptions about the world. Our belief system is formed in our minds through time, depending on the culture we are growing in, our early experiences in life and the crucial effect of people around us. In fact, our attitudes and views play a significant role in constructing and constraining our actions in the world. Teachers’ beliefs, too, can have a huge impact on

the way they plan and implement the curriculum and how they behave in the classroom (Tobin, 1987; Tobin & Espinet, 1989). According to Williams and Burden (1997) teachers' beliefs and values have a greater influence than the teachers' knowledge on the way they plan their lessons, the way they behave with the students and the kinds of decisions they make while they are teaching.

Teachers form various concepts in their minds which may come from different sources such as how they have perceived their own teachers, the experiences they had in different classes, the stories they have heard from colleagues, the impression that their job gives them in the society and a lot more. Their ideas may concern the notion of 'teacher' in general and some other things like learners, the process of teaching and learning, the specific language they are teaching and their own self-image in particular.

These ideas might be explicit or implicit in the teachers' minds and without their awareness controlling their actions. According to Cameron (2003) those involved in the educational system must get aware of their implicit concepts in order to make a more rewarding atmosphere for teaching and learning. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) propose the notion of 'critical reflection' by which they mean that teachers in order to have effective classes should improve their self-awareness and this requires them to reflect on their actions and critically consider the beliefs behind them and become what Schón calls 'reflective practitioners' (cited in Williams & Burden, 1997). By critically reflection on their actions, in addition to make their implicit knowledge of their beliefs explicit, teachers constantly monitor their own actions to see whether they reflect their ideas or not and make any needed change in their beliefs and consequently their behaviour in the classroom.

2.2. Metaphor in Language teaching

As a result, metaphors which are used by teachers and learners can play a crucial role as cognitive devices which provide insights into some complex concepts as teaching, learning or schooling, and help to comprehend personal experiences, in other words, metaphors can act as 'translators of experience' (Miller, 1987) building a bridge between people's personal experiences and their professional thinking (cited in Saban, 2003). A

major function of metaphor which distinguishes it from other forms of research is the fact that it can withdraw insights and attitudes from the participants without making use of direct questions. In fact metaphors can act as tools by which teachers can gain distance from their own practice and turn to an external observer looking upon and reflecting on their beliefs. As beliefs and ideas are normally hidden in minds, metaphor can serve to make this implicit knowledge explicit, provide situation for reflection and thus analyse, modify, and amend these beliefs.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) believes that metaphor analysis popularity is increasing rapidly in language learning and teaching process since it is a method to examine how teachers and learners construct themselves and the activities they perform. It is different from other methods since its underlying assumption does not just concern the language but the mental representations of thought and feeling and in this way it can be considered as a method which ‘can afford a person-oriented view of learners’ and teachers’ cognitions and affective states’ (p. 317).

Moreover, Moser (2000) points to the reasons why metaphor analysis has turned to a multifaceted research perspective. He believes that metaphors not only have instrumental value for self-reflection, anticipation, and communication, but also perform a major function of mind-setting that affects our cognition of the self and the world. Metaphors are a reliable and accessible ways to operationalize the tacit knowledge since they are the linguistic manifestation of our implicit concepts.

Actually metaphor analysis according to Cameron and Low (1999) involves “collecting examples of linguistic metaphors used to talk about the topic...generalizing from them to the conceptual metaphors they exemplify, and using the result to suggest understandings or thought patterns which construct or constrain people’s beliefs and actions” (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p.317). So far several studies have investigated the role of metaphor in constructing the beliefs of teachers and learners in education. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) found out that teachers make use of metaphoric language in talking about their language experiences. De Guerrero and Villamil (2002) report the metaphors by which teachers talk about themselves and their learners. Oxford (2001) used some personal narratives kept by language learners to identify the metaphors by which they characterize three teaching approaches (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

In education research, metaphor analysis has been often used as a cognitive tool to raise awareness about assumptions and beliefs held by teachers and learners (Bollough, 1991; Marchant, 1992; Marshall, 1990; Munby, 1987; Strickland & Iran-nejad, 1994) (cited in de Guerrero & Villamil, 2002). Elsewhere, the role of teaching contexts in viewing their roles by teachers was examined by Ben-Peretz, Mendelson & Kron (2003) who found out that the context of teaching has a significant impact on teachers' images of their professional roles. Some other studies investigated teachers' perceptions of their professional identity and its role in teachers' teaching and interaction with learners (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Bromme, 1991; Kompf, Bond, Dworet & Boak, 1996; Nias, 1989).

In a recent study Saban, Kocbeker and Saban (2007) revealed the prospective teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning through metaphor analysis and concluded that metaphors can provide a powerful cognitive tool in gaining insights into teachers' professional thinking. Most of these studies followed their specific model of categorization and interpretation of results. Actually there are few metaphoric models based on which researchers analyze their gathered data. The metaphoric model which is the focus of this study was used by Martinez, Sauleda, and Huber (2001) in an analysis of the literature of teaching and learning which attempts to categorize the metaphors stated by teachers and learners into three main dimensions of the learning space: behavioristic/empiricist, cognitive/constructive and situative/socio-historic perspective.

In the behaviourist/empiricist view, knowledge is interpreted as accumulation of associations which are resulted from experience and process of learning as generating new (S-R) connections between the units of "sensory impressions" and "individual response". Thus the metaphors falling into this category reflect the learners as passive recipients, teachers as transmitters of knowledge, and learning as a process of individual growth by the acquisition of knowledge in the form of new associations. The second perspective, the cognitivist/constructivist, includes the metaphors which view knowledge as consisting of interrelated schemata that are actively and individually constructed by transferring old schemata into new ones or by inductively developing new schemata from a series of different experiences. The mind here is pro-active, problem-oriented, and interpretative, teacher is considered as a facilitator and a coach and the learner as an

active re-constructor of knowledge who constantly organizes and elaborates knowledge with an active role in restructuring the experiences and achieving conceptual coherence.

The third category that deals with the situative view of learning (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996) holds this belief that learners should become able to interact with the physical world. Metaphors arising from a situative or socio-historical perspective reflect the view that learning is situated in the context in which it is constructed (Leavy, McSorley, & Boté, 2007). Learning in this perspective is seen as a product of authentic participation in the activities of a community of practitioners, where according to social constructivism the classroom is a community of practice and all learners participating in the search of knowledge that is situated and considered as a by-product of the activity, context, and the culture in which it is used. The teacher can be seen as the North Star guiding the explorer (learners) to find their way during the journey of learning. Teacher and learners can perform a joint job like ants, working collaboratively to get a result or like a tourist guide negotiating a route with the tourists.

3. Purpose of the Study

The major aim of this study is to put teachers in situations to provide metaphors expressing their hidden beliefs and ideas about teaching and learning and analyzing those metaphors to trace the roots of disapprovals in Iranian formal and informal contexts of English language education.

Therefore, the present study addresses the following questions:

Q1: What are the metaphors provided by school teachers about teaching and learning in the

current and ideal situations?

Q2: What are the metaphors provided by language institute teachers about teaching and learning in the current and ideal situations?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants and Setting

A total of 40 language teachers participated in this study, 20 of which were teaching English at high schools (Hoda, Fateh, and Zahraye Marzie High schools) and 20 other teachers were selected from the teachers of two language institutes in Mashhad (Kish and Danesh Language Institutes). The age of the school teachers ranged from 33 to 48 with teaching experience of 5 years or so, while the language institute teachers were ranging from 24 to 33 and they have been pursuing this career for an average of 10 years. Most of the teacher participants at the schools and institutes were B.A. graduates with a few M.A. students (N=8) at Kish institute.

4.2. Instrumentation

In the instrument which was utilized in this research the participants were asked to take part in discussion groups which were held by the researcher both in the schools and language institutes separately. The topics of the discussion groups were about teachers` attitudes towards real and ideal teaching and learning situations in both formal and informal contexts of education. The major aim of the discussion groups was to extract as many metaphors as possible from the teachers in both contexts. Having discussed the issues, the participants filled out the forms, comprised four sections with the prompts: "I think a teacher is like a...", "I think a teacher *should be* like a...", I think a learner is like a..." and "I think a learner *should be* like a...". The raison d'être of such prompting was to have the attitudes of both learners and teachers towards both the status quo and the ideal situations, that `s why *is* and *should* were employed in the prompts. The participants were asked to complete the sentences with as many as metaphors they want to mention describing the teachers and/or learners. In this stage, they were also provided by a blank

piece of paper to write down the metaphors about teachers and learners in any other forms they might prefer (see Appendix A).

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The process of data collection started in October (2008) and continued until December (2008) to gather all the data in the high schools and language institutes. Since in this study a qualitative approach was employed, a metaphor-elicitation instrument was utilized which consisted of a form with an instruction and a prompt: "I think a language teacher/learner is like a..." that required the subjects to express their ideas about what they usually believe of the language teacher and learner; also they had to complete this sentence "I think a language teacher/learner should be like a..." so that the subjects can provide some insights about their ideal teacher and learner. In this phase, the subjects were asked to write down as many metaphors as they please to express their views of their teachers and learners and also to provide an explanation or entailment for the given metaphor to make it easier for analyzing and categorization.

The data collected by the checklists displayed the teachers' beliefs and views about the current and ideal situation of English teachers and learners in Iran. According to Moser (2000), Metaphor Analysis is essentially a *qualitative* research methodology which allows the researcher to identify, explore, categorize, and discuss the hidden beliefs and ideas behind each metaphorical concept. Thus, the forms that subjects had filled with their metaphors about teachers and learners were analyzed based on the guidelines suggested by de Guerrero and Villamil (2002) and confirmed by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005).

The first step in analyzing this data was to organize the metaphors generated by the subjects so that they were listed verbatim alongside with their entailments. Next, the data was scrutinized to identify the metaphors that actually were related to the subject of the study and could clarify some hidden concepts about English educational process. In this stage 94 collected metaphors (40 about teachers, 38 about learners, 16 as self referential) were codified according to the typology of metaphors developed by Martinez, Sauleda,

and Huber (2001) into one of the three categorizations of learning: behaviourist/empiricist, cognitivist/constructivist, situative or socio-historical perspectives. At last, each metaphorical group was coded and categorized by the researcher first individually and then in a discussion with one expert so that the final categorizations were approved by them.

5. Results

The results of the comparison between the metaphors selected at schools and institutes were quite illuminating. All the metaphors produced by the participants that could fit into the framework introduced by Martinez (2001) along with their entailments are presented in appendix B. Some other metaphors that did not include any entailments and could not be classified such, are not mentioned in these tables and were exclusively classified as ‘self-referential’.

5.1. Schools

5.1.1. Metaphors for Teachers

Table 5.1.: The frequency and percentage of school teachers' metaphors for teachers in the current situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SEL F	f/p
manager	5,11.90%	mothe r	4,9.52%	repaire r	3,7.14%	chair	1,2.39%
trainman	2,4.76%	friend	2,4.76%	sun	1,2.39%	spoon	1,2.39%
saint	1,2.39%						
remote control	1,2.39%						
president	7,16.66%						

officer	4,952%						
microphon e	1,239%						
chef	6,14,28%						
animal trainer	3,7,14%						
total	30,71.7 %	total	6,14.34 %	total	4,9.52 %	total	2,4.76 %

As Table 5.1. shows the majority of metaphors ($p=71.7\%$) created by school teachers represent a notion of teaching which is based on *behaviorist/empiricist* ideas. These teachers in fact, interpreted learning as making new associations and teaching as transmitting knowledge. Teachers are mostly seen as the only active person in the class, controlling everything until knowledge as a determined product is transmitted to the passive learner. The concept of teacher as a *manager*, the most dominant metaphor in this group, implies the ultimate position of the teacher in classroom to whom everybody must obey. For this group, *cognitive* ($p=14.34\%$) and *situative* metaphors ($p=9.52\%$) represent the other ideas and just 4.76% were categorized as self-referential.

Table 5.2.: The frequency and percentage of school teachers' metaphors for teachers in ideal situation

BEH.	f/p	COG	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
controller	3,8,10%	team leader	3,8,10%	repaire r	2,5,40%	Cinderell a	1,2,70%
manager	2,5,40%	guide	4,10,81%	cell phone charger	1,2,70%		

gate guard	2,5.40%	playe r	2,5.40%	star	2,5.40%		
dictionar y	5,13.51%	friend	3,8.10%				
book	4,10.81%						
captain	3,8.10%						
total	19,51.49	total	12,32.52	total	5,13.55	total	1,2.70
	%		%		%		%

According to Table 5.2., more than half of the metaphors ($p=51.49\%$) created by school teachers are attributed to the *behaviorist/empiricist* perspective of learning. This means that school language teachers not only characterize the teaching in the present condition as still depending on behaviorism, but also they hold the view that the behaviorist paradigm of teaching is the most effective one in English education in Iranian schools. Apparently, the school teachers are not interested in reducing the degree of ‘power distance’ in the relationship with their students. So the cognitive ($p=32.52\%$) and situative ($p=13.55\%$) metaphors are placed in the next steps.

5.1.2. Metaphors for Learners

Table 5.3.: The frequency and percentage of school teachers' metaphors for learners in the current situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
pet	3,10%	friend	4,13.33%	young bird	2,6.66%	slippers	1,3.34%
blackboard	5,16.66%	infant	2,6.66%	patient	2,6.66%	slow worm	1,3.34%

photo frame	2,6.66%						
viewer	6,20%						
notebook	1,3.34%						
photographer	1,3.34%						
total	18,60.12%	total	6,20%	total	4,13.33%	total	2,6.66%

As table 5.3. exhibits the school language teachers mostly express *behavioristic* ideas (p=60.12%) for their learners. Evidently, they interpret the learner's role as a passive one in the classroom to whom the knowledge is transferred. Typical examples are *blackboard* or *notebook* within the behaviorist family quoted in Table 5.3. The emphasis in these metaphors is on the looking at a learner as an 'empty slate' on which the teacher can put down whatever he prefers to suit. The other metaphors in this group include cognitive (p=20%), situative (p=13.33%), and self-referential (p=6.66%).

Table 5.4.: The frequency and percentage of school teachers' metaphors for learners in the ideal situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
notebook	2,7.40%	child	6,22.22%	ant	2,7.40%	fuel	1,3.71%
statue	2,7.40%	player	2,7.40%	busy bee	2,7.40%	ring	1,3.715
memory card	1,3.71%						
bag	1,3.71%						
empty plate	3,11.11%						

cassette	3,11.11%						
food	1,3.71%						
total	13,48.23%	total	8,29.68%	total	4,14.84%	total	2,7.40%

As Table 5.4. demonstrates the school language teachers tend to have more positive contacts with a *behaviorists* learner. The behaviorist metaphors they have pointed out for an ideal language learner constitutes 48.23% of their all metaphors while fewer metaphors (p=29.68%) could be attributed to the cognitive/constructivist domain. In the similar fashion, their situative (p=14.84%) and self-referential metaphors (p=7.4%) specify much lower levels to themselves. Thus, for the school language teachers the role of the learner is more dominant in the behaviorist view.

5.2. Language Institutes

5.2.1. Metaphors for Teachers

Table 5.5.: The frequency and percentage of institute teachers' metaphors for teachers in the current situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
chef	2,4.54%	friend	14,31.81%	challenger	4,9.09%	melon	1,2.28%
speaker	3,6.81%	guide	3,6.81%	sun	2,4.54%	cherry	1,2.28%
		entertainer	5,11.36%	researcher	3,6.81%		
		coach	3,6.81%	waiter	1,2.28%		
		player	2,4.54%				
total	5,11.4%	total	27,61.56%	total	10,22.8%	total	2,4.54%

As it is evident in Table 5.5., examination of the institute language teachers' metaphors indicates the prevalence of *cognitive* metaphors ($p=61.56\%$) in their conceptualizations of teaching. Central to the cognitive perspective is the notions of organization and elaboration of knowledge by learners that can only be achieved by a teacher who is more of a *friend*, *mother*, *guide*, or *player*. In fact, metaphors such as *friend* and *mother* reinforce the view of teachers as a facilitator who turns learning into something enjoyable and less demanding for learners. The very few number of behaviorist metaphors ($p=11.4\%$) formulated by the institute teachers indicated their reluctance to follow the behaviorist principles in their classrooms.

Table 4.6.: The frequency and percentage of institute teachers' metaphors for teachers in the ideal situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF.	f/p
securit y	1,2.09%	mother	4,8.33%	tour guide	10,20.08 %	saffron	1,2.09 %
traffic warden	1,2.09%	dad	3,6.25%	mechani c	2,4.16%	scarecro w	1,2.09 %
robot	3,6.25%	comedia n	7,14.58%	doctor	4,8.33%		
lap top	2,4.16%	classmat e	2,4.16%	director	4,8.33%		
story teller	2,4.16%	team leader	1,2.09%				
total	9,18.81 %	total	17,35.53 %	total	20,41.8%	total	2,4.18 %

Illustrated in Table 5.6. is the prevailing attitude of the institute teachers towards the *situative* aspect of learning. What they have mentioned about situative metaphors constitute 41.8% of their total ones. This clarifies this belief that the institute teachers would rather follow the guidelines of situative paradigm to have much of a supporting role to provide the learners with the appropriate contexts in which the learners can reap the benefits of their perseverance.

5.2.2. Metaphors for Learners

Table 5.7.: The frequency and percentage of institute teachers' metaphors for learners in the current situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
soldier	2,4.25%	player	4,8.51%	tourist	4,8.51%	snail	1,2.13%
wax	1,2.13%	friend	11,23.4%	actress	4,8.51%	chair	1,2.13%
CD	3,6.38%	child	3,6.38%	choir member	2,4.25%	credit card	1,2.13%
recorder	3,6.38%	team member	3,6.38%				
sculpture	3,6.38%						
sheep	2,4.25%						
total	14,29.82%	total	20,42.6%	total	10,21.3%	total	3,6.38%

According to the results reported in Table 5.7., the institute teachers hold the view that their learners have mostly the characteristics of *cognitive/constructive* learners ($p=42.6\%$). These teachers' metaphors reinforce the idea that the learners in the language institutes can possess the privilege of having an active role in development of their skills in learning. Without feeling the constant supervision and force of the teacher, such

institute learners enjoy the opportunity of constructing their own version of English language in a joint, communal relationship with their teacher.

Table 5.8.: The frequency and percentage of institute teachers' metaphors for learners in the ideal situation

BEH.	f/p	COG.	f/p	SIT.	f/p	SELF	f/p
pencil	1,1.93%	sister	2,3.84%	customer	4,7.69%	gift	1,1.93%
CD recorde r	4,7.69%	baby	5,9.61%	young bird	4,7.69%	cherry	1,1.93%
safety box	2,3.84%	child	2,3.84%	tourist	8,15.37%		
brick	2,3.84%	game player	4,7.69%	constructo r	2,3.84%		
		friend	5,9.61%	plant	4,7.69%		
		cookin g trainee	1,1.93%				
total	9,17.37 %	total	19,36.67 %	total	22,42.46 %	total	2,3.84 %

Considering the results reported in Table 5.8., it can be deducted that the institute teachers prefer to move on to the *situative* perspective of learning ($p=42.46\%$). That is, the institute teachers hold that the knowledge is not transferred but created and made meaningful for learners by the context and activities in which they are involved. In fact,

the institute teachers with having the improving concept of learning theories in world in their minds would prefer to prepare their learners for real life situations which the learners have practiced dealing with them in the classroom.

6. Conclusion

Using the Iranian contexts of English education, this study explored the metaphors language teachers expressed about the teaching and learning in schools and institutes. In this study, the purpose was to delve into the teachers hidden insights to find out what are the points which are actually affecting the teaching and learning the way they are. According to the results, by organizing the metaphors on teachers and learners around the three perspectives of behaviorist, cognitive and situative learning, some noteworthy and significant points about the present and ideal situations of language teachers in Iran's English education are gained. Martinez, Sauleda and Huber (2001) hold that by disclosing the metaphorical base of thinking about teaching and learning, the researchers can assist teachers to bridge the gap between their implicit and explicit knowledge.

The findings suggested that the teachers in formal and informal contexts of English education in Iran share some similarities and differences which may account for their level of success and failure. Based on the typology of learning, most of the metaphors articulated by the school teachers indicated an atmosphere of *behaviouristic* approach dominating the teaching process at schools.

One important part of teaching system is the methodology the teacher adopts to apply in his class. The metaphors stated by the school language teachers about the present condition of teaching English in Iran emphasized the still existence of classical roles of leader (*president, military officer, manager*), provider of knowledge (*book, dictionary, machine*), agent of change (*controller, captain*), agent of control (*remote control, gate guard, traffic warden*) for the teacher. In fact, the conceptual metaphor reinforced by such linguistic metaphors is that of TEACHER AS CONDUIT which represent his role as holder, provider and transmitter of knowledge. Such roles do not seem to consider any feelings for the teacher to share with her learners instead they represent just a kind of *mission* she has to accomplish. Consequently, the metaphors like *empty plate, wax, photo*

frame and *viewer* which were put by school teachers about the current and ideal situation of school learners, emphasizes the conceptual metaphor of LEARNER AS RECIPIENT which allows little or none activity for the leaner in the process of learning.

These views about teacher reinforce the prevailing usage of ***behavioristic*** principles in schools of Iran, which can be a considerable factor in making learners to conceive of language teaching as a “repetitive, dull and unrewarding process, where the teacher implements classroom activities in a predictable manner and makes classroom proceedings routine” (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008, p.211). In turn, the English knowledge in school classes is seen as a product to produce or as data to transmit and learners are seen as passive participants, merely supplying the *raw material* while the teacher does all the *moulding*; being the *empty plate* or *food* for the *chef* teacher to fill and cook; or simply a *viewer*, *recipient*, *photo frame*, or *bag* having no will or control in the learning process.

Surprisingly, most of the school teachers still think of the behavioristic principles of teaching English to be ideally suited to Iranian schools. Since the teacher in a class running by behavioristic rules is enjoying much authority and control over the learners and the learning process, he may be much reluctant in changing his views into having a class in which the learners are more in the ‘cast’ than the ‘crew’.

In fact, it may be the fear of reducing the ‘power distance’ in their relationship with learners that prevent them from conducting their classes in a cognitive/constructivist or situative fashion where there is, albeit, more active participation of the learners in the learning process and more need for forming a closer relationship between them. These findings regarding the tendency of school teachers in maintaining the behaviouristic guidelines are compatible with those of Pishghadam and Mirzaee (2008) which asserted that Iran’s educational system is still under the influence of modernist, behaviourist and positivist views of learning. They also hold that Iranian teachers would rather exercise their authority in the class, be the absolute determiner of all class decisions. Therefore, it seems that it is somehow demanding for the school teachers to drag their teaching into the modern world.

Nevertheless, the role of ‘culture’ must not be ignored since culture can determine some crucial parts and prevent some others. In our culture, the teacher is generally thought to

be respected than befriended. That may be a reason why the relationship between the mostly traditionally thinking school teachers and their learners are “not lubricated with the democratic oil of warmth and first names” (Biggs, 1998, cited in Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008, p. 18).

Another significant finding of this study is the institute teachers considering themselves of following the guidelines of cognitive/constructivist paradigm in contrast to the school teachers. This choice which may account for the more beneficial outcome of English learning in the institutes involves more participation of the learners in class activities, closer relationship between teacher and learners, respecting individuals learning styles and creating a friendly atmosphere for learning which confirms the ideas of Martinez, Sauleda and Huber (2001) regarding the efficiency of a cognitive class of teaching second language.

In addition, in cognitive/constructivist perspective of learning, control over the learning process is shared between the teacher and learners. Metaphors such as *friend*, *parent*, *guide*, *team leader* and *coach* which reflect an implicit adherence to a cognitive/constructive view of learning remove the teacher from his behaviorist shelter and provide more room for his learners. The conceptual metaphor embedded in these linguistic metaphors can be that of TEACHER AS FACILITATOR also the metaphors such as *entertainer* and *comedian* can represent a theme of TEACHER AS ENTERTAINER which both conceptual metaphors convey the concept of putting the learner in a better, easier and more fruitful condition to learn.

Furthermore, the metaphors mentioned about language learners to be like a *child*, *player*, *infant*, *team member* and *cooking trainee* convey the conceptual metaphor of LEARNER AS DEVELOPING ORGANISM who is supposed to get nourished, grow, and finally get fostered to reveal his potential abilities in learning. Actually the teacher will not only develop the talents of such students by constant care and support, she will try to enhance and polish such talents to facilitate the process of learning for them.

The results of the institute teachers' self-written metaphors indicated a very noteworthy point regarding their preference of the *situative* or *socio-historical* view of learning to the other views. Considering the situative type of learning as the ideal for the present classes is in line with Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) belief that the tasks in a

situated learning class will provide the contextual features that allow the possibility of authentic and life-like activities in the classroom.

According to the findings, institute teachers suggest situative learning metaphors for the ideal teachers more often than other images. Actually, metaphors like *tour guide*, *director*, *waiter*, *challenger* and *mechanic* entail the situative view of learning which draws more attention to social processes and joint activities with knowledge being seen as situated, by-product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used. Thus the conceptual metaphor behind such ideas can be that of TEACHER AS SCAFFOLDER who stays in the activity of the group, providing support and guidance in the specific situation the learners are involved in and gradually takes off as the learners know how to move on without him.

In the same fashion, metaphors which talk about learners as *customer*, *tourist*, *actress* and *choir member* imply the conceptual metaphor of LEARNER AS INTERACTOR whose interaction in situated collaborative activities get him to enjoy much social support and stimulation for better learning. Such learners are in fact safe from the biased individual construction of knowledge and by appropriate social support from teacher and other learners can construct valid versions of knowledge which they can use in various life-like situations.

Therefore, as the comparison between the school and institute teachers show, the former prefers to teach under the umbrella of behaviorism and also holds that this approach is the best for the school learners, while the latter asserts that in the new developing world the conventions of cognitive/constructivism alongside those of situative learning would provide the best situation for the learners to learn English in a way that prepares them for actual use of their knowledge outside the classroom.

Becoming aware of the underlying assumptions and beliefs, teachers get to think and reflect on their present methods and styles, to find out the points which are helping or blocking their teaching. They may have to change or modify the method they apply in their classes, the way they look at students and the roles they consider for themselves and their learners. In fact, if the teachers are not aware of the importance of the roles they keep in their minds, those concepts are going to persist over time and somehow become counter-productive in the reform plans they may start to make. Thus, language teachers

and learners by reflecting on their attitudes and practices can gradually develop a reflective mind which cares for the needed modifications and holds this view of Dewey (1933) that ‘reflective thought is a component of all problem-solving activities’ (cited in Oxford et al., 1998).

Therefore, due to the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday language of teachers and learners and its ability to capture complex structures in any field and their usage as vehicles for reflection and consciousness-raising, its analysis has been used as a heuristic tool in education research to identify implicit beliefs, challenge established assumptions, and thus promote change in classroom practices (Marshall, 1990; Tobin, 1990Bullough, 1991; Marchant, 1992).

In conclusion, identifying and presenting the teachers by their hidden views can heighten self-awareness, perspective-consciousness, and help to increase tolerance and understanding to turn the language classroom to a more pleasant and welcoming environment for teachers and learners alike. Furthermore, analyzing one’s attitudes and assumptions about teaching can provide avenues for teachers to see how they comprehend the teacher-student relationship and where they prefer to stand in this continuum.

Considering the changes in the modern world and the new ways the learners and the whole process of L2 education is looked at, teachers may be inclined to make appropriate changes in their current beliefs to be able to come in line with the developments happening in the field. Teachers in Iran may particularly have to accept this fact that the era of behaviourism has reached its end and the teachers and learners are developing a friendlier and facilitating atmosphere in L2 classes.

Finally, another implication of this study concerns the pre-service L2 teachers whose number is increasing day by day. In fact, not only can the present teachers benefit from the findings of a metaphor analysis on their beliefs, but also the pre-service teachers who are going to enter the teaching education are going to take advantage of such awareness gained by analyzing their metaphors on teaching. Through this venture of metaphor construction, the pre-service teachers can become more cognizant of the attitudes and values they are bringing to the teaching system and let them reflect on the efficacy of each of them in future.

This research also contained some limitations. As is clear from any scientific research, nothing can be self evident unless verified by observation or experimentation. To do any type of observation or experiment, one may face with some limitations and problems. This study could have come to somewhat more different results than it did, if it were not confronted with the following limitations. First, this study was conducted in some schools and language institutes in Mashhad while more research can take place in universities or in other cities of Iran to compare the results. The second limitation of this research was that sex and major of the participants in both contexts were not controlled. Third, teachers' degrees and their experience were not taken into consideration.

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Appendices

Appendix A

What is your idea of a language teacher?

Try to complete the following sentence in as many ways to reflect your ideas of a language teacher.

☺ A language teacher is like...

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

What is your idea of an ideal language teacher?

Try to complete the following sentence in as many ways to reflect your ideas of an *ideal* language teacher.

☺ An ideal language teacher should be like...

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

What is your idea of a language learner?

Try to complete the following sentence in as many ways to reflect your ideas of a language learner.

☺ A language learner is like...

-
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
-

What is your idea of an ideal language learner?

Try to complete the following sentence in as many ways to reflect your ideas of an *ideal* language learner.

☺ A good language learner should be like...

