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Foreword

Welcome to the third edition of the year 2012. The bi-monthly Iranian EFL Journal has provided an opportunity for its readers to access to more articles. The number of our readers and the authors who send articles to us is increasing day by day. The Iranian EFL Journal has attracted many readers not only from the Middle East but also from different parts of the world. The journal has had strong growth over the last few years with a monthly readership now exceeding 2500 readers. For a journal examining the topic of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. The journal has also received numerous numbers of articles in the areas of translation studies and English literature. Statistically, readers are coming from almost 80 countries. In this edition, our readers can also find articles from the above mentioned domains. In the third issue of volume eight we present eighteen articles for your reading. In the first article, Reza Pishghadam and Shaghayegh Shayesteh present conceptions of assessment among EFL teachers. In the second article of the issue, the impact of critical thinking in EFL/ESL literacy is studied by Ashraf Haji Maibodi and Mansoor Fahim. In the third article of the issue, Mohammad Reza Hasannejad and Mohammad Reza Mollahosainy have studied the impact of cohesive devices on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension skills. In the next article, the evaluation and comparison of two most widely used textbooks for teaching English to the Iranian students of medicine is presented by Ataollah Maleki and Magnolia Kazemi. In the fifth article of the issue, Asghar Bastami Bandpay has presented conversational analysis in EFL learners: a case study on Iranian English learners. The next article which is about a clever and witty genre in the world of prose literature is presented by Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh.

Sara Badakhshan in the seventh article of the issue has presented the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control among Iranian intermediate EFL learners (prospective language teachers).

In the eight article of the issue, Behzad Ghonsooly, Majid Elahi and Seyyed Ehsan Golparvar have presented a study on general English university students' self-efficacy and their achievement. In the next article, the effect of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian high school students is studied by Naser Ghafoori and Fateme Jahedi Esfanjani. In the tenth article of the issue the impact of form-based and text-specific content-based feedback on writing accuracy and general writing performance of English students in Shahroud is presented by Ali Rastgou. In the next article of the issue, deixis, its definition and kinds in English and Persian languages is presented by Ahmad Farahmand and Asghar Hatami. In the next article of the issue, integrating language and literature: the impact of direct instruction of narratives on young adults' EFL writing ability is presented by Sepideh Ahmad Khanbeigi and Reza Yalsharzeh. In the thirteenth article Houman Bijani presents the development of students and teachers critical thinking ability: a case of explicit and e-learning instruction. Fereydoun Jafari Laasaki, in the next article of the issue, presents the washback effect of university entrance examination (UEE) on Iranian high school EFL pedagogy. In the next article of the issue the effect of oral conferencing and peer response on Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements is studied by Mostafa Mirzaii. The sixteenth article is about noticing the receptive-productive gap a step toward improving productive lexical knowledge and is presented by Arman Abednia and Leila Tajik. To be or not to be for 'CALL' in Iran, is the seventeenth article and is presented by Lakshmi Kala Prakash. In the last article of the issue Ahmad Mohseni and Hossein Karimi present linguistic imperialism and EFL learning in Iran: a survey among high school students in Tehran.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.

Title

Conceptions of Assessment among Iranian EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The present study, in the first place, aimed to shed light on the conceptual assessment beliefs of a group of Iranian EFL teachers grounded on Brown's (2008) classification (i.e. Improvement, School accountability, Student accountability, and Irrelevant). Thereafter, it sought to examine each of the four assessment concepts with respect to degree, major, gender, age, and experience. To this end, 103 EFL teachers were selected to fill out "Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA)" inventory (Brown 2006). Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and Pearson product-moment correlation were conducted to the data. The results indicated that teachers mainly conceived of assessment as Student accountability. Furthermore, it

was discovered that except for Irrelevant, there were no significant differences among various conceptions of assessment regarding degree and major. In addition, there existed no relationship between gender, age and conceptions of assessment. Correlational analysis of experience equally revealed that except for School accountability there were no significant relationships between diverse conceptions of assessment and teacher experience. Finally, the results were discussed and some suggestions were made.

1. Introduction

The importance of our belief system in forming our thoughts, governing our behaviors, and defining the reality of the events befall around us is undeniable (Pishghadam, Torghabeh, & Navari, 2009). Meanwhile, relying on the basis that behaviors reflect beliefs, teachers' nature, and structure of beliefs or conceptions may depict an important facet to educational objectives (Pajares, 1992). Teachers` thinking regarding diverse issues of pedagogical processes such as teaching, learning, and curricula intensely impacts how they teach and what pupils may learn (Thompson, 1992). There is compelling evidence that beliefs and conceptions can affect teaching even greater than experience and socioeconomic context; therefore, they necessitate further explicit attention (Griffiths, Gore, & Ladwig, 2006). In consequence, conceptions operate as a framework through which teachers perceive, respond to, and interact with their teaching environment (Marton, 1981).

In fact, all pedagogical attitudes, including teachers' evaluations of learners' deeds and performances (i.e. assessment) are affected by the conceptions teacher hold regarding educational facts such as teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum, and teacher efficacy (Brown, 2004a). Assessments are fundamental components of teaching and learning process. Teachers are key factors in modifying assessment information to improved learning (Brown, Kennedy, Fok, Chan & Yu, 2009). Hence, their assessment related beliefs matters for how and why assessment is implemented (Brown & Remesal, 2012). Ideally, it is hypothesized that teachers think of assessment as a way of improving teaching and learning together with holding students responsible for their own learning; yet, this notion is not implemented in practice or supported by major assessors (Brown & Michaelides, 2011).

All in all, explicit observation of teachers' conceptual assessment beliefs is remarkable owing to the fact that a great deal of educational policies pertinent to assessment is applied by and through teachers (Brown, Hui, Yu & Kennedy, 2011). Since research into teachers' thinking about assessment is relatively new in Iran, this study aims to examine teachers' self-reported assessment beliefs, drawing linkage between four conceptions of assessment (i.e. Improvement, Irrelevant, School accountability and Student accountability) with reference to external variables of degree, major, gender, age, and experience.

2. Theoretical framework

Assessment, a powerful force in students' lives, is any deed of interpreting information with respect to student performance, gathered through numerous means or practices (Brown, 2004a). This process is deemed specifically potent since it may simplify or impede the development of learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Assessments are used for copious intentions such as certifications, enhancement of teaching and feedback on the quality of learning (Peterson & Irving, 2008). Besides, they are designed to aid formative and summative evaluations of learning: the former takes place during the learning procedure (assessment *for* learning); whereas, the latter at its end (assessment *of* learning) (Brown et al., 2009).

From long ago, community and specifically parents have considered examination a reliable mechanism for accomplishing social purposes (Brown et al., 2009). They expect teachers to perform examination preparation activities regularly as a part of schooling. It is commonly believed that a good person is the one who scores high on the official examinations since the results manifest the