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Appendix B

Table 1: Metaphors about teachers

behaviourist	cognitive/constructive	situative/socio-historical
robot(emotionless, pre-programmed)	friend(helping you in any situation)	sun(provides light in when you are lost in learning)
military officer(forcing others to obey him, strict)	guide(guides for anything)	tour guide(when on travel, guides you to best places)
bad chef(is in charge of food and you have to eat even his bad food)	mother(kind, helping and supporting, believing in you)	star(shows you the way when dark in learning)
book(pre-written, fixed)	father(you can count on him in any situation)	doctor(visits you when having learning problems)
dictionary(is accepted as the original thing you have	team coach(guides the players how to learn and	cell phone battery charger(raises spirit,

to refer to, is always true)	win)	encourages you to learn)
good speaker(fascinates you by his talk, no will on your side)	player(you are in one team cooperating to win)	mechanic(provides services when you have problems to move on)
controller(controls your every action; no creativity on your part)	classmate(makes you feel comfortable with her, share your problems with)	repairer(repairs your learning problems)
gate guard(controls the start and end of actions)	team leader(with others' help makes decisions for the group)	challenger(makes you interested in taking new challenges in learning)
captain (everybody must obey him)	entertainer(when you are low provides joyous conditions for you to learn)	waiter(waits on you to help when you call him; makes sure everything is ok while you are learning)
security(whenever he allows you come and go)		researcher(you are his subject, he reports to you whatever needed for you to know about yourself)
traffic warden(controls your moves)		director(guides and monitors you while playing your learner role)
lap top(you can use it based on its programs)		
story teller(you have to listen to whatever he prefers to tell)		
manager(manages and controls everything in his		

own way)		
trainman(controls the coming and going of trains)		
animal trainer(tries to make you copy his actions while not considering your will)		
president(considers himself to be top of the class who must decide for everything)		
microphone(just a tool to make the teaching voice louder)		
saint(everybody thinks high of him so you must follow him)		
remote control(with no emotional connection stays away and controls you)		

Table 2: Metaphors about Learners

behaviourist	cognitive/constructive	situative/socio-historical
sheep(with no will on his side you follows his teacher)	child(learns better when his parent help him)	plant(needs care and attention while is growing)
statue(motionless, being passive in class)	friend(with having a friendly relationship with teacher)	tourist(learns things as if is travelling to new places)

	learns best)	
recorder(just records what he hears)	team member(can play with teacher and others in a team to win learning)	busy bee(gathers knowledge to make something special by it)
CD (is recorded by whatever teacher pleases)	player(can play with teacher and others to learn better)	constructor(with teacher's help constructs his plan)
memory card(is filled with data, no activity)	sister(is reliable and kind to other students and teacher)	actress(acts under teacher's direction)
safety box(knowledge is just kept inside him with no practical usage)	infant(needs care and attention to grow up)	choir member(with others and under teacher's conduction, sings in occasions)
pet(teacher just would play with it anytime he feels like doing it)	cooking trainee(is always eager to learn something to cook and taste)	patient(when fails in learning, gets better by teacher's help)
brick(is used to build something with no will of himself)		customer(like a customer chooses what and how to buy his needs)
black board(is just a tool in classroom being used by others)		young bird(learns how to fly by teachers help, after that flies alone)
photo frame(teacher put anything to show)		ant(supplies knowledge for special situation)
viewer(no activity, just watch what's happening)		busy bee(gathers knowledge to make something special by it)

notebook(teacher can write anything he wants in it)		
photographer(just takes photos of the class events)		
bag(can be filled by others)		
empty plate(teacher can serve anything in it)		
cassette(it can be files by others)		
food(teacher uses students as ingredients to cook any food by them)		
soldier(must obey his master)		
wax(teacher can give it any form he likes)		
sculpture(made by others, no activity on his part)		
pencil(teacher uses that anytime he wants)		

Title

Redundant Versus Consistent Stems in Multiple-Choice Vocabulary Tests and their Effects on the Pre-University Students' Performance

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Abstract

This research investigated the effect of redundant and consistent stems in multiple-choice vocabulary tests on pre-university students' performance. To this purpose, a sample English language proficiency test was administered to a total of 130 pre-university students to select sixty homogeneous students. They were randomly selected and divided into two groups, one consistent group that took the test including consistent stems and the other redundant group that took the test containing redundant stems. Next, three versions of the same test were provided in which the items had the same alternatives but different stems. The first and second versions of the consistent test were assigned to the consistent group, and the two versions of the redundant tests to the redundant group. In the last versions of the two tests, the groups were reversed. This time, the consistent group took the summative test containing redundant stems while the redundant group took the summative test consisting of consistent stems. All the tests were teacher-made achievement tests and their reliability coefficients were met through Kudar and Richardson's (KR-21 Method). Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the students' performance on two kinds of tests ($p < .05$). The empirical findings of the present study suggest that pre-university students' competence in vocabulary may be measured through both tests with redundant and tests with consistent stems.

Key Terms: Multiple-choice tests, Redundant stems, Consistent stems

1. Introduction

The goal of testing vocabulary is to assess the subjects' knowledge of lexical items. In preparing vocabulary tests, the first task concerns the selection of the vocabulary to be included in the test. In case of achievement testing, the test constructor chooses the vocabulary items from the materials covered in the course (Farhady, Jafarpur and

Birjandi, 2004, p. 179). Ballantyne (2004, p. 1) argues that objective tests are made up of short questions, termed items.

The most common test regarding vocabulary is the multiple-choice test. Since the construction of a stem in multiple-choice tests of vocabulary has a predominant function on the students' choice of correct alternative and gives a clear portrait of students' achievement during the course, this study will investigate using redundant and consistent stems in multiple-choice tests of vocabulary in order to see the effect of context provided in the stem. According to Mousavi (1990, p. 319), the redundant stem is the stem that contains a redundant phrase, clause, sentence or a combination of sentences (see Appendix A). Heaton (1988, p.57) defines consistent stems as a single sentence construction which is a simple single sentence that does not provide sufficient context (see Appendix B). Therefore, the redundant stems contain more information than needed for it to be understood. This may reveal the fact that contextualized items provide the test takers with more information about the situation, increase their cognitive extension, and also have beneficial wash back effect on them (Pappas, 2007).

Many of the researchers (e.g., Cooper, 2002; Brown, 1996) reject the use of redundancy items in the stems of multiple-choice items. There are also debates about the use of consistent stems, (i.e., simple sentence stems) in multiple-choice items. On the face of it, Heaton (1988, p. 56) states that simple sentence stems do not provide enough contexts and too little contexts are insufficient to establish any meaningful situation. Since, there have been no comparative studies on the multiple-choice vocabulary items with redundant or consistent stems. There may be a gap in the experimental work on the relationship between these kinds of stems and their effectiveness which needs to be bridged.

This study aims at finding out which stems are more helpful in testing vocabulary and provide full context in order to avoid artificiality and ambiguity in stems. In order to draw up the boundaries of research, this study intended to pursue the following research question: Is there a significant difference between students' performance on multiple-choice vocabulary tests consisting of redundant stems and those containing consistent stems? This research question is put in the following null hypothesis upon which the present research has been conducted: There is no significant difference between students'

performance on multiple-choice tests of vocabulary consisting of redundant stems and those containing consistent stems.

According to Lorusso (2004, p.26), the kind of context provided in the stem of a multiple-choice vocabulary item has a very important effect on the students' decision about choosing the correct alternative and also is a reliable criterion for the teachers to infer the students' knowledge of vocabulary.

It is hoped that this study provides a systematic analysis of the multiple-choice vocabulary tests will indicate the effectiveness of redundant stems or the consistent stems and may provide the teacher of English as a second or foreign language with more insights into the designing of multiple-choice vocabulary tests.

2. Review of literature

A number of experimental studies have been carried out on the stem orientation and stem formats as well as their effects on item difficulty and discrimination. In a research conducted by Violato and Marini (1989) the effects of stem orientation (positively stated stem or negatively stated stem) and completeness (complete stem or incomplete stem) of multiple-choice were investigated. Provisions were also made to determine possible interactions between orientation, completeness, and achievement. Thus, 142 senior education students were classified into three achievement groups (Low, Medium, and High). A three-way factorial design (orientation, completeness, and achievement) was used as the experimental model. Results indicated that incomplete versus complete stems increased item difficulty but had no effect on discrimination. Stem orientation had no effect on either difficulty or discrimination. Neither orientation nor completeness interacted with achievement or with each other.

In their research, Haladyna and Downing (1989) investigated that including irrelevant material in the stem decreases both the reliability and the validity of the resulting test scores. Grounland and Linn (1990) rejected the redundant stems and stated that excessive length can confuse or distract candidates.

Brown (1996, p. 56) believed that in order to make a test reasonably efficient, teachers should double-check that items contain no redundancy. Khodadady (1999) mentioned that the stem of multiple-choice items should include the context which is directly related to the keyed response and its alternatives. Some item writers increase the quantity of context hoping that it will help the test takers to make better decisions. These item writers should remember that irrelevant context not only increases the time required for answering the test but also misleads the test takers by forcing them to focus on irrelevant parts of the context.

In their study, Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, and Tysinger (2002) concluded that acceptable stems are short (i.e., shorter than 20 words) and clearly stated in a simple sentence or statement. Jackson (2003, p. 4) suggests that the stem should be written in the simplest, clearest and unambiguous way, to avoid it being a reading test. Painter (2004, p. 6) studied the maxims of item writing in general and offered the following suggestions:

1. Keep the writing level difficulty of test items appropriate in relation to the individuals who are taking the test, unless of course the purpose is to measure verbal and reading abilities.
2. Write items as simply as possible, making sure that students know exactly what information is being requested.

According to Hughes (2003, p. 182), context, rather than a definition or a synonym, can be used to test knowledge of a lexical item. It could be argued that, since learners and language users in general normally meet vocabulary in context, providing context in an item makes the task more authentic and perhaps results in a more valid measure of the candidate's ability.

The results of Lorusso's (2004) investigation showed that clinical vignettes can be used for higher taxonomy questions which require interpretation of data or problem solving. Lorusso also concluded that one must be careful, however, not to convolute a simple recall question into an elaborate and time consuming scenario.

While calling redundant stem window dressing, Zimmaro (2004, p. 16) and Jacob (2004) rejected excessive verbiage in the stem. Osterlind (2005) claimed that the stem should only contain information pertinent to the question and it should not be tricky or misleading. He rejected the use of stem as an opportunity to teach. Frary (2006, p.3) also did not offer superfluous information as an introduction to a question and concluded that this approach probably represents an unconscious effort to continue teaching while testing and is not likely to be appreciated by the students, who would prefer direct questions and less to read.

The findings by Collins (2006, p.7) suggested that "the stem should include only the necessary information and be kept as short as possible. It should not be used as an opportunity to teach, nor should it contain statements that are informative but not needed for the examinee to select the correct option".

Mueller (2006, p.2) emphasized the reduction of students' cognitive load and stated "cognitive load theory (and other related theories) recommends avoiding elements of instruction or assessment that will overload students' capacity to consciously proceed the immediate task on which they are working". Muller (ibid: p.3) further adds that stems must be simple and only include relevant information and adds "any additional information that is relevant to the question can distract or confuse the student, thus providing an alternative explanation for why the item was missed. Pappas (2007, p. 2) states that extraneous material should be avoided. Students should be told as much as is needed to understand the question, but no more.

In another research, Ascolon, Meyers, Davies, and Smits (2007) examined the format of the stem and homogeneity of the answer set and their effects on item difficulty. A mock multiple-choice license examination was administered to high school students with items having stems that were either open-ended or in question form and with distractors structured to be either similar or dissimilar to the correct answer. Analyses at the test level indicated that the similarity structured distractors raised the mean difficulty level by .12. No effect was found for item-stem format. Differential item function analyses on each of the test items further supported the effect of distractor similarity on test performance.

Repetition of the information plus clear segmenting of the thematic structure enhanced orally comprehension. Therefore, the repetition of necessary information is undoubtedly associated with easier items (Parker and Chaudron, 1987, cited in Ying-hui, 2007, p. 10). In addition, some researchers maintain that redundancy has a significant effect on listening-item comprehension. For example, Chiang and Dunkel (1992) found that redundancy does play a significant role in comprehension (Chiang and Dunkel, 1992, cited in Ying-hui, 2007, p.10). While investigating the effects of redundancy on the listening comprehension test performance, Buck and Tatsuoka (1998) revealed that the redundancy of necessary information correlates positively with item difficulty. When the necessary information was repeated, items were easier.

As shown above, the format of stem in multiple-choice item has been the subject of a number of studies, although the results on the issue concerned are still paradoxical and we can not arrive at a conclusive answer. The redundant and consistent stems also have been investigated separately. Therefore, the present study carried out an experimental work on the effect of redundant versus consistent stems in multiple-choice vocabulary tests on pre-university students' test performance to bridge this gap of the previous literature in a comparative fashion. In other words, this line of research focused on the differences between the learners' test performance in dealing with redundant and consistent stems in test taking processes.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Participants in this study were 130 students at pre-university center junior high school. They were female students with the average age of seventeen. They had studied English for about six years at the time of the experiment and were selected based on the scores obtained from a sample proficiency test. Having administered the (Mean+ SD and Mean- SD) formulas, 60 students whose scores fell between (11) and (23) out of (50) were selected as a homogeneous sample. Then, they were randomly divided into two groups based on systematic random sampling (i.e., odd and even numbers). Therefore, 30

participants represented the consistent group who took tests with consistent stems and 30 participants represented the redundant group who took tests with redundant stems.

3.2. Instruments

For the purpose of this experiment, the following instruments were used:

1. A sample proficiency test from Nelson English Language Tests (Fowler and Coe, 1976) was selected. The test was used to enable the researcher to select a homogeneous group. As calculated through the KR- 21 Method, the reliability of this test was ($r = .75$).
2. To figure out the effect of redundant and consistent stems on the participants' performance, three versions of a 40-multiple-choice-vocabulary-item test with redundant stems and three versions with consistent stems were designed based on Heaton (1988), Mousavi (1990), Cooper (2002), and Jackson (2003). These tests were administered in three periods. All versions were achievement vocabulary tests based on pre- university English text book. The first version of each test was constructed based on the first four lessons of the pre-university book and the second versions were based on the last four ones. The last versions (i.e., summative tests) covered all the lessons in the book (see Appendices A & B). In both kinds of the tests, the alternatives were the same but the stems were different. The reliability and validity coefficients of the six versions of redundant and consistent vocabulary tests were calculated in the following sections.

To estimate the reliability of all versions of the consistent and redundant tests the KR- 21 formula was administered. The result of the reliability statistics for the consistent tests 1, 2, and 3 was (.84), (.85) and (.85) respectively and for the redundant test was (.86), (.86) and (.87) respectively. The results, therefore confirmed that all versions of redundant and consistent tests were reliable.

Since there is a specific section in the course book on vocabulary on which the tests were constructed, the tests had content validity. The results of the redundant and consistent groups' correlation based on Pearson correlation formula showed that the correlation between the groups was significant at the 0.01 level (2. tailed) and at the 0.05 level (2. tailed). Therefore, there were significant correlations between all versions of the tests with redundant and consistent stems. The results of the correlation confirmed that the tests were concurrently valid. Table 1 summarizes the related data.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients of consistent and redundant stems

Group	Consistent1	Consistent2	Consistent3	Redundant1	Redundant2	Redundant3
Consistent1	1	.651**	.703**	.989**	.869**	.678**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.000	000	.000	.000	.000
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Cinsistent2	.651**	1	.474**	.641**	.650**	.642**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.	.008	.000	.000	.000
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Consistent3	.703**	.474**	1	.728**	.715**	.419*
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.008	.	.000	.000	.021
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Redundant1	.989**	.641**	.728**	1	.864**	.642**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Redundant2	.868*	.650**	.715**	.864**	1	.596**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.001
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Redundant3	.678**	.642**	.419*	.642**	.596**	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.021	.000	.001	.
N	30	30	30	30	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). / *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Having used differential-group studies (studies that are designed to compare the performances of the two groups on a test and are the most straightforward strategy available to testers for establishing the construct validity of a test) between redundant and consistent groups, the researcher was made sure of the construct validity of the tests. That is, the redundant group took the last version of the consistent tests and the consistent group took the last version of the redundant tests. In this way, the performance of the two groups on one kind of test was compared. The results showed that both redundant and consistent tests measured the cognitive construct (the knowledge of vocabulary) of the students.

3.3. Procedure

Having administered the language proficiency test, a table of specification based on the vocabulary items from the materials covered in the course was prepared. Afterwards, in order to examine the effect of redundant and consistent stems on the students' performance, three versions of vocabulary tests with redundant and three versions with consistent stems were designed and administered in the beginning, middle and at the end of the term. At the beginning of the term, the consistent group (i.e., the group taking the multiple-choice vocabulary test with consistent stems) took a 40-item multiple-choice vocabulary test while the redundant group (i.e., the group taking the test with redundant stems) took a 40-item- vocabulary test with redundant stems. The time allocated to each test was 40 minutes.

The second versions of the tests were administered in the middle of the term. The consistent group took a 40-items multiple-choice vocabulary test consisting of consistent stems while the redundant group took a 40-item multiple-choice vocabulary test consisting of redundant stems. In administering the third versions of the tests, the groups were reversed. This time, the redundant group took the test with consistent stems while the consistent group took the test with redundant stems in order to avoid the students'

getting used to one type of test and its effect on the result of the tests and also to observe a group performance on different kinds of test stems.

The interval between each period took three weeks. The two groups were instructed by the same teacher with the same methodology during the term. Data were collected and statistical analysis was conducted through correlation, independent-samples *t*-tests and paired samples *t*-test concerned with three sets of participants in consistent and redundant groups in three periods of time allocated to the administration of multiple-choice tests with these kinds of stems. A criterion level 20 out of 40 was considered for both redundant and consistent tests to pass the test. That is, the condition for students to pass the course was at least to answer 50 percent of the test items correctly.

4. Results

The results of the study focused on answering the research question mentioned in the first section as: Is there a difference between students' performance on multiple-choice tests of vocabulary consisting of redundant stems and those containing consistent stems? The findings were presented in three phases concerned with the administration of three versions of vocabulary tests in the following sections through descriptive and inferential statistics.

In the first stage of the experiment administered at the beginning of the term, the consistent group took a 40-item test with the consistent stems while the redundant group took a 40-item test with the redundant stems. The alternatives in both kinds of test were the same but the stems were different.

The mean scores for both groups of the study were calculated through descriptive statistics. The results revealed a mean of (23.37) for the consistent group and (26.33) for the redundant group. Next, the statistical independent *t*-test was administered. The *t*-observed of (-1.527) for a degree of freedom of (58) was less than the *t*-critical of (2.000) at the significance level of .50. Therefore, there was not a significant difference between the two mean scores, and the *t*-value was not high enough to reject the null hypothesis and so it confirmed that there is no significant difference between students' performance

on multiple-choice tests of vocabulary with redundant and those with consistent stems ($p<.05$). Table 2 summarizes the results of the descriptive statistics related to the above result paired samples t -test of the groups.

Table 2. Paired samples t -test of the groups on the tests (version 1)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-observed
Consistent1	30	23.37	7.435	-1.527
Redundant1	30	26.33	7.617	

The second version of the tests was administered in the middle of the term following the same procedure adopted for the first version of the tests. Results displayed a slight difference of the mean scores, i.e. (22.83) for the consistent group and (25.16) for the redundant group. Next, the statistical independent samples t -test was administered. The t -observed for a degree of freedom of (58) was (1.179) which was less than the t -critical of (2.000) at the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, there was not a significant difference between the two mean scores, and the t -value confirmed that the consistent group and the redundant group performed rather equally on the multiple-choice vocabulary tests containing consistent and redundant stems ($p<.05$). Table 3 reveals the descriptive statistics related to the results of the second version of the tests.

Table 3. Paired samples t -test of the groups on the tests (version 2)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-observed
Consistent2	30	22.83	7.717	1.179
Redundant2	30	25.16	7.616	

In order to avoid students' getting used to one type of test and its effect on the result of the exam, and also in order to observe a group performance on different kinds of test, the groups were reversed. This time, the redundant group took the test with consistent stems while the consistent group took the test consisting of redundant stems.

Once again comparisons of the two mean scores of the consistent group and the redundant group revealed little significant difference. The standard deviation for both groups was nearly the same. In order to make sure that the difference in the mean scores was not statistically significant; the statistical independent samples *t*-test was administered. The *t*-observed was (.396) for a degree of freedom of (58) which was less than *t*-critical of (2.000) at the significance level of .50. The results, therefore confirmed the null hypothesis ($p < .05$). In other words, there was not any difference between students' performance on multiple-choice tests of vocabulary consisting of redundant and consistent stems. Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics related to the results of the third version of the tests.

Table 4. Paired samples *t*-test of the groups on the tests (version 3)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-observed
Consistent3	30	28.70	7.08	.396
Redundant3	30	29.43	7.25	

5. Discussion

This section elaborates on the results and findings presented in the previous section through providing answers to the research question and the null hypothesis proposed in section one.

The empirical findings of the present study suggest that pre-university students' English vocabulary competence can be tested through both tests with redundant stems and those

with consistent stems. When we compared closely the scores in all versions of the tests, in all comparisons the students' scores were nearly the same. The results of inferential statistics showed no significant difference between test takers' performance on multiple-choice vocabulary tests with redundant and consistent stems ($p < .05$).

This study suggests that a multiple-choice vocabulary test with redundant or consistent stems can be beneficial in testing student's knowledge of foreign language. We may argue that both types of stems play a significant role in comprehension. This showed that designing such items could be in two formats which is due to the minimal role of stem format effects on students' test taking performance.

The result of the research performed by Ascolon, Meyers, Davies, and Smits (2007) on the format of the item stem and its effect on item difficulty showed that the effect of stem is minimal. Their study is in agreement with the result of the present study that showed little variation in the effect of redundant and consistent stems on the students' performance.

The result of this study also revealed that the multiple-choice vocabulary test with consistent stems can be used to measure the students' knowledge of foreign language vocabulary (Mueller, 2006). This revealed that stems must be simple and only include relevant information which is relevant to the choices in the simplest, clearest and unambiguous way, to avoid it being a reading test. Thus, test takers' obtained almost the same scores in both groups in the present study since Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman and Tysinger (2002) claim that acceptable stems are short (i.e., shorter than 20 words) and to the point. The results confirmed that the stem should include only the necessary information and be kept as short as possible (Collins, 2006).

Although the results of the study revealed no significant differences between redundant and consistent stems, the mean scores obtained through descriptive statistics showed that the performance of the students taking the tests with redundant stems were slightly higher than those taking consistent stems. The higher mean scores of the redundant test may be due to the context that the redundant stems provide. Heaton (1988) concluded that vocabulary is much more usefully tested in context since it is the context that gives specific meaning and relevance to a word, thus creating a situation which is as linguistically valid as possible in the circumstances.

In spite of the fact that the mean scores obtained from the tests with redundant stems were higher than the scores obtained from the tests with consistent stems, the result of the descriptive statistics showed no significant difference between these two kinds of stems. This may be due to the unfamiliarity of the students with the redundant stems, the similarity of the strategies that the students use in answering both kinds of tests, or the techniques used by the teachers in teaching and assessing vocabulary. Most of Iranian teachers in pre-university centers use consistent stems in their achievement tests to assess the students' vocabulary knowledge. This might be because of the following reasons:

1. The consistent stems are easier to design.
2. The redundant stems are time-consuming both in designing and administering.
3. The consistent stems are cost- effectiveness, that is, they occupy less space than redundant stems.

The comparison of the scores of the first versions of redundant and consistent tests with the scores of the last version of each test showed that this increase of both kinds of tests. This may be due to the benefits the learners taking from wash back effect which is the impact that tests have on learning and teaching. Concerning Hughes' (2003, pp. 53-56) basic practical advice, the tests with either redundant or consistent stems had following features that showed their beneficial wash back:

1. They tested the students' vocabulary knowledge whose development we wanted to encourage.
2. The tests sampled widely and unpredictably. Normally a test can measure only a sample of everything included in the specification. The redundant and consistent stems represented as far as possible the full scope of what was specified.
3. The items directly tested the vocabulary knowledge of the students.
4. The tests were criterion-referenced. According to Hughes (2003, p.55), if the criterion- referenced test specifications make clear what candidates have to be able to do, and with what degree of success, then students will have a clear picture of what they have to achieve. For the redundant and consistent tests, the students knew

that if they do perform the tasks at the criterion level of 20 out of 40, then they would be successful on the tests. It could motivate the students.

5. Both kinds of tests were progress achievement tests which were based on objectives. The objective of each test was to know how well the students mastered the vocabulary taught during each period.
6. The tests were understood by students. The rationale for each test, and its specifications were made available to everyone concerned with preparation for the test.
7. Counting the cost was taken into consideration. The tests were easy and cheap to administer, score and interpret.

A more important point that can be mentioned here is that the redundancy in the stem does not necessarily make it too long. The time required to take the tests with redundant stems was more than those with consistent stems. So, the time allocated to the test with 40 items of multiple-choice vocabulary test with redundant stems was 50 minutes and to the test with a 40-item multiple-choice vocabulary test was 40 minutes. It is possible to use a 40-item multiple-choice vocabulary test with either consistent stems or redundant stems for summative classroom tests. However, for the situation that is needed to embed more than 50 items in the test, it is suggested to use the tests with consistent stems.

An important point is that nearly all the studies dealt with the redundant and consistent stems separately while this study performed a comparative study between these two kinds of stems. And also, this study centered on the vocabulary in the comparison of the stems that adds to the innovativeness of the study.

6. Conclusion

After gathering and analyzing data, the researchers arrived at the following conclusions:

1. There is no significant difference between students' performance on multiple-choice tests of vocabulary with redundant stems and those with consistent stems. Therefore,

the knowledge of vocabulary of pre-university students can be assessed either through tests with redundant stems or those with consistent stems.

2. Although the result of the study revealed no significant difference between redundant and consistent stems, the mean scores obtained through descriptive statistics showed that the performance of the students taking the tests with redundant stems were slightly higher than those taking consistent stems. This revealed that the tests with redundant stems have more priority than the tests with consistent stems.
3. The results of this study conformed to the studies that were in favor of consistent stems as well as those advocating redundant stems (Mueller, 2006; Jackson, 2003; Buck and Tatsuoka, 1998). Mueller (2006) asserted that stems must be simple. Jackson (2003, p. 4) suggested that the stem should be written in the simplest, clearest and unambiguous way, to avoid it being a reading test. Buck and Tatsuoka (1998, pp. 119-157) revealed that the redundancy of necessary information correlates positively with item difficulty. Chiang and Dunkel (1992) found that redundancy does play a significant role in comprehension.

Based on the insights gained, the following is a set of implications that are suggested with reference to the findings of this research. Firstly, the study is primarily beneficial to teachers because these types of items would lead to more effective and reliable instruments to measure the students' knowledge of vocabulary. In language classrooms, it is suggested that language teachers use either kind of tests depending on the number of items and also the time allocated.

Secondly, the findings of this research are fruitful for language testers. When the importance of redundant and consistent stems is revealed, language testers can apply the finding to design much more considerable and reliable tests. Last but not least, this investigation is of paramount importance to English as foreign language (EFL) learners, since the tests with different stems would tap their knowledge of vocabulary in a better way.

The results of this research may provide the test designers with the following potential suggestions for further research.

1. This study concentrated on the comparative study of consistent and redundant stems in the items testing the students' knowledge of vocabulary attained during the semester irrespective of other kinds of stems which can be used to test such ability. Thus, the effects of stem variations could be investigated on test takers' performance in related areas of enquiry.
2. This experiment was conducted at a pre-university high school in Ahvaz; the same study can be replicated in other geographical situations, in English as second language (ESL) situations and even on native speakers.
3. This research was conducted with learners at the pre-intermediate level. Other levels of language proficiency may also be the subjects of future studies if researchers wish to make generalizations about language learners at different proficiency levels.
4. This study used the consistent and redundant stems in summative tests of vocabulary. They can be used in formative tests of vocabulary if researchers wish to see their effects in this kind of test. They can also be used to test other kinds of language skills and sub-skills, e.g., the students' knowledge of grammar.
5. This study was used for the participants who were female. The researchers can perform the test with male participants in a comparative study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Test for the Redundant group1

Choose the best answer.

1. When you do aerobic exercise and bring in that oxygen, your heart becomes stronger.
If you exercise regularly, your heart will move more easily through the blood

- a. bones b. cells c. vessels d. joints

2. Exercise makes your muscles stronger and sometimes larger. Strong muscles give better to your joints.

- a. support b. stretch c. store d. pain

3. My brother is a good footballer. He is a member of a famous team. He the football team when he was young.

- a. promised b. invited c. permitted d. joined

4. There was a terrible accident on Main Street. Two people were killed and one of my friends was badly

- a. relaxed b. injured c. excited d. amused

5. The old man has a terrible pain in his back and it is difficult for him to do his work alone. He had to on other people to do his shopping for him.

- a. turn b. rely c. keep d. agree

6. While giving a speech, the movement of your hands, arms, or head shows how you feel or think. Try many different ways to find a comfortable balance of to use in front of an audience.

- a. aspects b. lectures c. gestures d. silences

7. My friend lives in poverty. He hasn't got enough money to finish his studies. He's in a difficult

- a. warning b. variety c. projection d. situation

8. My friend moved to a big city two years ago. He always sends me letters and beautiful pictures. Yesterday he sent a letter two pictures of his.

- a. increasing b. involving c. including d. interesting

9. Yesterday, there was a big robbery at the central bank and a lot of money was stolen.

Now the police are trying to find Jim's in this robbery.

- a. projection b. confidence c. nervousness d. involvement

10. Noise will distract the students' attention. So, there must be during examinations.

- a. silence b. contact c. respect d. support

11. If people burn too much gas, oil, and coal, they will hurt the environment and this problem may cause acid rain. Acid rain destroys forests and can trees, rivers and buildings.

- a. define b. damage c. design d. prefer

12. You can change old cans, bottles, plastic bags, and newspapers to use them again.

Most plastics are also

- a. responsible b. possible c. reasonable d. recyclable

13. After walking for two hours, John felt tired. So he sat back and his legs.

- a. crossed b. carried c. changed d. turned

14. Scientists all over the world are working to find ways to cure some diseases. AIDS is a problem of importance.

- a. anxious b. facial c. global d. useful

15. There has been a considerable rise in the pollution of air in Tehran. This can result in many difficulties. So everybody is about this problem.

- a. concerned b. punished c. planned d. excited

16. It takes time to learn a foreign language and needs regular practice. In fact, learning a language is usually a slow

- a. habit b. sense c. strategy d. process

17. When we were on the ship, we received some radio signals. Although we tried hard, we couldn't their source.

- a. define b. disturb c. locate d. distract

18. There are lots of shirts with beautiful colors in this shop. These shirts come in of colors.

- a. mood b. reality c. variety d. focus

19. While giving a lecture, there should be silence during your presentation. Any noise in the middle of your speech can be to your audience.

- a. describing b. presenting c. damaging d. distracting

20. Although farming methods have improved, some of them still are harmful. Many modern farming methods are damaging the

- a. temperature b. extinction c. pressure d. environment

21. Most of our lives depend on fossil fuel. Coal is a fossil fuel that is used mainly to electricity.

- a. organize b. collect c. prevent d. produce

22. Young people living in villages move to large cities in order to find a job. Therefore the main cities are gradually by people from the countries.

- a. predicted b. provided c. populated d. performed

23. Educational system of a country plays an important role on the preparation of the children for the social life. Good education can young children from social harm.

- a. provide b. protect c. prepare d. predict

24. My friend has a flexible body. She can move her body so that it is not straight any more and she can also touch her toes without her knees.

- a. protecting b. supporting c. helping d. bending supporting

25. Smoking is very harmful. It is the cause of many illnesses. Giving up smoking the risk of heart diseases.

- a. enhances b. guarantees c. reduces d. results

26. The earth is made of three layers. The center of the earth is called the core.

..... of heavy metals and hot materials.

- a. includes b. decreases c. locates d. consists

27. We went on a vacation last month. When we arrived at the hotel and asked for a big room they told us that it was not at that time.

- a. available b. suitable c. developing d. common

28. Each job needs its own special tool to be done. Dentists usually use different in their jobs.

- a. appointment b. instructions c. instruments d. experiments

29. Light objects can stay on the surface of a liquid such as water. For example wood can on water, but rock does not.

- a. paint b. float c. shine d. break

30. I was educated from high school five years ago and I've lost with most of my old friends.

- a. contrast b. humor c. contact d. quality

31. There is an interesting film on TV tonight but I don't know the exact time it is going to be shown. Did Mary what time the film starts?

- a. compare b. define c. mention d. rely

32. If you want to be able to work well, you must find a more way of organizing your time.

- a. proud b. efficient c. sufficient d. similar

33. We the bird from the cage and let it come out and fly away.

- a. released b. raised c. kept d. lifted

34. There has been an increase in the prices. Spending on education has also rapidly in recent years.

- a. produced b. organized c. reduced d. risen

35. It is difficult for them to make preparation for their work without computers. So they on computers to organize their work.

- a. depend b. insist c. turn d. keep

36. You are not allowed to park your car here since this car park is for use.

- a. conscious b. personal c. general d. central

37. The old man had hurt his back and could hardly walk. His were slow and painful.

- a. appointments b. functions c. situations d. movements

38. She usually becomes ashamed of doing something wrong. Yesterday, she was of giving the wrong answer.

- a. involved b. embarrassed c. contacted d. overcome

39. Everyone in the village welcomed us warmly. They were kind and to us.

- a. emotionless b. friendly c. distracting d. funny

40. The teachers in this school behave their students kindly. They have a good with the students.

- a. involvement b. quality c. relationship d. instruction

Appendix B: Test for the Consistent Group-1

Choose the best answer.

1. Your blood moves easily through the blood
a. bones b. cells c. vessels d. joints
2. Strong muscles give better to your joints.
a. support b. stretch c. store d. pain
3. My brother..... The football team when he was young.
a. promised b. invited c. permitted d. joined
4. David was badly in the accident.
a. relaxed b. injured c. exited d. amused
5. The old man had to on other people to do his shopping for him.
a. turn b. rely c. keep d. agree
6. Try many different ways to find a comfortable balance of to use in front of an audience.
a. aspects b. lectures c. gestures d. silences
7. My friend is in a difficult
a. warning b. variety c. projection d situation
8. He sent a letter two pictures of his.
a. increasing. b. involving c. including d. interesting.
9. The police try to find out Jim'sin the robbery.
a. projection b. confidence c. nervousness d. involvement
10. There must be during examinations.
a. silence b. contact c. respect d. support
11. Acid rain can trees, rivers and buildings.

- a. define b. damage c. design d. prefer

12. Most plastics are

- a. responsible b. possible c. reasonable d. recyclable

13. He sat back and his legs.

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35. They on computers to organize this work.

- a. depend b. insist c. turn d. keep

36. This car park is for..... use.

- a. conscious b. personal c. mineral d. central

37. The old man were slow and painful.

- a. appointments b. functions c. situations d. movements

38. Sheof giving the wrong answer.

- a. involved b. embarrassed c. contacted d. overcome

39. Everyone in the village was kind and to us.

- a. emotionless b. friendly c. distracting d. funny

40. The teachers have a good with the students.

- a. involvement b. quality c. relationship d. instruction

Title

The Place of Information Technology in Second Language Teaching in Girl's High Schools and Private English Institutes in Shiraz

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of educational technology in Iranian schools and language institutes to see how frequently different means of educational technology are used at both places. Also, to see whether there are any significant differences across the three levels of proficiency at

different language schools in terms of using educational technology. The participants of the study were 700 EFL female students both in schools and in language institutes. Of this sample, 391 were 3rd grade students of eight public schools of the four main educational districts in Shiraz, Iran. The other 309 participants were from private language institutes. From each language institute three classes of elementary, intermediate and advanced levels were randomly chosen. The participants, age ranged from 16-40 for language institutes, and was 17 for high schools. To gather the data a questionnaire based on previous research was modified and used. The modified questionnaire had 24 items on a five-point Likert scale. The data were collected during March, 2008. Results revealed that use of educational technology at high schools is much lower than that of language institutes. And that technology use at different proficiency levels differed based on the type and frequency of means of technology. It is hoped that teachers, students and language planners can benefit from the findings of this study.

Key Terms: Information technology, High school, Private school, Second language learning

1. Background

The widespread nature of information communication technologies (ICTs) and the pervasive belief in the promise of technology have led to an obvious information technology environment in the 21st century, at least in developed countries and to an increasing extent in developing countries, especially in urban areas. These trends have dramatically reshaped educational setting in general. In addition, they, interwoven with other social, cultural, political and economic changes, have significantly affected the skills that learners use to construct knowledge (Dede, 2005).

In the field of language teaching and learning, the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research foci have typically been on enhancing input through technology, using technology to affect proficiency and achievement, providing feedback through technology, and integrating technologies to create multimedia learning facilities.

Despite the high demand for integrating ICT into teaching English these days, its adoption seems still to be going slowly. Of various reasons that hinder the effective use of technology in teaching and learning, one notable reason is insufficient empirical research evidence about our students' competencies in ICT, which makes it difficult for teachers to know what students can actually do with new technologies (Kaminski, Seel, & Cullen, 2003). Kavik and Caruso (2005) exhort investigators to identify student fluency in both technology and information, given that "technology skills or literacy are a necessary precursor to information literacy, and that the latter cannot be achieved without the former" (p.43).

Every language teaching method has its own technologies to support it. Language teachers who followed the grammar-translation method relied on one of the most ubiquitous technologies, the blackboard--a perfect vehicle for the one-way transmission of information which the method implied. The blackboard was later supplemented by the overhead projector, another excellent medium for the teacher-dominated classroom, as well as by early computer software programs (Long, 1992).

Over the years, educational technology has played an important role in the innovation of education, providing both teachers and students with more options and flexibility in their teaching and learning practices. With the Internet and computer technology available to most teachers, educational technology has become increasingly indispensable in education. In today's schools, multimedia software, content-based CD-ROMs, online resources and many other technologies provide students and teachers with many new research tools, limitless wealth of information, and shared professional practices. Moreover, availability of the Internet in schools enables teachers and students to have a variety of opportunities to expand the curriculum (Keane, 2002). Today's schools continue to be challenged by the increased visibility, roles and cost of educational technology. Considering current trends in education, a modern classroom would not be complete without computers, software, Internet connections, projectors and a variety of high-tech devices (Keane, 2002).

According to Hasselbring (2000), schools will be equipped with the best hardware and software in the near future, but it is unlikely that teachers and students will use them effectively, if teachers are not trained. The success of technology infusion in schools

depends on training both in-service and pre-service teacher programs. In the digital age, public schools will require teachers to have competent technology skills and be able to effectively implement educational technology in classrooms. Therefore, it is logical to require pre-service teachers to incorporate technology into the lessons they prepare to teach (Johns, 1991). Given the above points, it seemed necessary to conduct this study in Iranian EFL context to find out to what extent our EFL programs benefit from new technologies.

2. Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study was to find out to what extent educational technology is used by the English language teachers in high schools and private institutes in the city of Shiraz.

The study intended to find answers to the following research questions.

1. What type of information technology is currently used by teachers in teaching English language in high schools?
2. What type of information technology is currently used by teachers in teaching English language in private language institutes?
3. Are there any differences between public schools and private institutes in terms of using educational technology?
4. Are there any differences in using information and/or educational technology in different proficiency levels in private language institutes?

3. Previous research

Lam (2000) contends that some teachers lack perceived legitimacy of technology as an effective educational tool and consequently they reject the technological changes in the curriculum. He argues that teachers are not technophobes, but rather, he attributes this fault to the institutions and programs for a lack of dedication to teacher training. In the

same, Leu (2000) reflects on the rapidly changing nature of what it means to be a "literate" person in the 21st century. He asserts that many teachers literate in older technologies quickly become illiterate as newer technologies of information and communication replace previous technologies. He contends that we must begin to develop strategies to help each of us keep up with the continually changing definitions of literacy that will exist in our world.

Corea (2000) asserts that the concept of autonomy must be extended to apply not only to self-directed use of language and today's technology but also to the ability to develop, explore, evaluate, and adapt new technology as it evolves. He holds that this requires the development of meta-skills of critique and innovation beyond the skills of deploying any particular technology. He believes that students should be able to use not only today's search engines, but should also have the right analytic framework to select and make use of new search engines as they emerge.

Karchmer (2000) noted that providing opportunities for online publishing of students' work is another means to motivate student writing. He asserts that publishing online is a motivating factor when completing classroom assignments. Furthermore, he maintains that besides text-based writing, technology encourages students to integrate visual and aural multimedia in their school projects. Various software programs allow students to insert images, sounds, and video, thereby creating complex, multilayered compositions.

Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003) suggested that although access to technology is important to students attempting to learn a second language, of greater concern for these students are the ways technology is used. They assert that while commercially available language learning software packages make good use of multimedia to support the development of vocabulary and grammar skills necessary to become fluent, English speakers, other instructional uses of technology exist that are more student-centered. They confirm that technological tools may also enhance the higher level process required for productivity, expression/visualization, research, communications, simulated experiences, and problem-solving skills. The Internet has gained momentum as the infrastructure on which international knowledge is created and shared. Use of the Internet search engines can promote students' research and investigation skills and enable them to

locate online information on any possible topic. Students also can access online journals, magazines, newspapers, encyclopaedias, and informative Web sites.

Bataineh (2006) investigated 210 Jordanian English as a foreign language (EFL) students perceptions of their use of the Internet for both general purposes (e.g., e-mail chat, aimless browsing, games, and music) and EFL learning purposes (e.g., practicing various language skills, vocabulary, and structure through instructional software). The findings revealed that 47% of the sample reported using browsers to view documents. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents reported never or rarely using the Internet for any EFL learning purposes, except for about 58% and 52% who reported using it for developing speaking skills through chat and locating authentic texts, respectively. The findings further revealed a weak correlation between the students' use of the Internet for general and EFL learning purposes. Class level, but not gender, was found to significantly affect the students' use of the Internet.

Frigaard (2002) examined the performance of high school students' who participated in a computer lab on vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension in Spanish. Analysis of student surveys indicated that the computer lab was a beneficial tool, benefiting some students more than others. Some of students favored lab-based activities like the Spanish study Website and the grammar tutor. Other favorite classroom activities included flashcards and games. Most of the students believed that the computer lab improved their listening skills and made class more interesting and they enjoyed having regularly scheduled lab sessions. However, they preferred to learn vocabulary and grammar in the classroom and felt that having an instructor present in the computer lab increased their learning potential.

Kaminski, Seel and Cullen (2003) conducted a survey study with 1933 freshman students at Colorado State University. While the majority of the students indicated their familiarity with basic IT-based knowledge and skills such as using email, the Web, and Microsoft-type of software, a significant number of them still lacked advanced skills in using Web development-type software, and information gathering. Of the respondents, 82% said they had the ability to download and install software, 46% said yes to the ability to download and install plugging, and 41% responded yes to their ability to download and read PDF files. Pointing to the inconsistency in students' ICT knowledge

and skills. Results from this study suggested that it is crucial to create awareness of the digital divide in IT-based knowledge and experience that existed among freshman students. Increased awareness of the current state, in turn, would help educators find the best way to address the students' specific needs, integrate technology into the curriculum, and implement information technology-related initiatives.

Mie (2004) examined how ICT influences teaching and learning practices in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom at a middle school in Japan. In order to provide a rigorous description of the classroom experiences, the focus of the analysis was on the context and the norms for participation in classrooms with and without ICT, and on patterns of communication in both settings. An EFL class was observed and videotaped in both a regular classroom and a computer room approximately 5 times a week for three months. The videotaped interactions were described and analyzed using the language variation framework. The interactions were then described and analyzed following the IRE (an initiation act, a response act, and an evaluation act) framework. In addition, interview and questionnaire data were used to support the data analyses.

The data showed that a wide range of student-centered activities involving information gathering, collaborative inquiry-based study, online conference, and multimedia presentation were promoted by the use of ICT, and these activities, in turn, occasioned certain types of interactional sequences other than the IRE Sequential pattern. A notable finding was that a shift away from the IRE sequence occurred often as the teacher explored ways to use computers for such activities. It is recommended that other such detailed descriptions of classrooms may offer a thorough understanding of the process and consequences of educational technology implementation in schools. It is also suggested that collaborative research among researchers in different research sites may lead to a global knowledge of causation in terms of the influence of educational technology in education.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

The participants of this study comprised 700 EFL learners, all of whom were females who were native speakers of Persian. Out of this pool, 391 of them were 3rd grade students of eight public schools of the four main educational districts in Shiraz, Iran. From each school two classes were selected. The other 309 of the participants were from privately run language institutes. Again, from each of the main four educational districts two language institutes were selected and from each language institute three classes of elementary, intermediate and advanced levels were chosen. The age level of the subjects ranged from 16-40 and most of the participants belonging to language institutes were high school graduates and some of them had higher education. The participants were randomly selected with the help of the board of education representative who provided the researcher with the overall pool of schools and language institutes in Shiraz. The reason why 3rd grade high school students were selected was that they were at the end of their school education period and the assumption was that they had gone through the educational system at different stages and were aware of the use of information and educational technologies in their classes. They had therefore enough experience to report the technology use in the related context. The reason why the participants from language institutes were selected from three different proficiency levels is that we wanted to have a good representative sample because there is a possibility that some information and educational technologies are used at some proficiency levels and not at others.

4.2. Instruments

To gather information regarding the frequency of employing different technological teaching aids in classrooms, a questionnaire was used. To ensure the validity of the research findings attempts were made to produce a comprehensive questionnaire. Some valid questionnaires employed in EFL/ ESL contexts by different researchers (see, e.g., Turnbull & Lawrence, 2005) were consulted and because some of their items were quite unfamiliar to the participants of this study, they were discarded and a modified questionnaire was produced. The final modified questionnaire had 24 items on a five-

point Likert scale. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was given to some experts of the field so that any points of discrepancy would be discussed and modified (see Appendix). The questionnaire can, therefore, be said to benefit from content and face validity as the experts approved it. The experts were two Ph.D. holders at the English Department of Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran. Points of discrepancy were discussed and the final version received approval. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaire, it was given to 30 students at a language institute. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82 which indicates the reliability of the instrument. Finally, the questionnaire was translated into Farsi so that the students would understand it better.

4.3. Data collection and analysis procedures

The data were collected during March 2008. The researchers obtained consent from the authorities and the participants involved in the study. With prior permission and time arrangement so that the student's education would not be disrupted, one of the researchers participated in classes for data collection. After describing the general objectives of the study and familiarizing the students with the items of the questionnaire, and in a friendly atmosphere the questionnaires were filled out by the students and were collected on the site. The statistical package SPSS was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to find the related frequencies pertaining to use of technology at schools and language institutes. To find out the significant mean differences of technology use among the three levels of proficiency at different language schools one way ANOVA was used.

5. Results

In this section, the findings are presented and discussed according to the four research questions posed in the study. Table 1 presents the use of educational technology in public schools.

Table 1: Use of educational technology in public schools

Sound recording device	55.5%	44.5%
Types of equipments	Never & Sometimes	Often, Usually & Always
Virtual classes	93.9%	56.8%
Computer	73.0%	26.6%
Disk copies	69.9%	30.1%
Email	91.3%	8.7%
Electronic Games	91.8%	8.2%
Internet	81.6%	18.4%
On line chat	94.3%	5.7 %
Web pages	96.5%	3.5 %
Power points	97.0%	3. %
Word processing	83.1%	16.9 %
Personal computer	74.4%	25.6%
Digital camera	79.4%	12.6%
Language Lab	88.7%	11.3%
Lap top computer	94.9%	5.1%
Overhead projection	92.6%	7.4%
Printers	87.2%	12.8 %
Slide projector	94.1%	5.9%
Scanners	94.7%	5.3 %

Table1 shows that more than 90 percent of the students at the targeted high schools were of the opinion that e-mail, electronic games, on-line chat, web-pages, power points, laptop computer, overhead projection, slide projector, scanners and virtual classes never or only sometimes were used. Moreover, as it can be observed more than 80 percent of the high school participants of the study reported that the Internet, word processing, language lab and printers were never or sometimes employed at the related schools. Furthermore, over 70 percent of the high school students thought that computer, personal computer, digital camera and visualizer were sometimes or never used at schools. What is more, more than 60 percent of the high school students claimed that CD, video equipment and Xerox copies were sometimes or never employed in facilitating their education. Finally, over 50% of the students contended that Audio, and sound recording devices were sometimes or never used. In short, it could be said that except for audio and sound recording devices almost none of other educational technologies are used in used in public schools at a high frequency rate.

Table 2: Use of educational technology in private institutes

Type of technologies	Levels	Often, Usually & Always
Audio	Elementary	94.4%
	Intermediate	97.9%
	Advanced	97.7%
Computer	Elementary	61%
	Intermediate	89.6%
	Advanced	88.4%
CD Rom	Elementary	84.2%
	Intermediate	91.8%
	Advanced	87.7%
Sound recording	Elementary	89%

	Intermediate	88.7%
	Advanced	91.5%
Video equipment	Elementary	84.1%
	Intermediate	79.4%
	Advanced	91.5%
Xerox copies	Elementary	79.2%
	Intermediate	76.2%
	Advanced	76%

Table 2 reveals that some means of technology were almost often, usually or always used at private language schools. It is seen that in all the three levels of language proficiency audio, computer, CD Rom, sound recording devices, video equipment and Xerox copies have been most frequently employed at private language schools. The percentages indicate that use of different means of technology at different levels might have almost the same pattern but regarding some means of technology variations can be observed across the three proficiency levels. Regarding audio, CD Rom, on-line chat, web-pages, digital camera, language lab, sound recording devices, video equipment, virtual classes, visualize, and Xerox copies, the frequencies reported do not show remarkable differences among the three related levels. However, concerning electronic games, the Internet, word processing, laptop and overhead projection, the more advanced the students were the more frequently they used such means. As for computer, it is observed that the students in intermediate and advanced levels used computers more than their elementary counterparts. Power point and personal computer were more frequently employed by advanced learners rather than intermediate and elementary level students. Finally, it is seen that some devices like slide projector are more frequently used at elementary and intermediate levels. Comparing the frequencies reported in Tables 1 and 2 it is observed that for all means of technology the frequencies for never and sometime ranged from almost 50% to 100% for high school students while the private language

institute students reported that audio, computer, CD Rom, sound recording devices, video equipment, Xerox copies were most frequently used at all levels.

The one-way ANOVA run revealed the significant differences among the three proficiency levels in terms of the use of educational technology in private institutes.

The results show that although there are differences among the students at different levels regarding use of means of technology the differences are only significant for use of computer, CD, electronic games, the Internet, word processor, personal computer, laptop computer, overhead projection device, and scanner. Thus, it can be concluded that computer, CD, Electronic games, the Internet, word processor, personal computer, laptop, overhead projection device and scanners played vital roles to bring about significant differences among the learners who studied at three levels of proficiency at private language institutes. This might indicate the differences regarding mastery and proficiency over the English language at two different settings, namely, public schools and private schools.

Result of a post-hoc test brought to light the following findings:

The findings obtained through employing post hoc test indicate use of technologies among the three different grades (i.e. elementary 21, intermediate 22, and advanced 23) in private institutes. Regarding use of computer, it is noticeable that the differences across different levels are significant. The differences between elementary and intermediate, and elementary and advanced levels are significant. As for CD, the differences between elementary versus intermediate and elementary versus advanced levels are significant. Concerning electronic devices, the differences between elementary versus intermediate and elementary versus advanced levels are significant as well. Regarding the Internet the differences between levels for all cases are significant and the same is true for word processing. As for personal computer, except for elementary versus intermediate and intermediate versus elementary, all other cases are significant. For the laptop computer the only significant case is between elementary versus advanced levels. As for overhead projection device, all cases are significant except for the difference between intermediate versus advanced levels. Finally, concerning scanners, the only observable significant difference is between elementary versus intermediate levels.

6. Discussion

Generally speaking, Table 1 revealed that unfortunately at public schools technology is rarely or almost never used and for all means of technology the percentages for never and sometimes prevailed. It can be concluded that use of technology has not been appreciated at public schools. Thus, it can have dire consequences on the level of achievement by the students who enjoy different tastes and taking into account the individual differences and the literacy needed into account it is a disservice. Table 2 revealed some interesting results. It can be discussed that in general, use of technology at private language schools is more tangible and conspicuous. It might account for the fact that language institutes which are privately owned enjoy better means of technology at their disposal and hence students might take a better advantage of technology. Consequently, there should be no wonder if students at language institutes have a better command and fluency. More use of audio, computer, CD Rom, sound recording devices and video, improve students' illiteracies and arguably listening comprehension, speaking and other skills might be affected. Xerox copies might as well facilitate learning and supplementary materials can help teachers to teach, educate and train their students much more efficiency. Undoubtedly, at different levels of proficiency, needs might vary as, what, when, how and how often means of technology can be used. The ANOVA results showed that some means of technology are more used at lower, intermediate or advanced levels while some might be needed more at advanced levels. Nonetheless, it can be argued that technology is a facilitator in enhancing students' knowledge and performance and that some means of technology can be significantly used at all levels of proficiency to accommodate the diverse needs of different students who differ significantly in one way or another. Moreover, it was found that although some forms of technology might still be considered as luxury some others like CD, electronic devices, overhead projector, etc should be considered as bare-bone essentials in learning a foreign language. To compare and contrast the findings of this study with those of others studies in Iran and other countries, it can be said that the focus of studies in other countries was mostly the relation between technology use pertaining to language learning skills and there was no comparison between public schools and private institutes. Technology was something almost unheard

in the past in Iran that is why little research was done in this context, but in many developed countries because of the prevalence of technology lots of research has been conducted mainly on the influence of technology means on language learning and its skill such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. This research just elaborated on the use and frequency of technology use in Education in Iran and tried to compare and contrast use of technology in two contexts of public and private institutes to indicate possible gaps of learning. This study highlights the fact that more technology should be used at public schools in Iran to bridge the digital divide.

7. Conclusion

1. What type of information technology is used by teachers in teaching English language in high schools?

To analyze this question the descriptive statistics and crosstabs were used.

The majority of the students asserted that e-mail, making web, PowerPoint, word processing, personal computer, digital camera, laptop, overhead, printers, slide projector, scanners, and recorder were never used. Virtual class was something unheard of (93.1%) and that it was almost never used. However, only 2.6% of the students claimed that it was always used. 67.3% of the students thought that visualize was never used while 6.9% of them believed that it was always used. 37.9% of the students believed that Xerox copies were never used, whereas, 13.8% of them believed that Xerox copies were always used.

2. What type of information technology is used by teachers in teaching English language in private institutes?

To analyze this question the descriptive statistics, cross tab, was used.

The teachers in private institutes used information technologies in the following way: The percentages of the students who claimed that audio was never used are 20.4%, 0% and 0% for the elementary, intermediate, and advanced English language institutes, respectively, while the percentages of the students who claimed that audio was always

used were 68.3%, 62.9%, and 56.9% for the elementary, intermediated and advanced classes, respectively. The percentages of the students who believed computer was never used at their institutes were 26.87%, 6.2%, and 3.1%, respectively; whereas, the percentages of the students who thought computer was used were 0%, 14.4% and 21.5% for the elementary to advanced students. Regarding use of CD, 4.9% of elementary students and 3.1% and 0% of intermediate and advanced students believed that CD was never used at their institutes. However, the percentages of the students who thought CD was always used were 25.6%, 43.3% and 45.4%, respectively. As for e-mail, the majority of students in the 3 groups (elementary 81.7%, intermediate 87.6% and advanced 86.9%) claimed that e-mail was never used. Almost all students reported that such devices were not used at language schools. 13.4%, 9.3% and 2.3% of the elementary to advanced students claimed that the Internet was never used; whereas, 24%, 1% and 0% of the elementary to advanced students thought the Internet was always used. Regarding going online, the majority of the students in the 3 groups (elementary 92.7%, intermediate 93.8% and advanced 98.5%) reported almost no use of such a thing. the majority of the students in all 3 groups believed that making web was never used. This pattern was more or less the same for power point use. As for word processing, 9.8% of elementary students and 2.1% and 5.4% of the intermediate and advanced students believed that word processing was never used while 3.7% of the elementary and 4.1% and 13.1% of the intermediate and advanced students claimed that word processing was always used. 29.3%, 10.3%, and 10.0% of the students thought personal computer was never used at institutes. However, 6.1% of elementary and 3.1% and 10.8% of the intermediate and advanced students reported that personal computer was always used. As for the digital camera, the majority of the students believed that such a thing was never used and almost no one claimed that digital camera was always used. As for language lab and laptop, the majority of the students in the 3 groups reported that such devices were never used. Regarding use of overhead projector, 35.4% of elementary students and 18.6% and 15.4% of the students claimed that such a thing was never used. No one reported that such a thing was always used. Concerning use of printers, 53.7% of the elementary and 52.6% and 62.3% of the intermediate and advanced students claimed that printers were never used and almost no one claimed that printers were always used. This pattern is more or less the same for slide projectors. 31.7% of elementary students and 6.2% and

13.8% of intermediate and advanced students reported that scanners were never used; while, 7.3% of elementary and 11.3% and 5.4% of the intermediate and advanced students claimed that scanners were always used. As for sound recorder and video sets, most of the students believed that they were always used. Almost 100% of the students had no access to virtual classes. Concerning visualizer the majority of the students reported that such a device was never used and almost no one reported that such a thing was always used 4.9% of elementary, 5.2% of intermediate and 3.6% of advanced students thought that Xerox copies were never used.

3. Are there any differences between public schools and private institutes in terms of using educational technology?

In private institutes more means of educational technologies were used, except for computer, Email, Electronic, online, Making web, Digital camera, language lab, laptop computer, slide projector, virtual class and visualizer but in public schools the percentages of use of technologies were very low, except for audio, sound recorder, video, and Xerox.

4. Are there any differences in using educational technology in different proficiency levels in private institutes?

ANOVA analyses and post hoc test indicated a significant difference among the three proficiency levels in private institutes. Regarding use of computer, it is noticeable that the differences across different levels are significant. The differences between elementary and intermediate, and elementary and advanced levels were significant.

As for CD, the differences between elementary and intermediate, and elementary and advanced levels were significant. Concerning electronic devices, the differences between elementary and intermediate, and elementary and advanced levels were significant as well. Regarding the Internet the differences among the levels were significant and the same was true for word processing. As for overhead projection device, all cases are significant except for the difference between intermediate & advanced levels. Finally, concerning scanners, the only observable significant difference was between elementary and intermediate levels.

Pedagogical implications

In this part, pedagogical implications of the study with respect to teachers, students, policy makers and planners are discussed. Furthermore, the instrument implementation is discussed.

Pedagogical implications related to teachers

It is a fact that when something is alien to teachers they shy away from that. Teachers should have workshops and training sessions so that they learn how to use technological devices more and more in education inside and outside the classroom to facilitate learning. Although at times resources are very meager, some teachers do not take a good advantage of the present and accessible means of technology. There is no doubt that teachers play important roles to integrate technology into their classes. Moreover, offering constant training to teachers is very crucial in that they should adapt themselves to the changing world, emerging technologies and new learning and teaching contexts. Furthermore, the increasing importance of developing multiple literacies demands teachers to rethink their teaching practice and try new approaches to meet the challenges posed by technological changes in today's world.

Pedagogical implications related to students

Students should be trained as how to use and enjoy different means of technology. The assignments given to the students should make them use more technology so that literacy gaps can be bridged.

Pedagogical implications related to policy makers

Policy makers and authorities in their language planning should include more means of technology and more budget should be allocated to school to provide the teachers and

students with the desperately needed means of technology. If technology is not used in classes, sometimes, it is not the teacher's fault, but because of the top-down approach from administrators and school or government authorities. So authorities should provide training courses, seminars, workshops and discussion groups so that teachers can develop their teaching pedagogy.

Although efforts were made to minimize the flaws of this study, some limitations invariably exist. Regarding the instrument of the study, because after a comprehensive search some questionnaires were collated and modified to suit our culture, it might be said that some items are missing to provide the whole picture of technology use in education. The population was limited to only one city, Shiraz. Thus, it might not represent a true picture of use of technology in all Iranian schools and language institutes. Hence, the results are not that generalizable. If some data could be gathered across the country, a larger population could reveal more generalizable results. Sex, age and literacy levels of both teachers and students were not taken into account and if all public schools and language schools had the same means it could be observed where technology is used more effectively.

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APPENDIX : The Questionnaire

	Means	Never	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
1	Audio equipment(radio)					
2	Computer					
3	CD Rom					
4	Email					
5	Electronic Games					
6	Internet					
7	Live on line chats					
8	Making web pages					
9	Power points					
10	Word processing					
11	Personal computer					
12	Digital camera					
13	Language Lab					
14	Laptop Computer					
15	Overhead Projection device					
16	Printers					
17	Slide Projector					
18	Scanners					
19	Sound recording device					

20	Video equipment					
21	Virtual class					
22	Visualizer					
23	Xerox copies					

Title

An Investigation into the Validity of Conversational C-Test as a Measure of Oral Abilities

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Abstract

Alderson (2002) argues that C-Test is not an appropriate measure of language proficiency or even placement. His rationale is that there are no aural and spoken elements involved in C-Test taking, so they do not tap oral-aural skills. Nevertheless, there is evidence from previous research which asserts that text type can affect what a C-Test measures (Baghaei, 2008; Daller & Grotjahn, 1999; Sigott, 2004). The major goal of this project is to take advantage of this finding and test whether C-Tests constructed out of spoken discourse (dialogues, interviews, etc.) will result in the prediction of listening skill of the test-takers. In this study, two C-Test passages were constructed out of spoken language tests, and two C-Test passages out of written language texts. The four passages were then put in a C-Test battery and were administered along with multiple choice tests of reading comprehension and listening comprehension to a sample of undergraduate English students. Regression analysis indicates that conversational C-Test passages are better measures of reading, listening and composite scores of reading and listening than written C-Test passages.

Key words: conversational C-Tests, written C-Tests, cloze test, correlation, regression

1. Introduction

C-Test is a variation of cloze test where the second half of every second word is deleted. In a C-Test battery there are usually 4-6 short passages each of which contains 20-25 broken words. The first and last sentences of the passages remain intact. Test-takers are supposed to reconstruct the broken words.

C-Test is a practical and economical test of foreign language proficiency which can be developed easily by any language teacher. This test was proposed in the beginning of the 80s as an improvement over cloze test by Raatz and Klein Barely. Studies by Alderson (1983, 1978) and Klein Barely (1981) revealed the problems associated with

cloze test and preliminary studies on C-Test indicated the superiority of C-Test over cloze. High correlations between C-Tests and tests of other language skills and components, especially with composite scores of general language proficiency established its concurrent validity. Further research provided other types of evidence for the construct validity of C-Test. The sensitivity of C-Test to language related treatment and its capability in distinguishing among learners of different ability levels are among this evidence.

Dörnyei and Katona (1992) report a correlation of 0.33 between C-Test and listening comprehension test. Chapel and Abraham (1990) report a correlation of 0.44 between C-Test and listening and Grotjahn (1992) finds a correlation of 0.24 between C-Test and speaking. Nevertheless, Coleman (1994) reports a correlation of 0.76 for listening comprehension tests and 0.47 for speaking. The results of correlational studies of C-Tests and tests of speaking and listening are controversial but low correlations are more frequently reported by most researchers.

The important point about the studies cited above is that the texts used in all these studies to develop C-Tests are all taken from written language texts. The only indication of text type is in Daller and Grotjahn (1999) who try to measure two separate dimensions of “academic language proficiency” (ALP) and “everyday language proficiency” (ELP) by selecting texts from textbooks and magazines. For measuring ALP, they used texts from university textbooks and to measure ELP they used texts from newspapers about everyday topics. Their study gives satisfactory results and they manage to measure the two dimensions of ALP and ELP proficiency, i.e., academic and everyday language by means of C-Test passages based on texts from these two domains.

Sigott (2004) introduces the notion of the ‘fluid construct phenomenon’ (FCP) in C-Tests. What he basically means by FCP is that the construct of the C-Test is not stable and changes as a result of text difficulty and test-takers ability. His main focus is on the potential of C-Tests for involving test-takers in text-level and low-level skills. He argues that for high-ability students the C-Test is a test of lower level skills since he found out that high-ability students manage to solve C-Test items even when the items are given in short contexts. The C-Test is a test of higher order skills for low-ability test-takers because they need larger contexts to solve the item.

Baghaei (2008) analysed a C-Test battery comprising of four passages with different rhetorical organizations. These rhetorical organizations were description, causation, comparison, and problem/solution. The results of the study showed that different rhetorical organizations require different skills to get solved. He concluded that what C-Test measures, depends to a great extent on the rhetorical structure of the text.

Numerous IRT and classical analyses of C-Tests also have indicated that there are always some texts in C-Test batteries which should be discarded because of lack of fit or low item-total correlations. This is evidence of the effect of the nature of text on the kind of abilities which are triggered by C-Tests. This has always been a nuisance for C-Test users. However, a closer look at this phenomenon can lead to a more informed and purposeful C-Test construction and application.

The issue of the effects of the text on the construct validity of the tests associated with them and the processing strategies of the learners have been discussed by other researchers too. In a study Shohamy and Inbar (1991) constructed three spoken discourse on identical information in three different genres which had varying levels of orality: 1) a conversation 2) a lecture and 3) a news broadcast. Then, identical listening comprehension questions were constructed for the three genres. Although, there was the same information in all three texts and the listening comprehension questions for all the texts were identical, students performed differently on the texts.

Carrell (1985, 1985) discovered that rhetorical organization of texts affect reading comprehension of ESL students. Like Shohamy and Inbar (1991) she also noticed that students perform differently on different texts which have different structures.

Altogether, the findings of the previous research in text linguistics and schema theory all show that the features of texts in reading comprehension, listening comprehension and C-Test do play a role in what the test measures and affects its construct validity. If this is indeed the case, then constructing C-Tests on the basis of spoken texts should lead to the measurement of listening ability.

2. Purpose of the study

The effects of text structure and text genre on the processing strategies employed by test-takers and their effects on the difficulty of reading, listening and C-Tests have been investigated by other researchers (Carrel, 1984/1985; Shohamy & Inbar, 1991; Sigott, 2004, Baghaei, 2008). These studies unanimously conclude that the structure and genre of texts affect the difficulty of the reading tests, listening tests and C-Tests which are constructed on their basis. The present study aims at investigating whether by using spoken language texts (conversations and interviews) for constructing C-Tests, one can tap better into the listening skill of the test takers. In order to check this possibility the following research questions have been posed.

1. Is there any significant correlation between conversational C-Tests and listening comprehension?
2. Is the correlation between conversational C-Tests and listening comprehension higher than the correlation between written C-Tests and listening comprehension?
3. Is the correlation between written C-Test and reading comprehension higher than the correlation between conversational C-Test and reading ability?
4. How well do the two measures of conversational C-Test and written C-Test predict reading scores?
5. How well do the two measures of conversational C-Test and written C-Test predict listening scores?
6. How well do the two measures of conversational C-Test and written C-Test predict composite scores of reading and listening?
7. Which is the best predictor of (a) reading, (b) listening and (c) composite scores of reading and listening: conversational C-Tests or written C-Test?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and setting

A sample of 99 Iranian students of English, comprising 23 males and 76 females aged between 21 and 33 ($M= 21.2$; $SD= 6.3$) participated in this study. All of the participants were undergraduate English major university students at Islamic Azad University Mashad Branch in Iran; almost all of them were in the third year of their studies.

3.2 Instrumentation

Three tests were utilized for this study: (1) a C-Test battery, (2) a multiple-choice listening comprehension test taken from Longman TOEFL practice tests and (3) a multiple-choice reading comprehension test taken from Longman TOEFL practice test (Philips, 1996).

The C-Test battery contained four passages; two passages were spoken language texts taken from dialogues in ESL textbooks; one was a face-to-face conversation in Passages 1 (Richards, 1998) and the other was a telephone conversation in New First Certificate English, Book 1 by Fowler and Pidcock (1984). The two written language passages were taken from literary books. One was a short extract from George Orwell's Animal Farm and the other a paragraph from a book entitled Shakespeare's Sonnets by G. M. Ridden, (1982). Each passage had 25 blanks totaling 100 in the entire C-Test. The listening and reading comprehension tests each contained 30 multiple-choice items.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

SPSS version 15 was used for data analysis. Table1 shows the descriptive statistics for the six subtests.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the subtests

	Listening	Reading	Conv.C1	WrittenC1	Conv.C2	WrittenC2
Mean	17.37	19.95	18.06	10.58	13.83	10.62
S.D.	4.22	3.55	3.64	4.016	4.92	5.52
Min.	8	8	9	1	0	0
Max.	28	27	25	20	25	23

Conv.C1: Conversational C-Test passage 1

WrittenC1: Written C-Test passage 1

Conv.C2: Conversational C-Test passage 2

WrittenC2: Written C-Test passage 2

As the means of the test-takers in Table 1 show, students have found the reading test easier than the listening test. Among the four C-Test passages, conversational C-Tests are easier than the written C-Tests. They have also performed better on reading than on listening. The scores of reading and listening tests are out of a maximum of 30 and the C-Tests out of 25. The Cronbach Alpha reliability of the C-Test battery, considering each passage as a super-item is 0.85, that of listening 0.65 and that of reading 0.60. The reason for the low reliability of reading and listening sections is the low variation in the data, which is evident from the small standard deviations; the participants were all third-year students of English who comprised quite a homogeneous sample.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the entire C-Test, conversational subset (sum of the two conversational texts), written subset (sum of the two written language texts) and the composite score of reading and listening.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for composite scores

	Conv.Total	WrittenTotal	Reading +Listening	C-TestTotal
Mean	31.88	21.19	37.32	53.08
S.D.	7.67	8.89	6.51	15.33
Min.	13.00	1.00	21.00	19.00
Max.	48.00	42.00	52.00	86.00

Conv.Total: sum of the scores on the two conversational C-Test passages

Written Total: sum of the scores on the two written language C-Test passages

Reading +Listening: sum of the scores on the reading and listening tests

C-TestTotal: sum of the scores on the four C-Test passages

Altogether, the test-takers found the conversational C-Test passages much easier than the written passages, as the means of the sample are different on these two subsets by around 10 marks.

4.2 Correlational analysis

The relationship between different subsets of the test was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Correlations were statistically significant, varying from small to large. Table 3 shows the correlation matrix for the subsets of the test.

Table 3: Pearson product-moment correlations between the subsets

	Conv.Total	WrittenTotal	Listening	Reading
Conv.Total	1	.67*	.51*	.47*
WrittenTotal		1	.50*	.40*
Listening			1	.38*
Reading				1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 3 indicates that the coefficient of correlation between conversational C-Test and listening (0.51) is higher than the coefficient of correlation between conversational C-Test and the reading test (0.47), which is clear evidence that conversational C-Tests tap better into listening skill than reading skill. However, a closer look at the table shows that written C-Test correlates at 0.50 with the listening test, while conversational C-Test correlates at 0.51; almost no difference, which rejects the hypothesis that conversational C-Tests can be better measures of listening compared to written C-Tests. In other words, C-Tests based on written language texts and spoken language texts tap into listening ability of the test-takers equally well.

An interesting point in Table 3 is that the correlation between conversational C-Test and reading (0.47) is higher than the correlation between written C-Test and reading (0.40).

In other words, conversational C-Tests are better measures of reading comprehension than written C-Tests, contrary to what had been hypothesized at the outset. The correlation between the written C-Test and listening (0.50) is higher than its correlation with reading (0.40), which means written C-Test is a better measure of listening and not reading, which was not expected. But written C-Tests are as good as conversational C-Tests in measuring the listening ability of the learners.

Table 4 shows that the correlations between the composite scores of listening and reading (Reading +Listening), which can be considered as a general proficiency measure (although it lacks measures of writing and speaking), is highest with the total C-Test scores (0.62), that is, with the sum of the four C-Test passages and has the lowest correlation with the written C-Test (0.55). This shows the superiority of conversational C-Tests over written C-Tests in measuring general language proficiency. However a combination of conversational and written C-Tests (C-TestTotal) is a more valid measure of reading, listening and overall language proficiency as the correlations show.

Table 4: Pearson product-moment correlations between composite scores

	Conv.Total	WrittenTotal	C-TestTotal	Listening	Reading	Reading +Listening
Conv.Total	1	.67*	.90*	.51*	.47*	.58*
WrittenTotal		1	.92*	.50*	.40*	.55*
C-TestTotal			1	.55*	.47*	.62*
Listening				1	.38*	.86*
Reading					1	.80*
Reading +Listening						1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Comparing the correlations in Table 4, one realizes that when the scores of listening and reading are combined and correlated with C-Tests (whether conversational, written or total), the magnitudes of correlations are substantially higher than the correlations between C-Tests and separate reading and listening scores. This is adequate evidence that shows C-Test is a more valid measure of general language proficiency

rather than a test of a specific skill. Altogether, the results clearly show that conversational C-Tests are better measures of both reading and composite scores of reading and listening. However, a combination of conversational and written C-Tests is a more valid measure of reading, listening and composite scores of reading and listening, which can roughly be considered as a general language proficiency measure.

4.3 Multiple regression

Multiple regression is a statistical technique to explore how well a set of subtests can predict performance on another test. It can also provide information about the relative contribution of each of the subtests. Here the researchers will explore how well the conversational C-Test passages and written C-Test passage are able to predict scores on the listening, reading and composite scores of reading and listening.

Preliminary analyses were first conducted to ensure that the assumptions of multiple regression have not been violated. Table 5 shows the contribution of the two independent variables of conversational C-Test and written C-Test to predict reading scores. Looking down the *B* column, one can conclude that conversational C-Test (*B*=.15) makes the largest unique contribution to explain reading, while written C-Test (*B*=0.03) makes a very small contribution.

Table 5: Regression table for predicting reading scores by means of conversational and written C-Tests

Variable	B	S.E.	t
ConversationalTotal	.15	.06	2.56*
WrittenTotal	.03	.05	.70

* t is significant at the 0.05 level

Regression analysis for predicting listening by means of conversational and written C-Tests indicates that conversational C-Test makes a slightly larger contribution towards the prediction of listening. Both contributions are statistically significant though ($p<0.05$) (Table 6).

Table 6: Regression table for predicting listening by means of conversational and written C-Tests

Variable	B	S.E.	t
ConversationalTotal	.14	.06	2.13*
WrittenTotal	.12	.06	2.10*

* t is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 7 shows the contribution of the independent variables of conversational and written C-Tests to the prediction of composite scores of reading and listening. Again, by looking down the *B* column, it can be concluded that conversational C-Test makes the strongest unique contribution for explaining the dependant variable. The contribution of written C-Test is not statistically significant, while that of conversational C-Test is ($p<0.05$).

Table 7: Regression table for predicting composite scores of reading and listening by means of conversational and written C-Tests

Variable	B	S.E.	t
ConversationalTotal	.30	.10	2.94*
WrittenTotal	.16	.08	1.82

* t is significant at the 0.05 level

5. Discussion

The results of the study show that C-Tests based on spoken discourse (conversational C-Tests) are better measures of reading, listening and composite scores of reading and listening than C-Tests based on written discourse.

The findings above all show the superiority of spoken language texts for constructing C-Tests. For many years, linguists considered spoken language as inferior and not worth studying, because of ungrammaticality and lack of structure and organization. Written language, on the other hand, was viewed as the outstanding source of linguistic input for investigations. This view, however, attracted strong criticism in the 20th century. Linguists began to argue that speech, as the primary medium of communication, is thousands of years older than writing. It is acquired naturally by children, unlike writing that requires conscious learning and artificial teaching during adulthood. Bloomfield (1933) stated that writing is not language, it is just a method of recording language by some marks (cited from Crystal 1987). Later linguists came to a compromise on the issue of the superiority of speech and writing. They now view them as different systems of communication with different purposes and have focused on their similarities and differences.

The results of the present study clearly indicate the superiority of spoken language for constructing C-Tests. Conversational C-Tests tap better into the listening and reading skill of test takers. It seems that spoken language as the primary means of communication has more originality and is a better device for the purposes of *reduced redundancy testing (RRT)*¹.

Spoken language is richer in redundancy and this is one of the major differences between written and spoken language. This might be one of the reasons why spoken

¹ Reduced redundancy testing basically argues that natural language has a lot of redundancy, i.e., elements which are not needed but get repeated. If redundancy is reduced then those who know the language should not have any difficulty understanding the message. The operationalization of reduced redundancy is in fact distorting the message in one way or another. The assumption is that knowing a language involves being able to understand distorted messages. The content of reduced redundancy tests is language. The texts in RRT are just a sample of language and should be selected randomly. Stevens (1981) states that RRT's are tests "without a well defined content". A random sample of examinee's performance is collected by randomly deleting some of the text elements and the texts are viewed as random samples of language.

language texts turned out to be more efficient than written language texts in predicting reading and composite scores of reading and listening of the test-takers. Apparently, spoken language as the primary means of communication and the original and natural language has a more representative content of language in general compared to written language and is, therefore, a better content for reduced redundancy testing.

This is the first study that is conducted with conversational C-Tests and compares their behavior and magnitudes of correlations with other language skill tests. Further research is required to corroborate the findings of this study. Besides, the present study only considered reading and listening ability of the test-takers and investigated the correlations among conversational C-Tests, written C-Tests and these two skills. Future research should aim at investigating the relationship between these two types of C-Tests and speaking and writing skills of the test-takers.

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Title

There is never any one right way to teach!

A case of "Multiple Intelligences"

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Abstract

Gardner's Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory claims that every individual is in possession of one or some of eight types of intelligences and depending on the type of those intelligences, the outcome of their performance might be different. This paper intends to validate Gardner's MI hypothesis. 672 typical cases of English and non- English major students and their 26 English teachers participated in the study. Class observation , pre-post observation interviews and Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences Inventories for EFL Students & Teachers" were used as the means for data collection. Using the MANOVA statistical analysis , the study indicates that there is a

relationship between discipline and the types of intelligences, yet the activities observed in classrooms had no relationship with neither teachers' nor students' intelligence types , which underscores the cultural context of multiple intelligences .

Key Terms: Gardner, Multiple intelligences, Teaching

1. Introduction

Most universities in Iran require students to enrol in at least one English course as part of their degree programs. However, many students typically experience lower levels of performance in these kinds of courses than in other classes, prompting the present researcher to investigate factors that appear to predict performance in such contexts.

Ernst Von Glaserfeld (1985), the father of constructivism, argues that all knowledge is instrumental and is meaningless in isolation and that individual differences [teachers', learners', even syllabus designers' and materials developers'] and the factors contributing to these differences override anything else in teaching practice. That is, learners need to know the reason why they are required to act in particular ways, and teachers alike must be concerned with making sense of, or meaning from, the situation in which they find themselves. This, naturally, does not suggest that we can construct anything we like, but it does claim that within the constraints that limit our construction there is room for an infinity of alternatives.

But how can these alternatives be recognized if there is no information whatsoever of what the individuals already bring to their classes prior to the very act of teaching? Unfortunately, however, despite all the lip service given to constructivism and insisting on its application in teaching practices, the English classrooms in Iran at least, do not concern with the human side of the individuals and what they prefer to have in their learning experiences. Whereas research has indicated that students exhibit differences in the way they process and organize information, in the way they behave while learning, in their predispositions towards particular learning modes and in the conscious actions they make to deal with the demands of specific learning situations

(Sadler – Smith and Smith , 2004), a report released by IRNA (Islamic Republic of Iran News agency) on May 18, 2007 , reveals that Iranian language learners and teachers alike seem to have been the victims of unfair and malfunctioning educational systems which for multiplicity of reasons ignore the individuality of people and their preferences .This is happening today and in the 21st century when it is unanimously accepted that because students learn differently, they process and represent knowledge in different ways, and they prefer to use different type of resources (Reigeluth, 1996) . Consequently, it is due to these individual differences that experts repeatedly warn practitioners that "one size does not fit all" .

There are many factors which make learners different from each other, one of which is intelligence. But what role does it play in the very complex process of learning? This along with the question raised by Brown (2000), i.e., whether or not "a smart person will be capable of learning a second language more successfully because of greater intelligence?" (p.100) inspires the present researcher to tackle this particular aspect of human characteristic within the context of learning English as a foreign language. However the concept "intelligence" itself has undergone many revisions and modifications which make it appear more complicated (Gardner, 1983; Sternberg, 1985, Goleman, 1995; Oller, 1983). It is argued that our traditional notion of IQ reveals only a portion of the total capacity of the human mind and rules out a great number of the human being's mental abilities. One such modification which has been widely quoted and used these days is Gardner's Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, which claims that every individual is in possession of one or some of his many types of intelligences and depending on the type of those intelligences, the outcome of their performance might be different.

In this wider context, Marzano, et al. (1988) go further and claim that if the activities relate to students' intelligence, their learning will be faster, easier, more effective and permanent.

Accordingly, due to the necessity and scarcity of research in this area in Iranian EFL context, this study seeks to examine such claim in this particular context. That is, it first probes the type of intelligence possessed by English teachers and English major and the other major students, then via observations and pre-post observation interviews

scrutinizes how these individuals-shaping characteristics are reflected in their classroom experiences. More specifically, it tries to seek the answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the students' type of intelligence and their relevant disciplines?
2. Is there a difference in the type of intelligence possessed by Iranian English major students and Iranian English teachers?
3. Do the types of activities practiced in EFL classrooms touch the prevailing intelligence types of both teachers and learners?

2. Theoretical framework

So far, there have been two main theories for interpreting individual differences and designing educational models around these differences: learning style theory (LST) (Riding and Rayner, 1998, Kolb, 1984) and Multiple Intelligences (MI) (Gardner 2000). Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences has its root in cognitive science. There, intelligences refer to things one can do, such as to execute skills or strategies. According to Gardner, the implication of the theory is that learning/teaching should focus on the particular intelligences of each person's. For example, if an individual has strong spatial or musical intelligences, they should be encouraged to develop these abilities. Gardner points out that the different intelligences represent not only different content domains but also learning modalities. Gardner also emphasizes the cultural context of multiple intelligences. Each culture tends to emphasize particular intelligences.

Learning style theory, however, has its roots in the psychoanalytic community. It deals with the way people perceive, the way they make decisions, and how active and reflective they are while interacting with educational material. There, styles refer to preferences in the use of abilities. Unlike intelligences, which are unipolar and value directional, styles are bipolar and value differentiated. That is, high amounts of intelligence are always preferable to low amounts, whereas each pole of a style dimension indicates different characteristics. Moreover, intelligence is usually limited to a particular domain of content or function, such as verbal or musical ability, whereas style cuts across domains of ability. Consequently, since LST believes in the absoluteness

of the values and bipolarity of individual differences, it requires a more in depth introspective analysis, which was not possible be dealt with under the present educational circumstance of this research context because the Iranian educational system does not and will not allow for the luxury of the maximum treatment of individual preferences ; therefore, for the sake of realism and practicality, Gardner's MI theory , which is more relative and value directional has been chosen to help the researcher to investigate participants in action, what they do and what skills and strategies they execute against what kinds of learning activities they are programmed to be fed with.

2.1. Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory

Howard Gardner (1993), a critic of the idea that intelligence is unitary and static, argues that humans possess a number of distinct intelligences that manifest themselves in different skills and abilities. All human beings apply these intelligences to solve problems, invent processes, and create things. Intelligence, according to Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, is being able to apply one or more of the intelligences in ways that are valued by a community or culture. He further argues that everybody possesses the different types of intelligences to different degrees and that they operate together in an orchestrated way. The theory suggests that even though different intelligences do tend to be stronger in some people, everybody has the capacity to activate all the intelligences and in different situations distinct intelligences or a combination of intelligences may be used. Multiple intelligences, he believes, provide a much more comprehensive picture of intelligence (See table 1).

Table 1 Howard Gardner's model of Multiple intelligences

<u>Intelligence type</u>	<u>Capability and perception</u>
Linguistic	words and language
Logical-Mathematical	logic and numbers

Musical	music, sound, rhythm
Bodily-Kinesthetic	body movement control
Spatial-Visual	images and space
Interpersonal	other people's feelings
Intrapersonal	self-awareness
Naturalist	natural environment
Spiritual/Existential	religion and 'ultimate issues'
Moral	ethics, humanity, value of life

2.2. Variability or systematicity of intelligence

While Perkins, like Gardner, supports the idea that intelligence can change and increase through instruction (Andrade & Perkins, 1998; Perkins, 1995), Sternberg (1998), in contrast, is in favor of the permanence of the intelligence types and argues success in life depends on understanding our own intelligence profile, playing to our strengths and developing strategies for coping with our weaknesses. However, as Gardner emphasizes each culture tends to emphasize particular intelligences, so what interests the present researcher is to find out if Iranian teachers and learners display a different configuration of intelligences? If this holds true, then can the reflection of these intelligence types be easily traced in the realities and what the students and teachers actually practice in the Iranian EFL classrooms? That is, as a teacher, one should naturally choose classroom activities that complement his/her own multiple intelligence profile (Researcher's own conclusion based on MI theory and constructivism). Besides, while, some studies support the claim that language students and language teachers benefit from instructional

approaches that help them reflect on their own intelligence type (Marzano, et al., 1988), it is not clear how Iranian EFL teachers and students make choices about the activities in their classrooms and benefit from such selections.

To this end, Gardner's MI inventories for teachers and learners, as well as the classroom observation technique and pre- post observation interviews are employed to test the hypotheses adopted by the present study.

3. Method

This section, by introducing the participants, the instruments and the statistical techniques employed in this research, displays the procedures the study underwent to meet the earlier stated goals.

3.1. Participants

Twenty-six ESP teachers were contacted at the Guilan University, Payame Noor University & Islamic Azad University in Guilan province in the Northern part of Iran. All participants were volunteers and had current or very recent experiences in teaching ESP at universities. The 672 typical cases of English and non- English major students were all from freshman levels studying in different disciplines (Literature, Translation, Engineering, Medicine, Mathematics, Biology and Physics). This particular level was chosen because it is typically at this time that ESP is usually offered to the students of all disciplines at the universities in Iran. The subject context was deliberately chosen to be diverse because it was hypothesized that teacher practices should alter with the perceived variation in subject area or in the ability of the students at a course level. The resulting sample approximately mirrors the target population with respect to the selected characteristics of English level, language and ethnic background.

3.2. Instruments

The two most widely used standardized tests of intelligence are the Wechsler scales and the Stanford- Binet. Both instruments are psychometrically sound, but Gardner believes that these tests measure only linguistic and logical/ mathematical intelligences. Gardner (1993) maintains that assessment should elicit information about an individual's abilities in the context of actual performance rather than by proxy using formal instruments in de-contextualized setting. In other words he is in favour of assessment for the primary purpose of helping students rather than classifying or ranking them. The "Multiple Intelligences Inventory" offers reasonably simple and accessible method to understand and explain people's intelligence profile. However, we should bear in mind that the inventory is not a test - it is a snapshot in time of an individual's perceived MI preferences. Occasionally well-intentioned people will write that the use of such models can be problematic. This is true of course of any tool if undue reliance is placed on the methodology, or if the results of tests are treated as absolute and exclusive of other considerations in the overall mix of a person's personality and needs. That explains why this research benefited from a triangulation of data collection techniques; namely observation and pre- post observation interviews to compensate for the possible deficiencies of "Multiple Intelligences Inventory" for teachers and students. Although the reliability of the inventories checked for by the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were estimated to be high enough (0.87) to enable the researcher to conduct statistical analysis of the entire inventories and their subscales, still the concepts tested functioned as an aid, not a dogma to be followed and applied rigidly. It should be noted that at first 7 intelligences were identified by Gardner. For many, he seems to have stopped short of adding to the seven (some might argue, with the exception of Naturalist Intelligence) with any clearly and fully detailed additional intelligence definitions. This; however, is not because there are no more intelligences - it is because of the difficulty of adequately and satisfactorily defining them, since the suggested possible additional intelligences (Spiritual/Existential and Moral) are rather more complex than those already evidenced and defined. The original seven are relatively cut and dried; the seven intelligences plus Naturalist Intelligence are measurable, we know what they are, what they mean, and we can evidence or illustrate them. However the potential additional human capabilities, perceptions and atonements, are highly subjective and complex, and

arguably contain many overlapping aspects. Also, the fact that these additional intelligences could be deemed a measure of good or bad poses extra questions as to their inclusion in what is otherwise a model which has hitherto made no such good or bad judgment. Thus the instrument employed by this study just identifies 8 types of intelligences.

The MI inventory (downloaded from <http://surfaquarium.com/MI/inventory.htm>) used here is an 80-item, 3-point (0, 1, & 2) format instrument developed to measure 8 distinct dimensions of intelligences: Linguistic Intelligence (e.g., “I read something almost every day that isn't related to my work”), Musical Intelligence (e.g., “I listen to music frequently in the car, at work, or at home.”), Logical-Mathematical Intelligence(e.g., “I can calculate numbers easily in my head”), Spatial Intelligence (e.g., “I am partial to textbooks with illustrations, graphs, and charts”), Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (e.g., “I like to do things with my hands such as carve, sew, weave, build models, or knit.”), Intrapersonal Intelligence (e.g., “I keep a journal and record my thoughts.”), Interpersonal Intelligence (e.g., “People often come to me with their problems.”), and Naturalist Intelligence (e.g., “I like to spend time in the outdoors). Each subscale contains 10 items such that scores range from 0 to 20. A high score on any subscale represents a tendency towards that particular type of intelligence on the dimension measured by that scale.

As for the observation , a checklist was used to record : *Rapport* (close relationship between students and teacher) , *Satisfaction* (gratification of ESP as a need) , *Atmosphere* (tone or mood of the classrooms) , *Activities* (actions taken in pursuit of the objective), *Language used* (language in which the instruction was carried out) and *Class size* (spatial dimension in relation to the number of students). There were some boxes left which were completed later after the participants had filled out the inventories. These boxes tackled: *prominent intelligence types (as identified by the inventories)*, *capability and perception (as defined by MI theory)*, *activities expected (as defined by MI theory)*, *need (as defined by MI theory)*, *and relevance/ irrelevance of the activities to the identified intelligence types (as revealed by the comparison between what they were and what they should have been)*.

The pre-observation interview sought for the typical activities regularly practiced in ESP classes, and the post observation interview probed into the interviewees' opinions on the accuracy of the findings.

3.3. Procedures

The data collected for this study underwent different stages of data collection. Firstly, the MI inventory for students was translated in Persian and validated through back translation technique; secondly, the number of classes available was identified and those ready to cooperate were contacted. Thirdly, in acknowledging the validity of the criticisms that the observed do what they think the observer wants to see rather than what it is they actually practice, and that what teachers show while observed is not always what actually happens in the classroom, this study adopted a reverse process . That is, the researcher specifically asked the participants (5 teachers and 25 students) to tell her about a recent lesson they had had, the sorts of activities included in the lesson and their level of satisfaction with that lesson. Their conceptions emerged naturally from their experience of teaching or learning a particular lesson rather than by directly asking them what they thought about a particular phenomenon. Then one whole classroom session with an earlier announcement was observed to record the prevalent activities practiced in those classrooms. Next the MI inventories were administered to assess the intelligence profiles favored by both the teachers and students. Finally the same participants in pre- observation interview were further interviewed to cross validate the data collected. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using the MANOVA statistical procedure.

The interviews and observations were audio and video taped and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analyzed as a whole to identify the intelligence types existed and tackled across the groups. The comparison of the results identified via MI inventory and classroom observation indicated a noticeable mismatch between individual's prominent intelligence types and the type of activities practiced in their classrooms. The post observation interview offers some possible reasons of why this was the case.

3.4. Data Analysis

To test the following research hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between the students' type of intelligence and their relevant disciplines.
2. There is no difference in the type of intelligence possessed by English major students and English teachers.
3. Teachers do not know much about their own and their students 'multiple intelligence profile, so the choices of activities they make do not systematically touch the prevailing intelligence types of either side.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches simply because each has its own pros and cons which can complement each other if used together. For instance quantitative research is praised for its crispness and clarity, lack of subjectivity and known reliability and validity and blamed for its inability to convey data richness and data focus; however, qualitative approaches benefit from having rich and interesting data and suffer from subjectivity and unknown reliability and validity.

The major analytical procedure used by this study was : Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), which is used to examine the relationship between more than one independent and dependent variables (in this case : discipline & participants as two independent variables and eight types of intelligences as the dependent variables). The following assumptions allowed us to go with MANOVA in this study:

1. Dependent variables were related in some way.
2. Sample size was not small.
3. There was no outlier and the distribution was normal.

4. Results

In this section, the result obtained from both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be presented. It first begins with the quantitative data – data collected through the

inventories and then continues with the qualitative part-- the summary of the observations and interviews carried out by the researcher. Overall findings suggest that the activities observed in classrooms had no relationship with neither teachers' nor students' intelligence types.

4.1. Quantitative results

The significance of the F tests in Multivariate Tests (Table 2) shows the effect of discipline is moderately significant.

Table 2 Multivariate Tests

	Effect intercept	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Participants	Wilks' Lambda	.979	1.779	8.000	8.000	.078	.021 Small effect
Discipline	Wilks' Lambda	.619	2.449	136.000	4904.491	.000	.068 Moderate effect
participants * Discipline	Wilks' Lambda	.996	.342	8.000	671.000	.949	.004 Small effect

Based on the effect size shown by Eta squared, the MANOVA test has indicated that discipline has had an effect on the dependent variables—the intelligence types. In our case, participants accounts for 2.1% (0.021 Small effect), and participants by discipline accounts for 0.4% (0.004 Small effect) of the variability in the dependent variables. This

is a very small effect size. However, the calculated effect size for Discipline accounts for 6.8% (0.068 Moderate effect) of the variability in the dependent variables. Yet, to know where exactly the effect lies the Scheffe post hoc test was run. The result indicates the mean difference in English discipline was significant with respect to the dependent variable "logical intelligence". More specifically , bodily kinaesthetic intelligence with the mean of 13.61 , followed by visual spatial with the mean of 13.23 were favoured more by English major students here, whereas naturalistic intelligence 9.82 had the least degree of presence (see Table 3).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for English major students

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Verbal-linguistic	209	6.00	17.00	11.4091	2.59813	6.750
Musical-rhythmic	209	4.00	20.00	11.7045	3.55308	12.624
Logical-mathematical	209	3.00	19.00	12.5114	3.38351	11.448
Visual-spatial	209	6.00	20.00	13.2273	3.19024	10.178
Bodily-kinaesthetic	209	6.00	20.00	<u>13.6136</u>	3.69352	13.642
Intrapersonal	209	4.00	19.00	11.7386	3.19300	10.195
Interpersonal	209	4.00	20.00	12.7500	3.87817	15.040
Naturalistic	209	.00	18.00	9.8182	4.36692	19.070
Valid N (listwise)	209					

Surprisingly, unlike their students, English teachers favored logical mathematical intelligence (15.33) followed by interpersonal (14.33). Like the students, these teachers did not show much tendency for naturalistic intelligence (9.33). (see Table 4).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the EFL teachers

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Musical-rhythmic	26	6.00	5.00	11.00	7.3333	3.21455	10.333
Logical-mathematical	26	7.00	11.00	18.00	<u>15.3333</u>	3.78594	14.333
Visual-spatial	26	5.00	9.00	14.00	12.0000	2.64575	7.000
Bodily-kinesthetic	26	4.00	10.00	14.00	12.0000	2.00000	4.000
Intrapersonal	26	3.00	11.00	14.00	12.0000	1.73205	3.000
Interpersonal	26	3.00	13.00	16.00	14.3333	1.52753	2.333
Naturalistic	26	4.00	8.00	12.00	9.3333	2.30940	5.333
Valid N (listwise)	26						

4.2. Qualitative results

And finally, the qualitative section of this study, which is based on observations and pre-post observation interviews, begins with the observation of participants' activities, behaviors, actions, and interpersonal interactions and organizational processes and is supported by the data from interviews yielding direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Although the data collecting sources in interviews and observations can not be validated as easy as traditional data sources which yield traditional measurements, this researcher has tried to improve the validity of data sources by: (1) using multiple sources to validate information—using interview to validate information through observations, (2) having participants to review information for accuracy, (3) attempt to keep bias out of the data by reporting only what was observed and told, rather than inferring what was believed to have been told or drawing one's own conclusions.

Data were then recorded, and classified for each discipline investigated here; namely, Literature, Translation, Engineering, Medicine, Mathematics, Biology and Physics. Due to the inclusiveness of the disciplines, they were further categorized under 3 broader headings: Language science (Literature, Translation), Mathematical science (Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics) and Biological science (Medicine, and Biology). Finally, individual activities were broadly categorized as either relevant or irrelevant to the type of discipline under investigation and type of intelligence identified for the group (see table 5).

Table 5: MI related factors by discipline

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Language science</u>	<u>Mathematical science</u>	<u>Biological science</u>
<u>Factors</u>			
prominent Intelligence types	Kinesthetic Spatial intrapersonal	Logical Spatial Kinesthetic	Kinesthetic Intrapersonal Spatial

capability and perception	body movement control images and space self-awareness	logic and numbers images and space self-awareness	body movement control self-awareness images and space
Activities expected	- dancing, running, jumping, building, touching, gesturing -designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling - setting goals, meditating, dreaming, planning, reflecting	- experimenting, questioning, figuring out logical puzzles, calculating - designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling - setting goals, meditating, dreaming, planning, reflecting	- dancing, running, jumping, building, touching, gesturing - setting goals, meditating, dreaming, planning, reflecting -designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling
Need	role play, drama, movement, things to build, sports and physical games, tactile experiences, hands-on learning art, LEGOs, video, movies, slides, imagination games,	materials to experiment with, science materials, manipulatives , trips to the planetarium and science museum art, LEGOs, video, movies, slides, imagination games,	role play, drama, movement, things to build, sports and physical games, tactile experiences, hands-on learning secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices

	mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art museums secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices	mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art museums secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices	art, LEGOs, video, movies, slides, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art museums
Activities observed	reading, writing, doing exercises, translating, summarizing, playing word games	reading, writing, doing exercises, translating, summarizing, playing word games	reading, writing, doing exercises, translating, summarizing, playing word games
Relevance/ irrelevance	Irrelevant to the students' and teachers' types of intelligence (logical mathematical and interpersonal)	Irrelevant to the students' and teachers' types of intelligence (logical mathematical and interpersonal)	Irrelevant to the students' and teachers' types of intelligence (logical mathematical and interpersonal)

In addition, to examine the functioning or malfunctioning of the activities observed in these classrooms and their relevant impact on the general mood of the contexts, major features of all the classes observed are summarized in table 6 below.

Table 6 Major features of the classrooms observed

Checklist	Observations
Rapport	Wavering in two extremes: Both too distant and unfriendly or too friendly that led to mismanagement of the classrooms. Teacher functioned more as a monitor rather than a guide or facilitator in the

	classroom.
Satisfaction	Students' lack of involvement indicated that they were not satisfied and teachers did not take the responsibility for this dissatisfaction. Rather, they blamed the educational system. This was verified in the interview data as well.
Atmosphere	The frequent comment of asking the teacher to stop and the teacher's reaction to closing the lesson before the time ends reflected the fact that the atmosphere was heavy and burdensome both for teachers and students alike. They were doing what they were told to rather than what they wanted or what they could.
Activities	Mostly text book based. The focus of the activities is grammar and vocabulary. Grammar is presented and taught deductively and vocabulary is taught through English to Persian translation of words, explaining word functions, and presenting synonyms & antonyms. Students by the help of teacher read the text. Teacher corrects pronunciation Problems. Then Reading Comprehension Questions are asked in English & Persian. Students read their answers and are asked to translate the text into Persian. No correction for translation by the teacher is observed but he/she offers his or her translation version to the class so that they can write it down in their notebooks. And finally students are assigned to do the exercises at home which are more a matter of formality rather than a means to help the students learn more, since each and every one of the students has access to the guidebook available in the market. The guidebook has the translation of the text, the meaning of the words and the solution to all the problems in the

	textbook.
Language used	Mixed. Mostly Persian with very infrequent use of English
Class size	Large (25-38 students)

As table 6 indicates most English teachers (more than two thirds) do the same for all students irrespective of their disciplines and individual preferences. Very few classes(less than 1/3) manifested rays of newer ideas in their language teaching practices : such as using incomplete group work (lacking the essentials needed for group work) , having warm up activities by using pictures, presenting problems to students to solve, teaching and using categorization techniques, etc. However, even in that case, they proved to have been done hastily and unsystematically, In other words, the results obtained in these classes were not much different from the others, where traditional practices were observed. That is why in this study they are not treated differently.

4.3. Interview data

The teachers and students were interviewed twice: once prior to observation where the activities they usually practice in their classrooms were asked for, and once after their intelligence profile was discovered and the observation report was written. In the latter case, the participants were asked to validate the researcher's notes by judging the accuracy of the findings. All teachers claimed that due to the fundamental flaws in the academic curriculum, the inefficiency of the facilities available in the classrooms, time limit, size of the classes, heterogeneity of students and lack of supervision, the teachers prefer to do what is traditionally advised to be done for the classes. So although they

know what they are doing is not what it should be, they continue to do so because in Iranian educational system it is not hard work that pays but the silence of the students , lack of complaints from students and greater percentage of students' passes which guarantee teachers' stay in the profession. As with the students, they also confirmed that the ESP classes at university do not seem to be there to teach students English, because actually the student demography, the classroom facilities and the number of students in each class do not leave any room for any special kind of individual treatment. So these classes, according to students, are there, more as a matter of formality or perhaps in their best case for testing what the students already bring to the classrooms rather than teaching them something anew. Besides for most students, ESP is not respected as much as their content courses, partly because they do not find the English teacher competent enough to teach content materials in English, and partly because their textbooks are outdated and written without considering anything but superficial topic relevance to the discipline. The types of activities designed in all ESP books look alike irrespective of the disciplines involved, which can somehow explain why teachers do the same for all classes despite the individual needs of the learners.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between two dimensions of the academic life in Iran; namely, participants and disciplines with respect to the intelligence types in ESP courses within an undergraduate student sample. The MANOVA revealed that students in different disciplines tended to have varied patterns of intelligences. Moreover, Scheffe post hoc test indicated, the mean difference in English discipline was significant with respect to the dependent variable "logical intelligence". These findings provide the answers to questions 1- 3 of this current research study:

- Question 1 : (Is there a relationship between the students' type of intelligence and their relevant disciplines?) The answer is yes. Multivariate significance tests reveal the calculated effect size for "Discipline" is significant enough to reject the null hypothesis.

- Question 2 (Is there a difference in the type of intelligence possessed by English major students and English teachers?). Results of Scheffe post hoc test and the descriptive statistics indicate the mean difference in English discipline was significant
- And finally based on the classroom observations which was planned to lead us to the answer to our last question, question 3 (Do the types of activities practiced in EFL classrooms touch the prevailing intelligence types of both teachers and learners?), it was found out that surprisingly most classes seemed to have been doing more or less similar activities , sadly unrelated to students' preferences and intelligence types which in turn led to the students' dissatisfaction with their English classes An observation which underscores the cultural context of multiple intelligences.

These findings represent only a snapshot of what bizarre and critical condition the Iranian academic settings, at least as related to teaching ESP for the sample under investigation, is in. A situation which , based on interviews and observations, face so many fundamental issues which might have practically overshadowed the focal point of this study; that is, the effect of MI on students' learning and success. However, the observations and one on one interview suggest MI or any considerations of the individuals can undoubtedly be very effective in the outcome of the instructional programs at this level. What the interviewees were most complaining about were the lack of humane look on the individuals present in classrooms-- students and teachers alike. Their freedom to choose what to do is tragically restricted by a top down curriculum which is usually imposed by the outsiders (and even if there were traces of some insiders involved, they were representatives of the most conformist ones whose voice did not reflect the voice of the people involved). The impact of such a curriculum appears to be so strong that might undermine and suppress the functioning of all personal preferences, including the prominent intelligence type. As this research shows although students in different disciplines manifest identifiable patterns of intelligence types , the discrepancy between English major students and the English teachers' intelligence type is very alarming—an indication of the power of society which can mould all aspects of an individual's life including his or her personality. Since English teachers were once

English students themselves, it was expected that we could identify a similar trend among English major students and English teachers. Yet, despite our expectations they revealed different tendencies. This, as confirmed by the participants, can be explained with regard to the effects of other factors on one's intellectual preferences such as environmental or educational factors which definitely shape one's personality in order to fit him / her into the existing systems of their communities.

Moreover, the findings of this research support the findings of earlier studies and suggest that knowledge is processed and represented in different ways and that students prefer to use different types of resources in distinct ways. However, building appropriate educational systems that do adapt to different learning characteristics is not easy. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI) might be helpful as the basis for dynamically modelling learning characteristics and for designing instructional material because the underlying belief behind this theory suggests that intelligence is not a fixed static entity, but something that can be enhanced significantly through education and awareness. Although this research , too , suggests the dynamism of intelligence, it also indicates that a malfunctioning educational system is able to kill individuals' prominent intelligence preferences and replace them with even a totally different types of intelligence , needed by the individuals to survive but far away from their own true selves and preferences.

The challenge for Iranian EFL teachers now is determining whether a specific student behaviour is the result of individual differences or evidence of a learning or behaviour problem originated in its social context. Teachers need to be especially sensitive to the possibility that one of the reasons of what at first appears to be a learning or behaviour problem may actually be a difference in the intelligence type of the student which can be identified, dealt with and highlighted in advance. If students can stimulate an intelligence that may normally lie dormant, they might achieve a greater understanding of the material, and when students better understand what they are reading or discussing, their interest grows, resulting in more academic achievement and greater motivation. The procedure suggested by MI to assess students' ability, knowledge, attitude, and work habits can be adjusted quite well to the teaching-learning process that occurs inside the classroom.

6. MI and the future

There is more to come about multiple and learnable intelligence in teacher education program. Understanding, recognizing, and being sensitive to the myriad ways our students are smart will be a tremendous boon in the classroom. New ways of representing academic material and new possibilities for solving students' learning problems will present themselves as deeper knowledge of multiple intelligences is gained. Future work will involve exploring further the role of challenge in learning environments. It will involve determining the influence of different types of resources on individual learners and their effect on learning performance. More research are needed to explore what influences learning activity, and to determine if intelligence type related strategies that increase learning activity also increase learning gain.

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Title

A Contrastive Intercultural Analysis of the English and Persian Research Articles: The Case of the Discussion Sections

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Abstract

English has acquired the status of the international language. As a result, research articles in English have become one of the main channels for distributing and advancing scientific knowledge among scholars world-wide (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). English research articles are distinctive in many aspects such as organization, conventions and features of the language being used, all of which reflect the values and beliefs held by the particular

community of researchers. To facilitate the writing of research articles, different scholars have attempted to study different sections of research articles taking a “genre analysis” approach. In line with studies conducted by Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, (1988); Holmes, (1995); Biria and Tahirian, (1997); and Kanoksilapatham, (2005), this study was an attempt to reveal the generic structure of research articles written and published by English writers as well as Persian writers with the purpose of identifying culture-specific conventions of this genre. The results revealed significant differences in frequency, sequence, and even communicative functions of the moves and steps across the two RA groups. The differences may be partly due to the influence of cultural conventions associated with RA writing in the two languages. The results may have implications for EAP practitioners as well as EFL writers/researchers who wish to get their papers published in international journals.

Key Terms: Genre, Research articles, Moves, Steps, Lexico-grammatical features

1. Introduction

For a long time, genre analysis has been an important approach to text analysis, especially in the field of English for specific purposes (ESP). This approach has been developed by the works of such influential pioneers as Swales (1986), Dudley-Evans (1986), and Bhatia (1993). They provide models of organizational patterns through which different academic/non-academic genres achieve their communicative purpose. The genre approach has been most successfully employed in the field of academic English where a variety of genres such as research articles, abstracts, grant proposals, conference presentations, and reprint requests have been examined (Hyland, 1992, p. 15). Genre theorists also seek to understand the ways in which lexico-grammatical patterns in texts are globally contextualized so as to realize particularly important social functions (Ghadessy 1993, p. 3). At a broader level, genres derive their specific conventions from a general socio-semiotic system. In the same vein, the conventions and presuppositions of

the academic culture determine the ways in which the ideas and concepts are linguistically realized in a specific discipline.

Regarding English RAs, the well-established macro-structure “Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion” (IMRD) has proved to be the major framework for analysis (Swales, 1990). Among the different parts of an article, the Discussion section seems to be the most troublesome. Since this section represents the individual’s attempt to substantiate the reasons by which he/she hopes to convince the readers, it is the part that the writers often find difficult to organize in academic writing (Dudley-Evans, 1986).

Following Swales’ (1981) successful 3-move analysis of RA Introductions, Belanger (1982) analyzed 10 Discussion sections from articles in the field of neuroscience. On the basis of this data, he showed that the structure of the Discussion section is closely correlated to both the number and the kind of research questions posed in the Introduction sections of the paper. He identified the following moves for the Discussion sections:

Move 1. Summarizing results and stating conclusions with references to previous research, Move 2. Expressing what research suggests with references to previous research and/or to the current work, and Move 3. Posing further questions sometimes with possible explanations and sometimes with references.

Dudley-Evans (1986) devised a 9-move model of Discussions. The moves occurred in cycles in which the writer chose an appropriate sequence of moves. This idea of cyclicity was later reinforced by Swales who claimed “Discussions, in strict contrast to Introductions, move during a cycle in an inside-out direction; they move from stating the results themselves, to placing them within the established literature, to reviewing their general significance” (1990, p. 173). Each move was given a largely self-evident descriptive label as follows:

Move 1. Background information, Move 2. Statement of result, Move 3. Finding, Move 4. (Un)Expected outcome, Move 5. Reference to previous research both for comparison and support, Move 6. Explanation, Move 7. Claim, including deductions and hypotheses, Move 8. Limitation, and Move 9. Recommendation (Dudley-Evans, 1986, pp. 134-140).

Later, Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) provided a detailed move analysis of the Discussion section of both theses and published articles in the field of irrigation and drainage. Swales (1990) adopted and simplified the model into an 8-move model, based on the frequency of occurrence of the moves:

Move 1. Background information, Move 2. Statement of results, Move 3. (Un) expected outcome, Move 4. Reference to previous research for comparison or support, Move 5. Explanation, Move 6. Exemplification, Move 7. Deduction and Hypothesis, and Move 8. Recommendation.

These eight moves in the Discussion section proceed in a direction opposite to the moves in the Introduction section. As in the Introduction section, these moves may vary in their order of occurrence and are capable of being cycled.

A similar adaptation of the original work on the moves suggested for the Discussion section (Dudley-Evans, 1986) was made by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995). They argued that the moves could be ordered into a set of higher level units that reflect the moves posited for the Introduction. In other words, the moves were essentially the same as those in the Introduction, but in the reverse order:

Move 1. Occupying the niche, Move 2. (Re) establishing the field, and Move 3. Establishing additional territory. (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, p. 41)

Following the above-mentioned studies, Biria and Tahirian (1997) attempted to analyze the Discussion part of the articles in an issue of *The Sociology of Education Journal*. The results revealed that the texts under analysis were organized according to some explicit move cycles shared by all the texts. This uniform cyclicity of moves indicated that the text is a complete event with formularized organizational schemas.

Finally, Kanoksilapatham (2005) studied 60 biochemistry research articles and proposed a two-level rhetorical structure (moves and steps) for these texts. This structure consisted of 15 distinct moves: three moves for the Introduction section, four for the Methods section, four for the Results section, and four for the Discussion section.

In line with these studies, the present research, taking a contrastive approach, was an attempt to analyze the Discussion sections of English RAs published by English writers and the Discussion sections of Persian RAs published by Persian writers in order to find

the differentiating factors between the two corpora at the levels of move schemas and some lexico-grammatical realizations. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the move schemas of the Discussion section of English research articles published in English professional journals?
2. What are the move schemas of the Discussion section of Persian research articles published in Persian professional journals?
3. What are the lexico-grammatical features which realize each move in the English RAs?
4. What are the lexico-grammatical features which realize each move in the Persian RAs?

2. Method

For the English corpus based on availability criterion, four journals of applied linguistics were selected: Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), The Modern Language Journal (MLJ), and Studies in Second Language Acquisition (SSLA). A randomized selection procedure was used for the articles appearing from 2004 to 2008, and among these issues the articles which had clear separation of “Results” and “Discussion” sections in their rubrics were selected. Through this sampling procedure, 30 research articles were selected for the English corpus. For the Persian corpus again based on availability criterion, four journals of Persian language and linguistics were selected: Faculty of Literature and Humanities Journal (University of Shahid Bahonar), Language and Linguistics (Linguistics Society of Iran), Faculty of Literature and Humanities Journal (Tabriz University), and Persian Literature and Foreign Languages Journal (Allameh Tabatabaii University). Setting the same criterion of separation of “Results” and “Discussion” sections, first among the issues published from 2004 to 2008, the articles which were written on applied linguistic issues were selected and then, using a randomized selection procedure, 30 research articles were selected for the Persian corpus.

For the purpose of identifying the possible generic and lexico-grammatical differences between the Discussion sections of English and Persian RAs, initially a framework based on Swales' (1990) model of move schemas of the Discussion section of

research articles was developed. In addition, for the purpose of identification and easier access, the articles of each corpus were codified (E.1-E.30 for the English and P.1-P.30 for the Persian corpus). Regarding the first and second research questions, in order to find move schemas, the two corpora were investigated and the obligatory and optional moves as well as their frequencies and sequences were identified. Then, in order to answer the third and fourth research questions, the qualitative analysis of the two corpora was undertaken to identify some lexico-grammatical features which realize each move. These features included the most typical lexical phrases and syntactic structures such as verb tenses, sentence voices, hedging expressions, and typical collocations which may appear in form of expressions.

As the framework of analysis, the present study employed Swales' (1990) model of the Discussion sections of RAs mentioned above because of its detailed and comprehensive nature.

A word of caution, however, seems essential here. Since this kind of analysis is based on subjective judgment of the researcher, in order to account for the reliability of the study, the corpora were rated by two other raters independently. In other words, in order to guarantee reliability of the research, the analysis procedure was described to two EFL writers who were familiar with the topic and had experience in genre studies. At a later stage, the results were compared and the areas of controversy were discussed. However, despite the inevitable discrepancies in the ratings, there was no statistically significant difference among the ratings of the raters (See Table 1.).

Table 1. *Chi-square Test Indicating Non-significance of Differences between the Ratings*

	d.f	χ^2	Critical χ^2
Corpus	1	1.56	3.84

3. Results

The moves and the steps of the texts under investigation were identified and their frequencies were calculated as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2. Frequency of the Moves of the Discussion Sections across the Two RA Groups

Moves	Steps	English RAs	Persian RAs
I. Background Information	Restatement of the aims of study, Summarizing research procedure, Outlining what will be followed, Restating research questions	18 60%	21 70%
II. Result Statement	Presenting a brief, general statement of the result/s without interpreting them	23 76.66%	28 93.33%
III. Un/expected Outcome	Expressing the extent to which the results of the research are expected/ unexpected	18 60%	4 13.33%
IV. Reference to Previous Literature	References for purposes of providing support/contrast with previous research, References for the purposes of providing definitions	30 100%	26 86.66%
V. Explanation	Justification of results through citation, Finding reasons for the results, Interpreting results	30 100%	17 56.66%
VI. Exemplification	Providing examples or Providing illustrations	9 30%	5 16.66%
VII. Deduction	Making conclusions about the findings	30 100%	22 73.33%
VIII. Recommendation	Recommendation for pragmatic purposes, Expressing limitations of the study, Recommendation for further research	30 100%	27 90%

Move I. Background Information

The analysis showed that in the English research articles, the first move of the Discussion section was realized through a number of steps: Restatement of the aims of study was observed in 5 cases, Summarizing research procedure in 6 cases, Outlining what will be followed in 3 cases, and Restating research questions in 4 cases (out of 18 cases of occurrence of this move). This communicative move was explicitly signaled with the use of such lexical items/phrases as *this paper aimed to explore* and *the purpose of this study was to*. As exemplified below, these sentences mostly appeared in Simple Past tense.

Table 3. presents two examples of these steps:

Table 3. *Move I. Background Information in the English Corpus*

Example	Move I. Background Information	Function
E19	The purpose of this study was to characterize the contribution of content familiarity and structural task support to conversational negotiations of pairs of German-language students.	Restatement of the aims of study
E4	This research has investigated a number of ways of gathering judgments of word frequency across word lists of varying sizes and composition. ...	Summarizing research procedure

In the Persian corpus, this move was more frequent compared with the English RAs (21 cases). The realization of this move in the Persian corpus was also more varied. Persian writers preferred to initiate the Discussion sections with defining or focusing on the main variables of the study and highlighting their significance and benefits. Other steps observed in the English corpus were also present in the Persian corpus except Outlining what will be followed and Restating research questions. Three examples of this move along with the steps materializing it are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. *Move I. Background Information in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move I. Background Information	Function

P20	Making the EFL professionals acquainted with frequency studies and their uses in language teaching in the growing world of electronic communication seems important and indispensable.	Highlighting the significance of the study
P3	Guessing the meanings of words by using context is one of the most useful strategies in learning vocabulary. Special books and activities have been provided to help learners guess the meaning of unknown words using the context.	Focusing on the main variables of the study
P29	The main purpose of this study is to classify and describe the cohesive ties in the text and interpret them.	Restatement of the aims of the study

Move II. Result Statements

Swales (1990) described this move as quasi-obligatory. "It is the starting point of a cycle and is likely to be preceded only by Move I. Additionally, we might expect that the stronger results will be dealt with in an early cycle and weaker results in a later one" (Swales, 1990, p. 172).

Move II was realized through a single step in the two RA groups under investigation: Presenting a brief, general statement of the result/s without interpreting them. This step was linguistically realized through lexical items such as *the results (of analysis)* and *the findings*, and reporting verbs such as *show*, *indicate*, *reveal*, *find/found* and *reveal*. Two further linguistic signals were identified for this move in the present corpora: the use of non-modal verbs, and Past tense.

In the English RAs, Move II presented general statements or summary of the findings. This obligatory move appeared in 23 cases of the Discussion sections (76.6%). The most frequent verbs observed in this move were *show* (36%), *reveal* (33%), and

indicate, demonstrate, report (31%). Nearly all the verbs of this move were in Past tense (88%) and active voice (97%) and the sentences started with “*This study*”, “*The results*”, “*The research*”, or “*The findings*”. One example of this move is presented in Table 5:

Table 5. *Move II. Result Statements in the English Corpus*

Example	Move II. Result Statements	Function
E1	The results of this study show that training can enhance students' lexical access skill in a L2.	Presenting a brief, general statement of the result/s without interpreting them

However, the problem was that in the English corpus, in a few cases (2 cases, 6.6%), this move was found to contain the writer's comments or interpretation. Following Swales, this evaluation of the results indicates Move III (Un/Expected Outcome). One example of this problematic use of Move II has been provided in Table 6.

Table 6. *Problematic Use of Move II in the English Corpus*

Example	Move II. Result Statements
E26	In general, the results support the claim that learners notice a considerable amount of implicit feedback provided through interaction in a primed context.

In the Persian corpus, this move appeared in 28 cases (93.3%). Analysis of the Persian RAs revealed more consistency in the choice of lexical items implying the writer's objectivity in reporting the results in this move. In other words, it seemed that the Persian writers were aware of the function of this move. An example of this move has been presented in Table 7:

Table 7. *Move II. Result Statements in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move II. Result Statements	Function
	The results of the study reveal that learners' self-evaluations of their own lexical knowledge are not	Presenting a brief, general statement of the result/s

P3	precise.	without interpreting them
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Move III. (Un) Expected Outcome

According to Swales (1990), the writer comments on whether the result is expected or not through this move. In other words, this move expresses the writer's comments on the "expected-ness" of the results. Swales described this move as rare and difficult to distinguish from Move V (Explanation). In the present RAs under investigation, this move was realized through a single step: Expressing the extent to which the results of the research are expected/unexpected. If the outcomes were expected, in other words, if they were in line with the findings of previous researchers, the writer presented positive comments by using specific lexical items or expressions exemplified below. On the other hand, if the outcomes were unexpected, i.e. they were not in line with the findings of previous researchers, the writer indicated surprise or negative evaluation via the choice of lexical items.

Move III occurred in 18 cases of the English texts (60%). The identification of this move was based on content and linguistic features. Regarding content, this stage involved both the writer's comments and the extent to which the results of the research were expected or unexpected. However, the Expected Outcomes seemed to be less marked linguistically than the Unexpected Outcomes. The Expected Outcomes tended to be expressed as positive statements including the verb *support*, or the phrases associated with concordance of the present research with previous studies such as *in accordance with*, whereas unexpected outcomes were realized through linking verbs showing probability such as "*seem, appear to, and may*" and such explicit lexical items or phrases as "*surprisingly, contrary to what was expected, did not happen, fail to show, and did not support*". An instance of Outcome in the English texts is presented in Table 8:

Table 8. Move III. (Un) Expected Outcome in the English Corpus

Example	Move III. (Un) Expected Outcome	Function
E16	This finding was not unexpected and seems patently obvious in the scholarly literature suggesting that extended, meaningful exposure to cultural and linguistic life of the target language will have a positive effect on the learning of a L2 (e. g. Brown, 2000).	Expressing the extent to which the results of the research are expected

In the Persian corpus, this move was rather rare. Expected Outcome appeared in 3 cases (10%) while Unexpected Outcome was observed only in one case. All cases were explicitly signaled by the use of such lexical items/expressions as *همسو با* and *تایید می نماید* which mean *confirms* and *according to* respectively. In case of Unexpected Outcome, it was explicitly signaled by the phrase *بر خلاف انتظار* which means “*contrary to what was expected*”. A case of occurrence of this move has been presented in Table 9:

Table 9. Move III (Un)Expected Outcome in the Persian Corpus

Example	Move III (Un) Expected Outcome	Function
P14	Contrary to what we expected, although lexical knowledge did not have an important effect on reading comprehension in TOEFL test, this variable was important in reading comprehension in FCI style.	Expressing the extent to which the results of the research are unexpected
P3	Therefore, the results of this study confirmed Loffer and Yano's (2001) and indicated that guessing the meanings of words based on the context is sometimes useless because there is no relation between the meaning guessed by the learners and the real meaning of the word.	Expressing the extent to which the results of the research are expected

Analysis of Move III in the Persian RAs revealed the problem of overlap. For instance, in Example P3 above, Move III (Expected Outcome) had overlap with Move IV (Reference to previous research).

Move IV. Reference to Previous Research

Swales (1990) described this move as the most common move after Move I and II. He considered two steps for this move: references for purposes of comparison with present research and references for purposes of providing support for present research. In other words, in this move references are made to previous research in order to provide credit for the new research by connecting it to existing, related studies.

Two steps were identified in the corpora under investigation for this move: 1) References for purposes of providing support/contrast with previous research and 2) References for purposes of providing definitions.

Frequency analysis showed that Move IV occurred in all English RAs. This move attempted to convince the readers of the credibility of the findings. It referred to other studies and it was always in active voice (100%). The references which provided support for the present research occurred with greater frequency compared with references which provided contrast. Support was signaled with the use of such words or expressions as *were similar to, lend some support, the findings support, in keeping with* and *consistent with*. Contrast was usually signaled with conjunctive adjuncts (*despite, however, although*).

The sentences started with either a non-personal subject (64%) such as “*This study confirmed.....*”, “*The findings are in line with.....*”, and “*these findings support Honeyfield’s (1979) acknowledgement that ..*” (E. 15), or a personal subject (36%) such as “*Nation (1990) classified components of word knowledge into*” (E. 4), and “*As Arnold-Gritty (1978) mentioned...*” (E. 19). Two examples of this move have been presented in Table 10:

Table 10. *Move IV. Reference to Previous Research in the English Corpus*

Example	Move IV. Reference to Previous Research	Function
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E16	These similarities are shown in Table 5. The confirmatory factor structure and factor loadings were also similar to those of the PALS by Midgely <i>et al.</i> (1997).	Providing support for present research
E13	As regards politeness and face-saving strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), expressions such as “as we all know” and “of course” disclaim the assumption that the speaker’s intention is to inform the audience.	Providing definitions

In the Persian corpus, this move was observed in 26 cases (86.6%). Persian writers usually used this move to justify their findings. This move appeared in the passive voice (53%) with either “tebghe yaftehaye pishin” or “hamantor ke dar motalee...zekr shod” which both mean “as it was mentioned before” or in active voice (47%) with “natayeje motalee tavassote...neshan midahad” which means “The study by...reveals that”. It is exemplified in Table 11:

Table 11. *Move IV. Reference to Previous Research in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move IV. Reference to Previous Research	Function
P16	However, Richards (1995, p. 66) believes that “We should find strategies through which language learners can improve their abilities to use listening materials for different learning purposes.	Providing support for present research

Move V. Explanation

This obligatory move is very demanding because writers should justify their results through it. Writers should have enough expertise of the topic and explain possible causes of the results. This move was realized through a number of steps in the two groups of RAs under investigation: 1) Justification of results through citation, 2) Finding reasons

for the results, 3) Interpreting results. Therefore, such words as *because* and *due to* were highly frequent. The analysis revealed that the two RA groups employed similar linguistic resources; for instance, they frequently used modal statements showing various degrees of probability. The use of modal clauses of low probability showed that the writers were careful of presenting new claims so that they would not sound as if they forced their readers to agree with or accept their ideas. The identification of this move was rather easy compared with other moves because it was signaled by explicit linguistic markers.

This move occurred in all cases of the English RAs. It seemed that the English writers were well aware of the broad linguistic resources they could employ in order to serve the purpose of presenting new claims. They did not take a strong position in explaining the results; rather, they employed hedging language (the copular verbs *seem* and *appear* (25%), modal verbs *may*, *might*, *can*, *could* and *would* (52%), and sentence adverbials which related to the probability of the proposition being true, such as *perhaps* or *due to* (23%)) in expressing their claims. Furthermore, in a number of cases, more than one hedging expression was provided (15%). The use of modality in the English RAs was so frequent that perhaps it is reasonable to say that all statements were modalized. Another linguistic feature of this move was the use of lexical items or expressions associated with explanation, for instance, “*This finding may be due to the fact that...*” or “*This is because...*”. An example of this move along with the steps (functions) realizing it has been presented in Table 12:

Table 12. *Move V. Explanation in the English Corpus*

Example	Move V. Explanation	Function
E14	Further evidence that the corrective feedback induced changes in learners' implicit knowledge can be found in the fact that the effects of the experimental treatments on the oral imitation test scores were more evident two weeks after the instruction than one day after. This finding reflects previous research (e. g. Mackey, 1999), which has shown that the effects of instruction.... .	Justification of results through citation

In the Persian corpus, this move occurred in 17 cases (56.6 %); however, only in a few cases it was explicitly marked by the use of linguistic features. In most cases, the identification was content-based. Furthermore, Justification of results through citation was more frequent than the other steps.

If explicitly signaled, the move included such words and expressions as توجیه دلیل and *the reason* and *the justification* respectively in order to bring reasons for the results as exemplified in Table 13:

Table 13. *Move V. Explanation in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move V. Explanation	Function
P15	Although test anxiety as a factor in a correlational study has negative relationship with students' progress and other SRL factors, it does not have a considerable effect on students' progress in a multivariate analysis. Ball (1373) believes that we cannot consider test anxiety as a completely negative factor in educational progress. Rather, low levels of anxiety can facilitate students' progress.	Justification of results through citation

The apparent difference between the English and the Persian corpora in this move was that while English writers used hedging language to avoid making strong claims, in some cases, Persian writers expressed their claims rather firmly.

Move VI. Exemplification

The tables and figures which represent the results of the study usually appear in the Results section. However, through Exemplification move of the Discussion sections, the writer sometimes refers the readers to the tables/figures or gives examples in order to clarify what s/he says. In other words, in this move, the writer uses examples or

illustrations to further support the statements or claims made in preceding parts of the Discussion section. According to Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988), examples are most often used to support an explanation. In the RAs under investigation, this move was realized either through 1) Providing examples or 2) Providing illustrations.

In the English corpus, examples were found in 7 cases while illustrations were observed only in 2 cases. The linguistic resources used to signal these steps were limited to lexical items such as *illustrated*, *following example*, *illustrate*, *instance*, and *as shown*. The following example is an instance of the time when the writer refers the readers to an example in order to further clarify the points:

Table 14. *Move VI. Exemplification in the English Corpus*

Example	Move VI. Exemplification	Function
E18	In addition, in this portion of the text, there is frequent occurrence of the word “argue” or “argument” in the metatextual discourse, which supports our naming of the section. For example:	Providing examples

In the Persian corpus, four cases of Providing illustrations and one case of Providing examples were observed, all of which were signaled by explicit linguistic markers نشان می دهد and به نمایش میگذارد which mean “illustrates”. One of these cases is presented in Table 15:

Table 15. *Move VI. Exemplification in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move VI. Exemplification	Function
P1	We can look at the findings from another perspective and compare the frequencies of grammatical structures in technical and general English texts. Table 2 illustrates these data.	Providing illustrations

Move VII. Deduction

According to Swales (1990/2004), this move is used to make a claim about the generalizability of some or all of the reported results. Move VII makes conclusions about the results and usually includes explicit lexical items or phrases such as *conclusion*, *to conclude*, or *in conclusion*.

In the RAs under analysis, this move is realized through a single step: Making conclusions about the findings. The important point was that in most cases, Move VII and Move VIII (Recommendation) appeared under the separate subsection of Conclusion. In such cases, the deductions made by the researcher were more general and covered all the findings of the study. However, if Move VII appeared before the Conclusion subsection, it came at the end of every cycle of moves. In this case, the deductions made were local and only related to the specific points focused on within that particular cycle.

The analysis found that Move VII occurred in all English RAs (30 cases) either with or without the separate subsections of Conclusion or Conclusion and Implications. This move was usually signaled explicitly with the use of such phrases and clauses as *in conclusion*, *to conclude*, *to sum up*, and *the result would suggest that*. One example of this move has been provided in Table 16:

Table 16. *Move VII. Deduction in the English RAs*

Example	Move VII. Deduction	Function
E15	In summary , the model suggested that there is indeed an interface between conscious and unconscious knowledge and that, with the right training; consciously-learnt knowledge can become unconsciously-used language knowledge.	Making conclusions about the findings

In the Persian corpus, this move was observed in 22 cases and realized through the same step as the English RAs as well as another step not observed in the English RAs. This step was *Stating the benefit of the study*. It was somehow the restatement of the

significance of study. *Stating the benefit of the study* is realized through lexical resources associated with the uses or benefits of the study like مفید and موثر which both mean *beneficial*.

This move was linguistically realized through such lexical items as توصیه , پیشنهاد می شود and لازم است , می شود which mean *it is proposed* or *it is necessary*. . The important point was that in 8 cases, this move appeared under the separate section of Pedagogical Implications. It has been exemplified in Table 17:

Table 17. Move VII. Deduction in the Persian RAs

Example	Move VII. Deduction	Function
P26	Getting familiar with different aspects of memory as one of the interesting subjects in psycholinguistics can be highly beneficial in appreciating the learning process and selecting the appropriate methodology in EFL classes.	Stating the benefit of the study

Move VIII. Recommendations

This move recommends the pedagogical applications of the study as well as the need for further research. In the corpora under investigation, this move was realized through three steps: 1) Recommendation for pragmatic purposes, 2) Expressing limitations of the study, and 3) Recommendation for further research. Besides highlighting the pedagogical implications of the study, this move also pinpointed the limitations which constrain the process of research. Then, based on the limitations, the writers recommended further research. In other words, through presenting a restatement of the limitations of study, the writers recommended further research for those who are interested in the topic. In such cases, the writers usually recommended replicating the present study by addressing its limitations or by changing one or more of its variables. However, according to Swales, this step may be omitted because "researchers may not wish to give advantage to others in an increasingly competitive market for research grants" (1990, p. 173).

Regarding lexico-grammatical features of this move, one of the most typical features

of the three steps was the use of modality or hedging language. In other words, the researchers were not usually explicit in tone; rather, they carefully made use of modality of low probability in order not to impose their findings or suggestions on the readers. In other words, the writers attempted to negotiate with their readers by using modality of low probability such as *can*, *may*, and *might*.

This move occurred in all cases of English RAs, with different frequencies for different steps (Step 1. Recommendation for pragmatic purposes appeared in 12 cases; Step 2. Expressing limitations of the study appeared in 19 cases; and Step 3. Recommendation for further research appeared in 25 cases). This move was explicitly signaled in the English corpus. The first step, Recommendation for pragmatic purposes, was linguistically marked with the verb *suggest* and the lexical items or phrases such as *pedagogical implications*, *implications*, *applications*, *for teaching purposes*, etc. The most typical linguistic features used to realize the second step, expressing limitations of the study, were *limitations*, *suffers from*, *need*, etc. Finally, the most conspicuous linguistic features of the third step, Recommendation for further research were the frequent occurrences of the verbs “*need*” or “*require*” (54%) and “*research*” or “*investigation*” (60%), for example, “*further research*” or “*further investigation*”. Some of the sentences were in Future tense (18%) while most of them were in Present tense with adverbials or verbs which implied future endeavor (82%). Two examples of this move along with different steps realizing it have been presented in Table 18:

Table 18. *Move VIII. Recommendations in the English Corpus*

Example	Move VIII. Recommendations	Function
E14	We also argue that from a pedagogical perspective , it is important to examine corrective feedback within the classroom context.	Recommendation for pragmatic purposes
E5	There are some limitations that could be addressed by future studies .	Expressing limitations of the study

This move appeared in 27 cases of the Persian RAs (90%). Through this move, the writers recommended directions for future research. It was a restatement of the limitations of the study. While only a small number of sentences had a verb in Future tense (9%), a large number of them (91%) were in Present tense with a clear indicator of future such as “*dar ayande*” which means “in future”. However, one factor specific to the Persian RAs was that in the Persian corpus in most cases (78%), this move included some words and expressions of “wish” like “*omidvarim*” or “*omid miravad*” which both mean “we hope”. Two examples of this move along with different steps realizing it have been presented in Table 19:

Table 19. *Move VIII. Recommendations in the Persian Corpus*

Example	Move VIII. Recommendations	Function
P3	This study does not take the effect of such learning styles as dependent and independent styles into consideration. Students' learning styles may have important roles in their self-evaluations.	Expressing limitations of the study
P4	Therefore, it is recommended that future studies include learners from different age ranges.	Recommendation for further research

4. Discussion

The generic analysis of the Discussion sections of English and Persian research articles revealed a clear resemblance in the kinds of moves and steps. This confirms the fact that members belonging to the same academic discipline share a considerable amount of conventions and background knowledge (Yarmohammadi, 1995). However, it seems that the differentiating factors between English and Persian Discussion sections mostly appear to be a matter of stylistic difference. These differences may be due to cultural discrepancies. According to Connor (2004), some differences are due to the dynamic nature of discourse and culture and are tied to the intellectual history and social structures of different cultures. For instance, Persian writers usually tend to make strong claims. It

is mostly evident in “explanation” move where writers explain and justify their findings. While in the English corpus all claims are moderated by using hedging words and expressions (such as *may*, *may be*, *should*, *perhaps*, etc.), Persian writers use hedging language sparingly in this move.

Another differentiating point was related to the communicative function of “Reference to previous studies” across the two corporuses. The rather high frequency of “Reference to previous studies” may reflect the cultural attitude of Persian writers who attempt to seek evidence and justification for what they have obtained in their studies and prefer to have a conservative attitude. In other words, in the English corpus, reference to previous studies relates the present research results to previous findings (Swales, 1990). However, it seems that Persian writers hope to search credibility and validity for their findings by repetitively referring to past literature.

Finally, “limitations of study” favors a higher frequency in the English corpus (85%) compared with the Persian corpus (40%). While English writers believe that all studies inevitably have limitations and reflect this belief in such sentences as “*Like other studies, the present study has some limitations*” (E. 19), Persian writers seem hesitant of talking about limitations and consider them as signs of weaknesses and deficiencies of their studies so that they avoid talking about limitations as far as possible.

On the basis of the frequency analysis, this study developed a model of move schemas for the English corpus. The analysis of the English corpus revealed that all the Discussion sections of English RAs were made up of two levels of organization: a macro-level and a micro-level (moves-steps). The macro-level consisted of Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. Since these three parts were observed in all English texts under investigation, they can be considered macro moves. Meanwhile, each macro move itself was made of some micro moves. Table 20. presents the model of move schemas developed in this study for the Discussion sections of English research articles. This table shows each macro move along with its micro moves. This model presents a clear framework of the sequence of moves observed in the Discussion sections of published English RAs. It seeks to provide a framework for the EFL writers/scholars who want to

have their English articles published in professional journals of the field. It will hopefully help EFL professional writers write more effective research articles.

Table 20. The Extended Model of the Move Schema of the Discussion Sections of the English Corpus Identified in this Study

Introduction	Background information Result statement References (possible)
Body	Explanation Exemplification References (required)
Conclusion	Deduction Recommendations References (possible)

Parallel to Swales' (2004) model of the Introduction sections of RAs, the above model can be rendered into Figure 1:

Figure 1. The Extended Model of the Move Schema of the Discussion Sections of the English Corpus Identified in this Study

Move 1 *Background Information* (citations possible)

via

Step 1 (optional) Restatement of the aims of the study

Step 2 (optional) Summarizing research procedures

Step 3 (optional) Outlining what will be followed

Step 4 (optional) Restating research questions

Move 2 *Result Statement* (citations possible)

via

Presenting a brief, general statement of the result/s without interpreting them

Move 3 *Explanation* (citations required)

via

Step 1 (optional) Justification of results through citation

Step 2 (optional) Finding reasons for the results

Step 3 (optional) Interpreting results

Move 4 *Exemplification*

via

Step 1 (optional) Providing examples

Step 2 (optional) Illustrations

Move 5 *Deduction* (citations possible)

via

Making conclusions about the findings

Move 6 *Recommendations* (citations possible)

via

Step 1 (optional) Recommendations for pragmatic purposes

Step 2 (optional) Expressing limitations of the study

Step 3 (obligatory) Recommendations for further research

5. Conclusion

The findings revealed that while there is a kind of universality in the moves across English and Persian Discussion sections, there are some discrepancies in the frequency and sequence of these moves. Some culture-specific factors may have given rise to these differences. According to Kaplan (1987), writing styles differ across cultures, a statement that has been widely supported through linguistic analysis (Ostler, 1988; Kaplan, 1987, & Connor, 1996). Thus, it is crucial to explore, trace, and describe the origins of rhetorical differences across cultures. As Bhatia (1993) believes, the most important function of learning is not simply to be able to read and produce a piece of text as a computer does, but to become sensitive to its conventions in order to ensure the pragmatic success of the text in its academic or professional context. Therefore, a model or an explicit structural pattern provides a framework for guided practice in the genre. This allows writers to concentrate on particular stages in order to polish strategies for organizing information and evolving realizations (Hyland, 1992, p. 14). In the same vein, this study attempted to provide EFL writers and EAP practitioners with a tentative model of communication of the Discussion section of RA genre. The model proposed in this study can familiarize writers/scholars of English with the move schemas of the Discussion sections of English research articles which they should follow while they write English research articles. It may also make them aware of some characteristics of Persian Discussion sections which are somehow different from the characteristics of English texts and Persian EFL writers should be aware of them when they write English research articles. It hopes to help EFL writers get their articles easily published in international professional journals.

This study suffers from some limitations. In this study, the articles written by English and Persian writers on applied linguistic issues were selected and analyzed. The results would change if the articles were written by practitioners/writers of other fields of inquiry. So, other studies can be conducted following the same procedure to identify the generic structure of research articles written by practitioners/writers of other fields.

Several studies can also be conducted in which other sections of RAs across different languages are studied.

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Publications.

Appendices

Part 1) List of the English Research Articles (Codified as E. 1-E. 30) Used as the English Corpora (The articles have been alphabetically ordered based on the author (s)' names):

Alderson, J. C. (2007). Judging the frequency of English words. *Applied Linguistics Journal*. 28, 3, 383-409. (E. 4)

Basturkmen, H., Loewen, S., Ellis, R. (2004). Teachers' stated beliefs about incidental focus on form and their classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics Journal*. 25, 2, 243-277. (E. 12)

Caldas, S. J., Caron-Caldas, S. (2002). A socio-linguistic analysis of the language preferences of adolescent bilinguals: Shifting alliances and developing identities. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 2, 4, 490-514. (E. 6)

Ching, L. C. (2002). Strategy and self-regulation instruction as contributors to improving students' cognitive model in an ESL program. *ESP Journal*, 21, 261-289.

(E- 20)

Crossley, S. A., McCarthy, P. M., Louwerse, M. M., McNamara, D. S. (2007). The linguistic analysis of simplified and authentic texts. *The Modern Language Journal*. 97, 1, 15-30. (E. 2)

Csizer, K., Dornyei, Z. (2005). The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning efforts. *The Modern Language Journal*. 89, 1, 19-36. (E. 8)

- Dussias, P. E. (2003). Syntactic ambiguity resolution in L2 learners: Some effects of bilingualism on L1 and L2 processing strategies. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal*, 25, 529-557. (E. 27)
- Ellis, R., Loewen, S., Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal*. 28, 339-368. (E. 14)
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- Lieberman, M., Aoshima, S., Phillips, C. (2006). Native-like biases in generation of wh-questions by non-native speakers of Japanese. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal*. 28, 423-448 (E. 3)
- Mackey, A. (2006). Feedback, noticing, and instructive second language learning. *Applied Linguistics Journal*. 27, 3, 405-430. (E. 29)
- North, S. (2005). Disciplinary variation in the use of theme in undergraduate essays. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 26, 3, 431-452. (E. 22).
- Philp, J. (2003). Constraints on noticing the gap: non-native speakers' noticing of recasts in NS-NNS interaction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal*. 25, 99-126. (E. 26)
- Pulido, D. (2007). The effects of topic familiarity and passage sight vocabulary on L2 lexical inferencing and retention through reading. *Applied Linguistics Journal*. 28, 1, 66-86. (E. 5)
- Ross, S. J. (2005). The impact of assessment method on foreign language proficiency growth. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 26, 3, 317-342. (E. 23)
- Ruiying, Y., Allison, D. (2004). Research articles in applied linguistics: structures from a functional perspective. *ESP Journal*. 23, 264-279. (E. 18)
- Sachs, R. (2007). Learners' use of two types of written feedback on a L2 writing revision task. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal*, 29, 1, 67-100. (E. 24)
- Waring, H. Z. (2005). Peer tutoring in a graduate writing center: Identity, expertise, and advice reciting. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 2, 141-148. (E. 25)

- Webb, S. (2007). The effects of repetition on vocabulary knowledge. *Applied Linguistics Journal.* 28, 1, 46-650. (E. 17)
- Webber, P. (2005). Interactive features in medical conference monologue. *ESP Journal.* 24, 157-181. (E. 13)
- Woodrow, L. (2006). A model of adaptive language learning. *The Modern Language Journal,* 90, 3, 297-309. (E. 28)
- Yabuki-Soh, L. (2007). Teaching relative clauses in Japanese: Exploring alternative types of instruction and projection effect. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Journal.* 29, 219-252. (E. 10)
- Yiakoumetti, A. (2006). A bidialectal programme for the learning of standard modern Greek in Cyprus. *Applied Linguistics Journal.* 27, 2, 295-317. (E. 15)
- Yu, M. C. (2004). Interlinguistic variation and similarity in second language speech act behavior. *The Modern Language Journal.* 88, 1, 103-119. (E. 16)
- Zhu, W. (2004). Writing in business courses: An analysis of assignment types, their characteristics, and required skills. *ESP Journal.* 23, 111-135. (E. 9)

Part 2) List of the Persian Research Articles (Codified as P. 1-P. 30) Used as the Persian Corpora (The articles have been alphabetically ordered based on the author (s)' names):

آقا گل زاده، فردوس. کاربرد آموزه های زبانشناسی نقشگرا در تجزیه و تحلیل متون ادبی. مجله دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی دانشگاه مشهد، شماره 149، 1-21، صص. 1384 (P. 12)

امیری خراسانی، احمد؛ علی نژاد، مهر انگیز. بررسی مشکلات آموزش زبان فارسی به غیر فارسی زبانان و ارائه چند راهکار. مجله دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی دانشگاه مشهد، شماره 149، صص. 51- 23. 1384.

(P. 13)

برزآبادی فراهانی، داود. پایابی و روایی خودارزیابی و تاثیر توانش زبانی، جنسیت، و پیش آگاهی از ابزار سنجش عینی. پژوهش زبانهای خارجی، شماره 24، صص. 139- 151. 1384. (P. 10)

بهنام، بیوک. ماهیت تعامل زنجیره واژه ها در داستان کوتاهی از همینگوی: ارائه یک رهیافت تحلیلی برای بررسی عناصر انسجامی در متون نثر ادبی. فصلنامه علمی-پژوهشی علوم انسانی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)، سال دهم، شماره 36. 3. 1379. صص. 17- 3. (P. 29)

تجلی، غفار. یادگیری و آموزش اصطلاحات. نشریه دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی دانشگاه شهید باهنر کرمان، شماره دوم. صص. 31- 15. 1376. (P. 28)

حسینی نصب، داود. بررسی رابطه مولفه های یادگیری خودنظم داده شده با پیشرفت تحصیلی. مجله دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی دانشگاه مشهد، شماره اول و دوم. صص. 369- 379. 1380. (P. 15)

حقانی، نادر. قابلیت های بستر الکترونیکی در آموزش زبان. پژوهش زبانهای خارجی، شماره 18. صص. 39- 50. 1383. (P. 7)

حقانی، نادر. شیوه انتقالی در بستر آموزش الکترونیکی. پژوهش زبانهای خارجی، شماره 24. صص. 87- 98. 1384. (P. 11)

خان زاده، علی؛ معرفت، حمیده؛ حجازی، باقر؛ و جعفری کندوان، غلامرضا. رابطه هوش هیجانی و جرات ورزی با مشارکت کلامی فرآگیران انگلیسی. پژوهش زبانهای خارجی، شماره 38. صص. 19- 41. 1386. (P. 4)

خاوری، خسرو.. از واژه به مفهوم: اقتباس یا ترجمه ادبی. پژوهش زبانهای خارجی، شماره 18. صص. 83- 8. 1383. (P. 23)

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Title

Reflection through Peer Collaboration

“A Study from Omani ELT Classrooms”

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Bio Data

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Abstract

The literature on ELT has highlighted the important role of peer collaboration as a means to promoting critical reflective practice amongst colleagues. This paper thus reports on a study into reflection through peer collaboration among a group of 37 multinational and multicultural teachers of English in four different schools in Muscat, the capital of Sultanate of Oman. The teachers were invited to observe a lesson taught by one of their volunteer colleagues from the mandated syllabus, complete some forms while watching the lesson and conduct a post-lesson discussion. This was intended to achieve two interrelated aims: a) help the teachers concerned develop a sense of critical reflection; and b) encourage them to learn to work and develop collaboratively. A self-reported questionnaire was completed by the 37 teachers at the end of the study. The results showed that the experience was very effective in helping the teachers concerned to deepen their skills of critical reflection and acquire a better understanding of, and develop skills in peer collaboration so as to become efficient and informed agents of positive change.

Key Terms: ELT, Oman, peer collaboration, reflection, teachers, teacher education.

1. Rationale

The literature on teacher education in general and English language teaching (ELT) in particular have been supportive of the fundamental role of reflective teaching and peer collaboration as tools that contribute positively to the teacher's overall performance inside the classroom. However, the Omani ELT system operated in a somehow "traditional" manner from 1970-mid 1990s. In other words, the teacher was visited by an inspector once or twice every semester. The inspector sat at the back of the classroom and observed the teacher for one whole lesson and wrote an advisory report about him/her. This was then followed by a post-lesson session, whereby the teacher and the inspector would discuss possible ways of improvement.

However, this situation changed to a certain degree for the past decade or so, as the Ministry of Education decided to appoint a senior teacher (Head of ELT Department) in each school. One of the responsibilities of the Head Teacher, who attends a 25-hour training course as soon as s/he is appointed in this post, is to play a role almost identical to what the inspector used to play. The senior teacher is further responsible for encouraging the relatively less capable teachers in the Department (usually the Omani and non-Omani new arrivals) to visit their colleagues in the Department and observe them teaching, take notes, discuss their lessons with them, and prepare an action plan based upon what they have seen.

Unfortunately, many teachers find themselves reluctant to implement this due to the heavy teaching load they have been assigned (25-30 lessons per week with each lesson lasting 40-45 minutes) and other technical and administrative responsibilities, such as filing, marking homework and exam papers (each classroom contains over 35 students), & maintaining discipline in the school corridors during the two breaks between the periods. I gathered this information through a number of long informal talks I had with different ELT inspectors and Head Teachers whom I personally know in different schools in Muscat – the capital.

Thus, many teachers of English in Oman, who come from diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, usually bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Omani ELT classroom, which if shared, can positively impact the ELT process in the Sultanate. This was evident during my teaching in different public schools in Oman in the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, others often find internalizing the philosophy behind ELT in Oman and adjusting to the new context an uphill struggle due to the complex nature of teaching and learning a foreign/second language. This subsequently leads them to experience difficulties in performing adequately inside the classroom.

Hence, the aim of this paper is to introduce systematic reflection through peer collaboration to the Omani ELT system and bring to the attention of the decision makers and stakeholders at the Ministry of Education the advantages of such concepts and tools to the overall development of the ELT system in the Sultanate.

2. English in Oman

English in Sultanate of Oman receives legislative support from the government. It has “institutionalized domains” like the mass media, business, and education (Al-Busaidi, 1995) and is a fundamental tool for transition, national development, and modernization (Al-Issa, 2005a, b, c, d; 2006a, b, c; 2007a, b; 2008; 2009). English is also the medium of instruction in all science-based majors in the private and public higher education institutions.

In his case study about ELT in the Sultanate of Oman, Al-Issa (2002) found that Omani students learn English for purposes like cultural understanding and analysis, acquisition of skills and knowledge in science and technology, pursuing higher education locally and abroad, finding a white-collar job in the public and private sector, conducting day-to-day business transactions in English, and using English for other communicative purposes like travelling abroad, for example.

2.1. ELT in Oman

Al-Issa (2005a, b, c; 2006a; 2007a; 2008) argues that English in the authoritative Omani educational system is rigidly centralized and is used as a tool for transmitting “selective traditions” (Williams, 1989) and “interested knowledge” (Pennycook, 1989), which prevents the students from using the language in communicative, functional, analytical, and creative ways. This has its implications for producing linguistically retarded and incompetent Omani users of English language, who fail to contribute to the country’s development. This is particularly the case in a system, such as Oman’s, which gives ELT insufficient time/contact hours on the national curriculum and is characterized as product, textbook and examination-based, and teacher-centred. Moreover, classrooms are mixed-ability and barrack-like (Al-Issa, 2002; 2006a, b; 2007a, b, 2009).

Furthermore, Al-Toubi (1998) and Al-Issa (2006a) found that learners in the Omani English classroom are not given opportunity to express themselves. They found that the curriculum does not provide sufficient room for spoken language and integration of the four skills, gives usage and product an edge over use and process, and lacks both authentic materials and communicative language practice activities. The researchers conclude that the Omani ELT curriculum fails to prepare the students for oral communication in English due to a lack of a variety of appropriate activities and the controlled nature of the existing ones.

2.2. English Teachers in Oman

Oman is not self-sufficient in terms of local teachers. The contract expatriate teachers recruited from outside the Sultanate to teach English in Oman mainly come from the Arab world (Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) and South-East Asia (Indian, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan) and form almost half of the teaching force in the Sultanate. These teachers vary in their cultural, social, academic and training backgrounds, which has negative implications for ELT curriculum implementation (Al-Issa, 2002). Many of these teachers, according to Al-Toubi (1998), Al-Issa (2002), and Al-Kalbani (2004), prefer teaching English the way they were taught – through Grammar Translation and the Audio-Lingual Method.

In addition, Al-Issa (2005a) found that English teachers graduating from SQU have problems with their language and teaching competence in general, and that such problems can be attributed to inadequate program design and delivery and to their early English language learning experience at school.

Initial second language teacher education programs thus train prospective teachers to pay as much attention as possible to each and every part and detail of the lesson – the “nuts and bolts” of the classroom process. However, such parts and details are unfortunately sometimes overlooked or even neglected by the different student teachers once they graduate from their respective teacher training institutes (Al-Issa, 1993). This has been mainly found due to the various images and beliefs graduating teachers construct throughout their training process, which they sometimes fail to confront (Al-Issa, 2002).

Thus, the language classroom is governed by various social, psychological, cultural, economic, and political factors that determine its success or otherwise (Al-Issa, 2002), and it is these factors that form the greatest challenge to the teacher's skill, knowledge, and ability and require him/her to become a critical reflector, dynamic inquirer, and an informed analyst. Such a study clearly needs to be carried out to contribute to the overall understanding of these problems as encountered by the various English teachers in Oman and to examine such teachers' readiness, willingness and determination to change and bring about positive change through working collaboratively and reflectively about what they are doing and how they are doing it and about what they are using, how and why. This is bound to lead to critique of the prescribed material and the scope of language it presents, and subsequently a move beyond what is given to develop a sense of professionalism that has its powerful implications to learning and teaching English in Oman.

2.3. Reflection and Peer Collaboration

Teaching is always evolving (Collier, 1999) thus requiring teachers to reflect systematically and constantly on their knowledge, practice, beliefs, and experience. This process of reflection enables them to diagnose and understand their classroom contexts and students' learning better, put their students' learning at the heart of the process,

develop a rationale for their teaching, and take informed specific actions in the classroom (Al-Issa, 2002). In other words, teachers are required to identify problems emerging in their classrooms and schools through “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action” (Schon, 1983) and try to solve these problems through continuous reflection and professional inquiry into their own practices (Schon, 1983, 1987).

Moreover, reflective teaching is a sign of “intelligent action” (Farrell, 2003) as well as a life-long activity and skill which helps improve the complex classroom processes and outcomes. At the same time it develops confident and self-motivated teachers and learners (Pennington, 1992).

Furthermore, reflective teaching facilitates professional development and trains teachers to become dynamic examiners and inquirers and active thinkers (Seidelhofer, 1999), who rid themselves from “impulse and routine behavior” and “grow beyond the initial stages of survival in the classroom to reconstructing their own particular theory from their practice” (Farrell, 2003, p. 20). Reflective teaching further helps teachers access their beliefs and images via questioning and assimilation of roles (Collier, 1999).

In addition, reflective teaching trains teachers to analyze critically their own performance (Calderhead, 1989) and promotes open-mindedness and the acquisition of experience (Zeichner, 1983; Zeichner & Teitelbaum, 1982). Critical reflection, according to Richards (1990), “... is a response to a past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action” (p. 95).

Richards (1990) considers reflection as a key component of teacher development and Zeichner (1994, 1996) believes that reflection is an essential component for bringing understanding to the complex nature of classrooms and states that teachers should be trained to reflect on the subject matter and the thoughtful application of particular teaching strategies. He further states that teachers need to reflect on their learners' thinking, understanding, interests, and developmental thinking. This maybe especially important when, as in the present study, the target students are teenagers, who are going through several biological, psychological and social changes. Students thus bring various hidden agendas, philosophies, needs, interests, concepts, expectations, and perceptions to the foreign language classroom (Holliday, 1992, 1994), and it is mainly and largely the

teacher's responsibility to explore and analyze all these and respond to them accordingly. After all, students are powerful socialization agents (Doyle, 1979) and classrooms are first and foremost about social realities (Al-Issa, 2002).

The literature on second language teacher education provides examples of activities like journals, narratives, diaries (Farrell, 2003; Richards, 1991; Thorne & Qiang, 1996), autobiography (Pennington, 1990; Richards, 1991), teaching portfolios (Bullock & Hawk, 2001), action research, (Gebhard, 1998), self-observation, and observation of other teachers (Farrell, 2003; Gebhard, 1998; Richards, 1998; Richards & Farrell, 2005) that can facilitate self-reflection.

Nunan (1989, p. 76) thus stresses that

There is no substitute for direct observation as a way of finding out about language classrooms. Certainly, if we want to enrich our understanding of language learning and teaching, we need to spend time looking in classrooms.

Crandall (1998) stresses that "peer observation can be a powerful source of insight and discovery" (p. 4). Cosh (1999) states that observation of others "...stimulates awareness, reflection, and a questioning approach, and it encourages experiment; it also may make us aware of exciting techniques that we are temperamentally unable to implement" (p. 25). Naidu, Neeraja, Ramani, Shivakumar and Vismanatha (1992) thus write that teachers "... possess a vast repository of classroom experience, which when shared with other teachers can lead to a body of theoretical insights and practical procedures" (p. 262). Peer observation, according to Richards (1998, p. 146), "... should be approached as an opportunity to develop a critically reflective stance" to the teachers' own teaching. "Focused" observation of teachers can act as a mirror to the observed teachers, as it "... triggers reflection about one's own teaching" and "provides an opportunity to get feedback on one's own teaching ... and developing self-awareness of one's own teaching" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 86). Richards and Farrell (2005) suggest that "how to" dimensions of teaching can be considered as the focus of an observation. The "how to" dimensions, which can be documented using a "checklist" (Richards & Farrell, 2005), can include managerial and instructional aspects. However, Bartlett (1998) argues that the "how to" questions are insufficient to consider and lack a

“utilitarian value”, and that critical reflection is most effective when the “what” and “why” questions are taken into account.

Crandall (1998) further emphasizes the integral role of observation for experienced and inexperienced teachers equally, and the change it can bring to their professional lives.

Observation can help experienced teachers develop new strategies and experience a kind of renewal, since most will not have had the opportunity of observing different teaching strategies or classrooms in many years, if at all. Issues of time, access, or attitude may have prevented much opportunity for classroom observation even in the pre-service teacher education program, and teachers may be relying on their experiences as a student (termed their “apprenticeship of observation”) for their understanding of the teaching process (p. 4-5).

Observation, therefore, requires peers who are willing to collaborate with other classroom teachers through observing each other’s classrooms and coaching each other through providing feedback, which should ultimately lead to peers supporting each other, learning from each other, and developing new theoretical and practical insights (Nunan, 1989). These insights are bound to help generate and create solutions to problems impeding students’ success. Observation within the context of this study is therefore used to mean “... a way of collecting information that can be used to develop a deeper understanding of how and why teachers teach the way they do and different ways teacher approach their lessons” (Richards, 1998, p. 142).

Richards and Farrell (2005) argue that collaboration converts the school into a culture of cooperation and a learning community and encourages and enhances professional development and sharing responsibilities and greater interaction between teachers, as it helps them to share skills, experience, and solutions to common problems, and creates new roles for teachers such as team leaders, teacher trainers, or critical friends.

Professional and reflective development through observation thus need work/professional environments (Borich, 1999) and other “significant” people like colleagues – Farrell (2003) calls them “critical friends” – who assist rather than assess

(Freese, 2006), to help self reflective processes materialize. This social and professional support and closeness, which falls under the umbrella of professional interaction and collaboration, is bound to facilitate professional development. Within this vein, Zeichner (1983) and Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982) suggest that one of the conditions that facilitates critical inquiry and reflection is self-assessment and peer assessment, which encourage and develop a sense of wholeheartedness and self-sufficiency in the teachers. Rodgers (2002) thus acknowledges that "... the most productive starting place for teachers' professional development is their own classroom experience" and that "... transformative growth comes through reflection on experience where such ideas practices illuminate teachers practice rather than usurp it" (p. 232).

In the research study reported here and carried out in four different schools in Muscat, the teachers have different levels of experience, knowledge, skills, and expertise, which makes mutual sharing of knowledge and experience a valuable source of professional growth, as such teachers need opportunities to update their professional knowledge through learning from their classrooms (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

The teachers, hence, reflected on their practice through attending an off-shot in-service workshop and observing one of their colleagues volunteering to teach a lesson from the mandated textbook, completing a lesson observation form and a survey questionnaire, and participating in a post-lesson discussion session about the concerned lesson. The volunteer teachers too had an opportunity to reflect on their lessons through completing a self-evaluation form about their lessons and a survey questionnaire about the entire experience.

3. Setting and Participants

Four different schools in Muscat were approached on different days – approximately one to two-week intervals between each of the four visits. A teacher in each of the four schools (#4, #13, #22, and #35 – see table below) volunteered to teach a lesson on the specified day. Each of the four lessons taught were attended by the respective teachers' colleagues in the school. The students' levels in the different classrooms, and according

to the IELTS band scale, ranged from “intermittent”-“limited” users of English - Band 2-4.

There were a total number of 37 participating teachers in the four schools. They represented both genders, many different nationalities – Omanis, Jordanians, Syrians, Sudanese, Egyptians, Tunisians, Pakistanis and Indians, and widely different cultural, social, academic and training backgrounds (see Table 1).

Table 1: Description of participants.

Number	Nationality	Years of Experience	
		Outside Oman	In Oman
1	Omani	-	21
2	Omani	-	13
3	Omani	-	12
4	Omani	-	5
5	Omani	-	3
6	Omani	-	3
7	Omani	-	1
8	Omani	-	22
9	Omani	-	13
10	Omani	-	13
11	Omani	-	12
12	Omani	-	8
13	Omani	-	6
14	Omani	-	7

15	Omani	-	7
16	Omani	-	3
17	Omani	-	2
18	Omani	-	16
19	Omani	-	17
20	Omani	-	2
21	Omani	-	11
22	Omani	-	10
23	Egyptian	10	7
24	Sudanese	8	2
25	Sudanese	25	5
26	Pakistani	5	16
27	Indian	23	2
28	Jordanian	14	4
Numbe r	Nationality	Years of Experience	
		Outside Oman	In Oman
29	Indian	3	14
30	Egyptian	15	4
31	Egyptian	10	4
32	Egyptian	4	17
33	Syrian	20	2
34	Indian	4	16
35	Egyptian	9	7

36	Tunisian	2	12
37	Tunisian	5	4

The Arab teachers (Omanis, Jordanians, Syrians, Sudanese, Egyptians & Tunisians share several features in common such as the native language (Arabic), the place of ELT on the curriculum (a school subject rather than a language), and the role of English language in the country (foreign language), while it is a second language in India & Pakistan, which usually has its implications to the teacher's and students' competence & proficiency in English. There are other features, which these Arab teachers share with the Indian and Pakistani teachers such as roles of teachers and students inside the classroom (teachers as deliverers of knowledge and students as recipients), resources allocated to ELT (large classes and lack of technological equipment), ELT approaches adopted (mainly Audio-Lingual and Grammar Translation), and adherence to the mandated textbook as stressed by the respective language education systems. While the first language in India is Hindi & in Pakistan it is Urdu, teachers coming from India, Pakistan, and Tunisia are usually multilingual, while the rest are usually bilingual. Also, all teachers, except the Tunisians, are usually trained to teach from the mandated textbook.

All teachers were asked to fill out a "descriptive information form" (see Appendix 3) prior to the commencement of the study. They had to provide basic and background information about themselves and the context they were working in, as this information was relevant for the experiment/study in general.

All teachers had certain things in common and taught English in almost identical circumstances in Muscat. They all held a first degree in ELT; they all taught young learners in public schools (13-15 years old Preparatory classes and 16-18 years old Secondary classes); they all taught the same mandated national syllabus, *Our World Through English* (OWTE), which is written and published by the Omani Ministry of Education; they all taught large classes (35-45 students in each class), which has been found negatively impacting communicative language teaching (CLT) (Al-Issa, 2002); and they were all assigned a relatively heavy workload (18-24 periods per week), which is

considered to hinder CLT, which requires careful preparation, effort, and time (Al-Issa, 2002).

Research Questions

In the light of the current ELT context in the Omani schools at the theory and practice levels and the way teachers are trained and operate, which has its implications for their performance and their learners' English language competence, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What aspects of ELT can the teachers reflect on during their peer collaboration?
2. What are the uses of implementing peer collaboration in an ELT context like Oman's?

4. Methodology

This study adopts an “interpretive-descriptive” approach (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and aims at helping the target teachers’ professional development and transformative growth to take place/deepen through systematic reflection on experience (Rodgers, 2002). Thus, the complex and multidimensional participants’ interaction with everyday interweaving events and activities inside the classroom and the system as a whole and the meanings they give to all these through their statements largely determines their role as active and dynamic reflectors, or otherwise. The review of the pertinent literature has revealed that reflective practice is complex and has different levels and multiple purposes, and it is the role of the participants to reveal their understanding of these levels and purposes through their evaluations, analyses, and interpretations of the different lessons. As Rodgers (2002) writes that “reflection demands community and the diverse perspectives on practice that community brings” (p. 233).

Thus, different forms and texts were used to facilitate the reflective and collaborative process amongst the teachers, which is much more fruitful and rewarding than individual work and contributes to a deeper understanding of experience-in-context from the perspective of the target participants. Three lesson observation forms were

hence designed to facilitate “systematic observation” (Nunan, 1989) and help the observing teachers comment in as many details as possible on the observed lesson. Moreover, a self-evaluation form was designed for the teaching/observed teacher to complete on completion of teaching his/her lesson. It is imperative that an “objective record” (Nunan, 1989) is provided here to help the volunteer teachers to self-monitor their performance (Nunan, 1989). The lesson plans prepared by the teaching teachers in their daily lesson plan books were also copied and distributed to the observing teachers. In addition, a survey questionnaire was designed and a copy was given to each participant to complete. The checklists or observation schedules used in this study are used “... to obtain information from teachers about their teaching practices” (Nunan, 1989, p. 62), while the questionnaires are used to identify the teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about what they have seen.

The 12 items in the questionnaire largely derive from, and are inspired by, the literature on reflective teaching and collaborative development. Recorded excerpts from the respective teachers’ statements during the post-lesson discussions, which centered round reflecting on their own performance and their colleagues’, are incorporated within the discussion where appropriate. The data collected was analyzed through descriptive statistics.

To improve the questionnaires’ quality, reliability, and validity, the questionnaires (lesson observation forms, self-evaluation form, and survey questionnaires) were piloted on two ELT volunteers (one Omani and the other Sudanese) from the College of Law in SQU.

5. Discussion

Four themes – understanding classroom realities, sharing and learning, making decisions, and using English – have emerged from the inductive analysis of the data and will be discussed below. The review of the pertinent literature, the researcher’s professional definitions, and his own values and experience with the subject matter contributed to the construction of these themes (Ryan & Russell Bernard, 2003). 75.7% agreed in item 6 that observing their colleagues teaching and completing the forms gave them new insights and ideas about their students’ learning. This is an indication of “open-

mindedness" (Dewey, 1933). It is important that teachers look back and see forward "... in order to move closer to the future aims" (Hamerness, 2006, p. 3).

Moreover, the four teachers, who were teaching different levels, classes, and lessons, had developed a good rapport between them and their learners. The students were clear about what they were doing, timing was good, and discipline was restored due to the four teachers' good personalities, movement, and positioning. Hamachek (1999) states that "the rapport existing between teachers and students is the interpersonal medium within which teaching and learning occur" (p. 202). Hamachek also states that "research supports the idea that one of the reasons effective teachers are effective is because they are able to create an interpersonal medium that encourages positive rapport" (p. 202). Hamerness (2006) stresses that teachers who focus much on their subject matter, while overlooking their students' needs and interests, are "... focusing on only one half of the equation" (p. 6). Hence, 91.9% in item 1 disagreed that if they were to teach the same lesson they would make certain changes to classroom management aspects.

One of the encouraging comments raised by participant #8 to the observed teacher (#13) was "I liked the fact that you never stopped smiling at your students. You seem to like each other". The observed teacher's (#13) response was revealing when she said "I firmly believe that the closer you are to your students' hearts, the easier you can manage your class." This was a positive and important statement of the practitioner's own belief about the psychology of education, which the observed teacher held and passed on to her colleagues. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) suggest that "going deeper" while exercising "core reflection" helps the professional dig into the richness of one's inner potential through focus on the positive feelings connected with the inner potential and one's inner sources of inspiration.

Furthermore, Conway (2001) states that "... accurate perceptions of self, world ... are essential for mental health" (p. 99). Conway further states that "... overly positive self-evaluation, exaggerated perceptions of control or mastery, and unrealistic optimism are characteristics of normal thought" (p. 99). Teachers described this way – caring for others (their students) – can be hence productive and creative in their field.

Thus, being friendly and showing warmth, are two of the essential interaction and personal characteristics of an effective teacher (Hamachek, 1999). Hamachek acknowledges that “qualities of this type help teachers to be sensitive and emphatic” (p. 196). Hamachek highlights the importance of personal qualities and personality in teaching practices and establishes a strong link between the “person” and the “professional” and considers them as inseparable. Hamachek stresses that “intelligence” in teachers includes their ability to deal effectively with others and “... to know one’s own feelings and understand one’s own behavior” (p. 218).

Another positive comment came from participant #24 to his teaching colleague – #22. “You were really busy during the pair work activity monitoring almost everyone very carefully. I thought that was very good ... They were quite busy and serious”. Rodgers (2002) encourages teachers to place learning at the heart of the educational process and give their attention on their students’ learning, while meantime warns teachers from assuming that students are learning if they are engaged – “engaged” as in being on task or getting work done, as learning is complex and concerned with “... what and how students are understanding” and what “... they are learning and how they are learning it” (p. 236). In other words, learning is not about appearances, which can be deceptive, but about processes.

Participant #22 responded to his colleague by acknowledging “you have to be certain they are all working by being physically and mentally close to them, or you may have class control problems”. Class control appears to be a concern in Oman and many parts of the world when teaching male students and an important “physical level” (Hammerness, 2006) appears to be an effective solution, although may not be always realistic. However, this Omani teacher, who showed a moment of reflection-in-action, demonstrated to his expatriate colleague how such a problem could be tackled and overcome through assessing his own action, which enriched the other teacher’s experience in this respect and told something about the complexity of teaching and learning (a foreign language).

Participant #22 further devoted sufficient time to get the students to practice the language in isolation from his interference and got them engaged in practicing the target language meaningfully. This could be a reflection of the fact that this teacher supports his

students "... as they construct their own knowledge" (McLean, 1999, p. 64) and favors engaging the students in tasks that promote communicative, interactive, and meaningful language use and practice and assigns "progressive" or more "contemporary" roles to himself - supervisor, guide, organizer, helper, facilitator, etc. These are indications of a "thoughtful" teacher (Hamachek, 1999), who reflects on his students' interests, needs, and wants.

Participant #13 and #22, therefore, have acquired self-esteem as a result of their self-evaluation and were able to judge the effect of their impact according to acquired values and standards (Borich, 1999).

The comments coming from participants #8 and #24 fostered the respective teachers' self-esteem. Both comments stressed the teachers' role as valued significant others to the pupils with respect to guidance. Moreover, the comments provided feedback that allowed the teachers in action to realistically perceive their progress and share an appropriate amount of responsibility with their students (Borich, 1999). This helped the teachers to move away from what Borich (1999) describes as "... teacher authority, external control, and extrinsic rewards toward internalized standards, an internal locus of control, and intrinsic reward" (p. 114). In reporting their answers to item 5, 81.1% of the observed teachers agreed that they had been very encouraged by the post-lesson discussion and the new ideas and insights about teaching English that they had gained. The post-lesson discussion presented feedback to the observed teachers, which mainly included constructive criticism by the observing colleagues, or the critical friends, and a substantial amount of informed practical and theoretical suggestions that the observers felt would help their colleagues to improve their performance and move beyond the routine and the initial stages of survival in the classroom (Farrell, 2003). The feedback not only added new ideas and insights to the observed teachers' knowledge, but many of the observing teachers appeared to have benefited from it too.

Participant #5 raised the following comment to #4 about a lesson in the Preparatory textbook in which the students were asked to write paragraphs about different countries of the world like USA, Britain, China, Argentina, Australia, Singapore and Tunisia. She said:

I liked the idea of using the world map to start the lesson with ... Getting them to point to the different countries in the lesson was really good and I could tell they liked it and had good knowledge about the geography of those countries.

Another comment was from participant #7:

I particularly liked the idea of leading them into the lesson through providing them with a parallel paragraph about Mexico with filling some blanks with some missing words. There were no countries from Central America in the lesson.

A third comment was from participant #3:

I thought turning a big part of the textbook lesson into a game was a great decision and gave the class a lot of zest ... Myself I'm a big fan of teaching through games and your kids appeared to have enjoyed it very much.

Participant #4 has projected considerable enthusiasm by turning an ordinary lesson into an exciting and interesting one. She has clearly put time, thinking, and effort into preparing the lesson. She is aware of her students' levels, interest, and needs & has clearly reflected on it. She is aware of the uses and values of English in Oman. Therefore, she exerted effort to motivate her students and help them accomplish something and acquire language skills that will be helpful and useful to them in their academic and social future. Ofman (2000) acknowledges that core qualities as flexibility, sensitivity and creativity are always potentially present and come from the deeper level of the inside. Tickle (1999) mentions that such qualities are essential for teachers. Peterson and Seligman (2003) stress that such core qualities should be nurtured, as they reflect the strength of the teacher's character and produce desirable outcomes inside the classroom.

Participant #4 has translated her knowledge of pedagogical practices into interesting, meaningful, and interactive activities, which integrated as many skills as possible with each other. In short, she has successfully blended the three prerequisite types of knowledge – content, pedagogical, and pedagogical-content (Schulman, 1987) – any teacher needs. Such teachers with such “intellectual characteristics” (Hamachek, 1999) are worthy of being classified as good and effective.

Item 7 is closely related to item 6 and the scores are identical. Again 75.7% agreed that the post-lesson discussion gave them new insights into, and ideas about their students' learning. The teachers were seen to be acquiring relevant knowledge from two different and important sources – observation and post-lesson discussion, both of which involve "significant" others. While the former source appeared to have given 33 of them a chance to observe a lesson and think, the latter source gave all the teachers a genuine chance to play a more active role through discussing, giving advice, making practical suggestions, and expressing their professional opinions. Sharing all this is important, and has its implications for understanding the Omani homogeneous ELT classrooms.

Moreover, 46% agreed in item 3 that the lesson contained ideas which they would like to apply in their future teaching, as opposed to those who did not (54%). The four lessons taught by the four teachers dealt with different topics. Two of the teachers (#13 and #35) adhered to the steps in the teacher's guide, while the other two brought a considerable amount of their own ideas to the lesson.

The same can be said about item 4, where 51.4% agreed that observing their colleagues teaching and completing the forms gave them new ideas about and insights into teaching English, which is an important sign of dynamic examination and active thinking. Once again, those were the ones who agreed that if they were to teach the same lesson, they would make some changes to certain teaching techniques and procedures (Item 2).

Thus, and with reference to the "Titanic" lesson, participant #27 raised the following comment to the observed teacher (#35):

I could tell your students were really hungry for giving you information beyond the textbook and wanted to show you this. They obviously knew a lot about the story ... It could have broken the routine. Don't you think you should have given them a chance to demonstrate to you that they knew something more than what's in the textbook? ... These chances don't knock on your door everyday ... It's not always easy to get them to choose to speak about something they know or like ... This could have been *their* lesson today!

Participant #35 lacks “anticipatory” reflection (Freese, 2006). He failed to see that total adherence to the textbook would be problematic in the sense that it would fail to meet the needs and interests of his students. This resulted in him failing to see the solution, which is represented in moving beyond the textbook and adding some change and variety to the context.

Participant #27, who is concerned with the students’ needs, interests, and abilities, is confronting and steering his colleague through explaining the problem to him & trying to raise his awareness about what should have been achieved (apply their knowledge to the lesson and use the language meaningfully and interactively), why and what prevented him from achieving it – “limiting factors” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). He then drew his attention to the qualities needed for achieving the target – better preparation, showing more flexibility, and projecting more enthusiasm that lends excitement to one’s own teaching. He then mentions to him that such a lesson should have been taught in a creative atmosphere and a pleasant and productive manner. In other words, participant #27 wants his colleague to be conscious of and sensitive to his students’ needs and interests and to be sufficiently daring to move beyond simply surviving in the classroom to being in control of the entire situation with a sense of innovation and creativity and with power over the subject matter and an edge over the mandated textbook.

Participant #27 adopted in his feedback the “core reflection” phase model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Such model derives from positive psychology and “... helps build professional growth on the teacher’s sources of inspiration and personal strengths” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 23). Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) consider core reflection as “a rewarding experience”, which helps teachers get into touch with their “inner potential” and raises their awareness about their students’ core qualities.

Items 9 and 10 very closely complement each other and show the strong reciprocal and cooperative relationship between the observed and the observing teachers. In fact, 100% of the teachers in items 9 and 10 agreed that they would like to attend more classes of their colleagues and have their colleagues attend their own classes in the future. This is an indication of “open-mindedness”, “responsibility”, and “wholeheartedness” (Dewey, 1933), which are all important for reflection. The high scores obtained in items 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10 demonstrated the willingness of the teachers to frame and reframe their

teaching through scratching beneath the surface (Freese, 2006) and think about and accept change and hopefully take action. All the teachers surveyed clearly understood the importance of working and cooperating with “significant” others and appreciated the strengths and skills of their colleagues.

Although 46% disagreed that, if they were to teach the same lesson again, they would make some changes to certain teaching techniques and procedures in item 2, 54% agreed with the statement which underscored their awareness that this was a very important sign of decision making and reflection on the subject matter and the application of teaching strategies. Reflecting on and revising a teaching plan should lead to taking informed decisions. As I said above, the four lessons taught by the four teachers dealt with different topics.

Two of the teachers (#13 and #35) adhered to the steps in the teacher’s guide, while the other two brought a considerable amount of their own ideas to the lesson. It is interesting to know that the 54%, who agreed, were the ones who saw teachers #13 and #35.

For instance, participant #28 remarked to the observed teacher (#35), who did not supplement the lesson, which was about the famous ship the “Titanic” saying “You could have asked the students about the film “Titanic” as a warm-up exercise ... I’m sure most of them or even all of them have seen it” - (the recent version of the film was released in the cinemas in Oman and televised on one of the very popular free-to-air satellite channels – MBC – a few years back and repeated a few months later).

Participant #37 described his experience:

In fact, I taught this lesson last week. What I did was to get the class in groups first. I then wrote the word Titanic on the blackboard. It was a sort of a competition you know. I asked them to write as much information they knew about the Titanic as possible ... of course with their books closed. The group leaders then started reading out the answers. The group that got the most information, which I put on the blackboard, came first. It was fun ... Textbook work came after that, actually. I know that Task Eight in the teacher’s guide is a

speaking exercise and not exactly like what I'm trying to say ... but I wouldn't see any harm in starting with such an idea.

Participant #34 made the following suggestion

You could have started by asking the students about who liked sailing and what kinds of ships, seas and oceans they knew and then gradually moved on to talking about the Titanic, which could have been a good starter for the lesson.

A fourth comment came in the form of a question from participant #26. "How much do you think the students would know about the Titanic in the age of information and satellite TV?"

These three participants (#28, #34, and #37) are trying to identify themselves professionally with the professional environment they are affiliated with through initiating a communication. In other words, they are reflecting on their personal practical knowledge and teaching experience, which are "complex and contextual" (McLean, 1999, p. 67), and are trying to present this experience, which is a blend of their beliefs, images, attributes, values, and behavior, in the way they perceive it appropriate, with an aim to make a positive impact on their colleague. They are trying to communicate some principles about dynamic, innovative, and creative teaching and the impact and effect such teaching can have on the students. Their reflection fits more with what McLean (1999) class the "pragmatic" or "traditional skill-based" (p. 70) approach which emphasizes "what works and what doesn't" or "the right" and "the best", which McLean considers as making "... good sense to many beginning teachers" (p. 71), as it helps them increase their confidence in their progress in becoming teachers as a result of accumulating more concrete strategies about teaching to select from.

Borich (1999) argues that teachers playing such "directive" roles can have a positive influence over their colleagues, particularly if they provide their colleagues with positive reflection and complete and accurate feedback, as it is the case here. Teachers as such, according to Borich, are supportive, self-assured, independent, autonomous, and holders of a positive self-esteem. Hamachek (1999, p. 209) says that "the more that teachers know about themselves – the private curriculum within – the more their personal decisions are apt to be about how to pave the way for better teaching".

However, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) thus argue that teachers are naturally and generally influenced by the school culture and the pressure of work they experience, which leads them to focus on obtaining rapid solutions to practical problems, as it is the case in the statements made by participants #28, #34, and #37, "... rather than shedding light on the underlying issues" (p. 4). Korthagen and Vasalos consider such approach to reflection as lacking structure and describe it as "effective short-term measure" (p. 4), which prevents the teacher from going deeper and hence developing the ability to be "... internally directed to learning" (p. 4)

Thus, it is interesting to see participant #26 taking a "structured feedback" approach (Rodgers, 2002) – an approach which draws the attention of participant #35 to the fact that learning is complex and that there is a great deal hidden in the minds and hearts of the students (Rodgers, 2002). This approach, as described by Rodgers, challenges teachers to describe and analyze the context. Participant #26 is trying to help participant #35 to be "present" and "himself". He wants him to internalize the subject matter and draw his attention away from the textbook, while listen to his "students' thinking" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 237). He wants him "... to see through his "students' eyes" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 237) and pay full attention to their learning and to contributing to their intellectual and linguistic development, "... rather than being chained to a lesson plan that may fit the learning" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 234).

Rodgers suggests that in "... putting comments in the form of questions" approach the observing teachers are helping the observed teacher to "... expand the details of what happened and keep her interpretation multiple and tentative" (p. 241) and that this approach gives teachers like #35 "... the opportunity to paint a fuller picture before others jump to conclusions and start to give advice, an impulse that inevitably shuts down the process of inquiry" (p. 242). Teaching is considered as art and teachers are seen as artists, who should attend to their complex work with all their whole heart and mind and make meaning. In other words, it is the thoughts, feelings, needs, wants, and actions of the teacher and the students are what are being reflected on, as they make arriving at new actions possible (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Korthagen and Vasalos call this the "concreteness phase" in their suggested core reflection model.

Participant #35 – the observed teacher – commented on the importance of finishing the mandated textbook in time.

I know what you're saying is nice and helpful and I respect it all. But the problem is that we don't have a lot of time. I think it is safer to stick to the textbook because the students will have their exams soon and they need to be good at doing tasks like the ones they have in the textbook ... I mean they need to get good training before the examination in order to score good marks.

Participant #32 agrees with this participant:

Well, I've been hearing about this problem of finishing the syllabus in time since the day I came to Oman. It hasn't changed since then. It is the same every year. The inspectors ask you to finish teaching the textbook before the final exams.

It is interesting to see participant #35 and to some extent #32 applying what Conway (2001) calls “prospective” reflection, or what Augustine (1961 - cited in Conway, 2001) labels in his “model of time” as “future-in-the-present”. In other words, reflection here is “... about looking forward toward the horizon. Looking toward the future with knowledge of the past from the viewpoint of the present” (Conway, 2001, p. 90).

Looking at the statement of participant #35 from a different perspective, one can argue that his openness to learning, his relationship with the students, and the classroom climate have been impacted by his attitudes. He is attributing his behavior and surrendering his power to external variables instead of accepting responsibility for his behavior and actions (Freese, 2006). This consequently has its negative implications for the students' behavior and attainment. This is usually the case in a traditional foreign language classroom where the end product has an edge over the developmental process. The beginning of his statement indicates a discrepancy between his theories of learning and teaching English and the classroom experience (Conway, 2001) and a contradiction between his beliefs and practice (Freese, 2006). While he believes that what his three colleagues said was right, his practice was contradictory to that. This can be possibly attributed to fear of failure (Freese, 2006). His fear of finishing the year with a large number of failure students in his classroom, made him resort to training his students for

exam purposes. His reputation and present job as a non-Omani contract teacher can get affected by the marks his students score in the final exams. This fear and anxiety have led him to create what he believes to be an “ideal situation” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005) and believe and feel that he has no power or influence over the entire situation. He allowed these limiting factors to determine his behavior and actions, which lead him to relinquish the choice he has between acting dynamically and creatively and relinquishing his teaching craft to transmission and product-based teaching, which can have serious implications for his professional development and his students’ linguistic development simultaneously.

However, teachers, who believe in and are aware of the tasks emphasized by progressive education should analyze their political contexts, which education is an integral part of, and strive to present the best to their students. “Hope”, as grounded in practice and “optimism”, as grounded in understanding the complexities of teaching (Conway, 2001), help teachers perceive events differently and anticipate positive consequences. Hope and optimism equip teachers with a reason to strive and power to swim against the current.

Thus, Al-Issa (2005b, 2009) argues that the time and exam constraints imposed by an authoritative and product-based system, such as Oman’s, are a cause of concern to this teacher and a cause of the existence of a complex relationship between “... maintaining one’s ideals and addressing the demands of accountability” (Hamerness, 2006, p. 28). The system in Oman defines the textbook knowledge and the exams solely using quantitative measurements of learning, while undermining both the quality of knowledge the students should be exposed to and the competence the teachers can demonstrate (Al-Issa, 2002). Scoring high marks is crucial for Omani students at this educational level, as it determines whether or not they can pursue post-secondary education and carve themselves a better future. Their options fall into three broad categories: limited government-sponsored scholarships – mainly to English-speaking countries and a few other countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe; limited opportunities for higher education at public institutes, which offer free post-secondary education; and, on the other hand, a good number of private higher education institutes, which charge relatively high tuition fees. The state policies and the national context have thus a significant role to

play in teaching, which can pose challenges to these teachers' confidence about their teaching and vision for their students, which suggests that both teachers (#32 and #35) had a clear vision of their subject, but not their students (Hamerness, 2006). In other words, they both failed to build a bridge between their visions and their students'.

The two participants above (#32 and #35) hence attempt to problematize the exam-oriented dimension and produce a theory and highlight the conflict between the world of the classroom and the world of education in the broader sense in Oman. Their analyses of the concrete practical reality they are living are wrapped with theoretical and ideological interpretations (McLean, 1999). These two participants are obviously not comfortable with the existing situation, but the reality of the system is considered to be way too powerful to be challenged.

Returning once again to the statement made by participant #35 above, it can be argued that this teacher is not "present" or "alive" (Rodgers, 2002) in the classroom and lacks sensitivity to his students' needs, as he simply aims at covering the material and feels "... satisfied with the appearance of learning", than with "... what students are learning and how they are learning it" (p. 236). The students in this teacher's classroom may very well pretend they are attentive and learning, as they are doing what they are being asked by the ultimate figure of authority in the traditional classroom – the teacher.

100% of the teachers agreed that the forms helped them focus their observation on the main points of the lesson (item 11). Item 12 goes on to show that, in case they observed any of their colleagues teaching in the future, they would use the same forms. The aim behind preparing the three forms in as detailed manner as possible was to remind the teachers about the fundamental concept that the language lesson is one large entity made up from several inter-related parts. This insight should help the teachers watch out for the parts of the lesson that are often overlooked or given little attention by the teachers themselves and other observers like the inspectors, for example, but which have been discussed and considered important for the overall success of the lesson by the literature on second language education. Examples of such parts are the teacher's movement and positioning, teacher's clarity and accuracy of instructions, the timing of the activities, application of the correction techniques, legibility of handwriting, and accuracy of pronunciation (Al-Issa, 1993).

Thus, participant #33 raised the following comment on pronunciation to the observed teacher (#35), which he agreed with.

I thought your pronunciation of the words “giant” and “voyage” was problematic. I know that many Arab users of English have a problem pronouncing the letter “g” and often confuse it with “j”, but then the students become victims here and pick the incorrect pronunciation from you ... As language teachers, I really think we need to become or we should in fact become role models to our students.

It is interesting and encouraging to see participant #33 showing a sense of responsibility and commitment toward his profession, students, and their outcome. This participant would like to see all teachers of English closely and carefully monitoring their instruction to be absolutely sure that the subject matter conveyed to their students is perfect (Hamachek, 1999). Participant #33 is aware of the language limitations of participant #35 and is trying to put the problem he experienced within a larger context – Arab users of English language, as both participants are Arabs.

Participant #33 is activating participant #35 reflection-on-action and clearly inviting him to go deep into his “self” and see what problems can be caused to the students by such a language deficiency as shown by the teacher. This participant appears to have concerns for pupils greater than his concerns for “self” (Borich, 1999). Conway (2001) states that “... a teacher’s future self is an important dimension of a teacher’s professional self” (p. 102). Borich writes that such teachers “... can be expected to function within the teaching role as effective significant or salient others and to use the classroom environment to foster positive self concept in their pupils” (p. 106).

Indeed, competence in language is a prerequisite for the non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST), as highlighted in the literature (Wilkins, 1974; Edge, 1988; Lafayette, 1993; Cullen, 1994; Murdoch, 1994; Edwards, 1997; Liu, 1998, Al-Issa, 2005a), and the role of the initial second language education programs is crucial and pivotal in equipping the NNESTs adequately. Hence, the role of the observing colleague in bringing up such a point to his observed colleague’s attention highlights how cooperative learning and reflection can effectively blend and help teachers directly and indirectly, despite deficiencies in teachers’ earlier training.

In a lesson called “Famous Navigators” in Third Secondary, the teacher (#13) experienced difficulties providing the long version for “AD” (Anno Domini), its spelling, and its exact meaning.

I think “AD” gave you a nightmare today, didn’t it? The long version of the word, the spelling, and the meaning … it just didn’t work out for you today! I could tell you had it there somewhere in your mind, but just couldn’t track it down (Participant #10).

Participant #10 is showing empathy towards her colleague. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) consider this kind of intervention, which derives from humanistic psychology and stresses “… the development of an awareness of less rational sources of teacher behaviour” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 5), as important for the teacher’s continued professional development and reflective practice.

On the contrary, participant #11 has other ideas and adopts a different approach to participant #10, which is a reflection of her deep-rooted and persistent beliefs about such students and suffers from a vast gap between vision and what she is able to do in her current context (Hamerness, 2006).

You see, I always say to myself that such students … I mean there are certain students, who can be a pain sometimes and like to show off their muscles and try to embarrass or challenge the teacher. I mean you always have to be ready! Be prepared for the worst, as I always say to myself. This kind of students always likes to test the teacher’s knowledge and information … trying to play smart, if you see what I mean. Good and thorough planning should guarantee you smooth sailing and should help eliminate any chances for this kind of trouble-shooting. This is how I do it! I don’t know! It may work out differently for you!

Participant #7 suffers from deficiencies in her “content knowledge” (Shulman, 1987), which is considered in the literature as an essential characteristic of an effective teacher (Hamachek, 1999). However, participant #11 is blaming the students for the difficulties experienced by her colleague and her colleague’s lack of ability to take responsibility for the emerging problems through attending to surface features rather than exploring underlying causes (Freese, 2006), which can lead to tension, disappointment,

and failure to take responsibility for one's professional development. Reflection here is restricted to reflecting on the "environment" (as in the student), the "behavior" (as in the student's question about the long version of AD), the "competencies" (as in the lack of ability to provide the answer to the student's question), and "beliefs" (as in the belief that the student is trying to test the teacher). These phases of reflection, according to Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) do not go to the heart of the problem. The teacher here needs to analyze and understand her problem, which is lack of knowledge of English. Today, the problem is associated with failing to provide the long version of AD. Tomorrow, we can expect other problems related to explaining the meaning of another item (lexical, grammatical, etc.) in English.

Moreover, participant #11 has failed to take a "moment" (Rodgers, 2002), which includes a troubling classroom element to look at it closely, analyze it, and interpret it. This teacher has rushed to conclusions and failed to see beyond the "students" as a group of learners and subsequently failed to see the students as individuals. This is evident in her generalization. She has further jumped to giving advice and providing a solution to the problem to her colleague instead of getting her colleague to carefully reflecting on the context and trying to pay attention to its details (Rodgers, 2002).

It is interesting to see participant #11 shaped by her own "private curriculum" (Hamachek, 1999) in the first part of her statement, which is reflected in her attitudes toward the students. This private curriculum along with the curriculum prescribed by the system, "... play a significant part in shaping – for better or worse – how students feel about themselves and school" (p. 208). In the second part of her statement and the statement made by participant #12 below, the role of thorough planning as one of the intellectual characteristics of an effective teacher (Hamachek, 1999) is stressed. Hamachek argues that hard work as in through planning and preparation to response to expected and unexpected events is essential for effective teaching and leads to excellent teaching.

Well, I'm not very sure about this particular student trying to test the teacher. I mean I have to disagree here. I know this student quite well. I taught her last year. She's excellent and she's hungry for knowledge. She's actually very motivated to know everything about the language. But yes, I agree with you about being

prepared for this kind of situations. As you said, a good plan is the key here ... it helps you avoid all this mess and confusion (Participant #12).

It is interesting to see participant #12 confronting participant #11 about the student's reality, but at the same time it trying to awaken in her the reflective sense about her teaching, her students as unique individuals, and her status as a NNEST, who needs to be better prepared. Anticipating students' prior knowledge of the subject matter (English) and subsequently planning for it, is a reality that teachers have to face and a challenge to be prepared for and prepared to accept (Conway, 2001).

Participant #12 is making use of what Egan (2000 – cited in Kortahgen and Vasalos, 2005) labels “self-disclosure”. She is sharing her story about the excellent and motivated student with her colleagues to help them see the different intellectual and psychological dimensions in it. Such a story helps the story teller's colleagues make meaning of the experience and activate their reflective senses and see the complexities of the situation prior to issuing their judgments and to rationally consider any similar or identical incidents that may occur in the future.

NNESTs need to be proficient in the target language for social and professional purposes (Peyton, 1997), as linguistically competent teachers are successful (Edwards, 1997) and confident teachers as well as good examples for their students (Wilkins, 1974; Lafayette, 1993). This is particularly the case in situations where English is a foreign language and a compulsory school subject (Cullen, 1994). Dewey (1933) states that “unless the teacher's mind has mastered the subject matter in advance ... he will not be free to give full time attention to observation and interpretation of the pupils' intellectual reactions” (p. 275). In other words, mastery over English language by NNESTs, as it is the case in this study, helps teachers concentrate on their students' learning and thinking and reflect on them.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this paper was to introduce systematic reflection through peer collaboration to the Omani ELT system and bring to the attention of the decision makers and stakeholders at the Ministry of Education the advantages of such concepts and tools to the overall development of the ELT system in the Sultanate.

The findings revealed three important issues. First, the study involved 37 multi-national and multi-cultural teachers in four schools in Muscat. During the study, however, the researcher discovered that factors like nationality and years of experience did not have any direct or strong influence on the teachers' ability or enthusiasm to use their critical and reflective abilities and senses. Teachers from widely different backgrounds participated effectively and enthusiastically in the post-lesson discussion and feedback processes. The diversity in the participants' background should be thus seen from a positive perspective. In other words, those who come from non-Omani backgrounds have brought to the Omani ELT context some important experiences. One day they will take home those experiences and skills they gained in Oman, creating a direct and positive impact on their own future performance and other ELT contexts.

Second, NNESTs need to be trained properly so that they have sufficient English competence to help them cope with today and everyday's language classroom demands and challenges. Students have changed, and so have their attitudes, interests, needs, perceptions, and motivations, and the factors that influence their exposure to, and use of, an international language like English. This is a problem that confronts many NNESTs around the Arab World in particular and the wider world in general, as documented in the contemporary literature (Al-Issa, 2005a; Cullen, 1994; Lafayette, 1993; Liu, 1998). This responsibility falls on the initial teacher education programs, particularly in contexts where English is just another school subject on the national curriculum and is being studied as a foreign language, and where English language education systems fail to contribute to the students' linguistic growth and competence development.

Next, the discussion has revealed that reflection is complex and that while teachers have a sense of critical reflection – reflection on their beliefs and classroom cultures, realities, and practices – some space, encouragement, and guidance would be essential and beneficial. This is particularly the case in rigidly controlled and largely "hegemonic" educational contexts like the Omani one and many others round the

developing world. Such space, encouragement, and guidance can be essential and beneficial for the ELT context and would result in producing self-motivated, liberal, informed, intelligent, active, and dynamic agents of change and teachers who develop vision, insight, and critical understanding about their contexts and roles.

“Guidance” has another perspective. The discussion revealed that while some participants were judgmental in their reflection (for example #35 and #11), others were more critical (for example #3, #4, #7, #26, and #27). This was the result of applying different approaches to reflection. The literature on reflective practice and teaching, as the discussion has revealed, is supportive of the teachers (or supervisors) as providers of structured reflection – reflection which stimulates the observed teacher’s thinking and challenges his/her thinking (for instance what participants #12 and #33 provided), and not reflection which proposes instant and short-term practical solutions to problems (for instance what participants #28, #34, and #37 provided).

In addition, teachers should be guided to look deep into their inner selves and potential and possess the courage and ability to confront their philosophies, beliefs, and images and “... identify any inconsistencies between their beliefs and practices” and “... assume personal responsibility for their actions and performance” (Freese, 2006, p. 117), instead of blaming the students or others for their problems.

Teachers should be further guided to perceive their students’ core qualities. Teachers should be also guided to learn and see multiple perspectives. This kind of guidance puts the teacher in the driver seat and makes him/her responsible for his/her professional growth.

Hence, the roles of initial and in-service teacher education are complementary and equally crucial. While the former is responsible for preparing the prospective teacher to become critical reflectors, who can bridge the gap between vision, beliefs, images, and ideology on the one hand and practice on the other, the latter should foster such practice and help it flourish and prosper.

Admittedly, the participants showed a great deal of readiness, experience, will, ability, enthusiasm, courage, interest, and motivation to be efficient reflective practitioners and develop cooperatively. 45% of the participating teachers used the

Additional Comments space in the questionnaire form to share their hope that the Omani Ministry of Education would consider implementing something similar to this study in the future. This is in addition to the different statements that were all in favor of the study – “hope to do more of this in the near future”, “one of the best in-service-sessions I’ve ever done”, “excellent experience; very educational”, “I wish we could have more of this”, “wonderful practical experience”, “timely change”, “extremely rich and interactive experience”, and “interesting workshop”. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), these are all benefits of workshops, which help teachers develop professionally.

This study was thus built around the notion of peer collaboration and personal relationships, where knowledge is seen as personal; something that develops through close contacts amongst all participants (McLean, 1999). The source of knowledge in this study was the personal experience originating from close observation (Rodgers, 2002), shared understanding, and the wisdom of practice (McLean, 1999). However, alternative arrangements by the Ministry of Education can be made to help teachers gather and share experiences and knowledge via reflective practice. Good examples to foster reflection are the use of video, writing dialogue journals, writing stories, or visiting several (exemplary) colleagues. Observing others teaching allays or removes fear, helps one develop his/her own teaching style and find one’s own professional identity, and helps the observing teacher identify instructional and management strategies compatible to his/her beliefs (Freese, 2006). Teachers bring to the classrooms their complex personal biographies, cultural and educational experiences and values, and biases, which largely influence the way they perceive teaching and learning (Freese, 2006). “Critical retrospective”, “contemporaneous”, and “anticipatory” reflection, as Freese (2006) suggests, help teachers reconstruct their experiences, see things differently, and come to a deeper understanding of “themselves” as persons and as teachers, as “teaching is an “ill-structured” task, beset with problems for which there are multiple approaches and solutions” (McLean, 1999, p. 62).

The Ministry of Education can further help in introducing and encouraging the teachers in the same school or in schools that are geographically close to adopt a “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998) approach, whereby its professional members invest in dynamic and collaborative inquiries. Such a community is flexible and self-

organizing whereby its members periodically visit each other and continually negotiate and share practice, learning, and interests, keep up with developments inside and outside the school, and address recurring sets of problems to contribute to practice and maintain their expertise. Such a community will support and encourage the participating teachers to see the value of ELT knowledge – knowledge which is created, shared, organized, revised, passed on within the community, and owned in practice – as they are engaged in a collective and collaborative process of learning that can lead to creativity.

Wenger (1998) argues that while a community of practice arises naturally, it needs careful seeding and nurturing to make it active and complementary to the organization – the school in this context. The Ministry of Education in a centralized context Oman, can encourage and instruct the respective schools to give the ELT peers/members of the different communities of practice space, time, and the necessary guidance and resources to collaborate and initiate and practice their activities on regular bases. Richards (1998) argues that “for maximum effectiveness, peer observation should be carried out regularly” (p. 149).

The tool introduced in this study can be looked at as a “prototype” in certain contexts that are identical or similar to the Omani context, while it can be modified in other contexts to include more/less sub-competencies depending on the context in which it is used. Indeed, it can also be used at the initial teacher training level in longitudinal studies, for instance, to help monitor the student teachers’ and practicing teachers’ development, as it is the case in this study, to see whether the treatment had any lasting effect on the teachers’ reflection on their own teaching and dispositions to collaborate with their colleagues. Reflective teaching and peer collaboration are fundamental practices, skills and concepts for language teachers anywhere and anytime. Systematic, critical, and analytical reflection is about helping teachers make a positive shift in their thinking and in understanding themselves as persons and teachers and understand the complex contexts within which they work. It is hence important to train and help teachers in the service to be open-minded and responsible and not to restrict their focus to the end product.

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Appendix 1

Self-Evaluation Form

Classroom Management:

1. Voice vitality, clarity and effectiveness	4	3	2	1
2. Movement and positioning	4	3	2	1
3. Viewing of class	4	3	2	1
4. Class control	4	3	2	1
5. Clarity and accuracy of instructions	4	3	2	1
6. Timing of activities	4	3	2	1
7. Level of class participation	4	3	2	1
8. Interpersonal skills	4	3	2	1

Teaching Techniques and Strategies:

1. Achievement of lesson objectives	4	3	2	1
2. Adherence to lesson plan	4	3	2	1
3. Degree of syllabus supplement applied	4	3	2	1
4. Degree of answers elicitation	4	3	2	1
5. Variation of teaching techniques	4	3	2	1
6. Variation of teaching activities	4	3	2	1
7. Degree of exploitation of teaching/learning materials	4	3	2	1
8. Application of correction techniques	4	3	2	1
9. Degree of independent learning applied	4	3	2	1
10. Relating lesson topic to pupils' background and experience	4	3	2	1

Overall Level of Lesson Success	4	3	2	1
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Additional Comments:

Appendix 2A

Classroom Management Form

1. Did the teacher time his activities well?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
2. Did the teacher give any attention to certain individuals?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
3. Did the teacher encourage the learners to help with some classroom activities/chores?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
4. Was the teacher successful in spreading attention over the whole class?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
5. Did the teacher move and position well?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
6. Were the teacher's instructions clear?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
7. Did the teacher modulate his voice so as to encourage rather than to threaten?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
8. Was good discipline maintained, thereby, ensuring a lesson free from distractions?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
9. Did you feel the teacher suffered from any confidence problems?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
10. Was the teacher patient and tolerant?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
11. Was the teacher friendly and showing a sense of humor?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No

12. Did you feel the learners liked the teacher? Yes Yes, No
to some extent

Additional Comments:

Appendix 2B

Teaching Techniques Form

- | | | | |
|--|-----|------------------------|----|
| 1. Did the teacher skillfully use any relevant audiovisual materials? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 2. Did the teacher exploit the existing and surrounding aids and materials? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 3. Did the teacher relate the lesson topic to the pupil's background and experience? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 4. Did the teacher use interesting techniques to facilitate learning? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 5. Did the teacher ask suitable and relevant questions? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 6. Were the oral questions distributed fairly amongst the learners? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 7. Were the four skills incorporated and integrated in the lesson? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 8. Was the blackboard work clear, neat and organized? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 9. Was there any group or pair work applied? | Yes | Yes,
to some extent | No |
| 10. Did the teacher vary the pace of the lesson | Yes | Yes, | No |

according to the needs and level of the learners?		to some extent	
11. Was the lesson lively and interesting?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
12. Did the teacher supplement the syllabus?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
13. Did the teacher adhere to his lesson plan as it appears in the preparation book?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
14. Were the aims of the lesson, as documented in the lesson plan, achieved?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	

Additional Comments:

Appendix 2C

Language Form

1. Were the teacher's verbal instructions clear, simple and easy to understand?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
2. Did the teacher make any grammatical mistakes?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
3. Did the teacher make any pronunciation mistakes?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
4. Did the teacher show any weakness with particular sounds?	Yes	Yes,	No
		to some extent	
5. Did the teacher make any spelling	Yes	Yes,	No

mistakes?		to some extent	
6. Was the teacher's handwriting legible?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
7. Did the teacher use a language suitable for his pupils to understand?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
8. Did the teacher use any stress and intonation?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No
9. Did the teacher use any Arabic (L1) for giving instructions or translating any lexical or structural item?	Yes	Yes, to some extent	No

Additional Comments:

Appendix 3

Descriptive Information Form

Please complete the form with information about yourself.

Nationality:

Academic Qualification:

Years of Teaching Experience in Oman:

Years of Teaching Experience in Country of Origin:

School:

Level(s) Taught:

Teaching Load:

Number of Classes Taught:

Total Number of Students Taught in All Classes:

Appendix 4

Please complete the following questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box.

No.	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	If I were to teach the same lesson, I would make changes to certain classroom management aspects.			8.1%	81%	10.9%
2	If I were to teach the same lesson, I would make some changes to certain teaching techniques & procedures.		54%		46%	
3	The lesson contained ideas, which I would like to apply in my future teaching.		46%		54%	
4	Observing my colleague teaching & completing the forms gave me new ideas about & insights into teaching English.		51.4%	13.5 %	35.1%	
5	The post-lesson discussion					

	gave me new ideas about & insights into teaching English.	8.1%	73%	18.9 %		
6	Observing my colleague teaching & completing the forms gave me new ideas about & insights into my learners' learning.	13.5%	62.2%	13.5 %	10.8%	
7	The post-lesson discussion gave me new ideas about & insights into my students' learning.	13.5%	62.2%	13.5 %	10.8%	
8	The post-lesson discussion brought me socially & professionally closer to my colleagues.	10.8%	73%	16.2 %		
9	I would like to attend more classes for my colleagues in the future.	5.5%	94.5%			
10	I would like my colleagues to attend some of my classes in the future.	5.5%	94.5%			

No.	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	The points in the three forms helped me focus my lesson observation on various important points of the lesson.	24.4%	75.6%			
12	I would like to use the same three forms if I observe any of my colleagues teaching in the future.	19%	81%			

Additional Comments:
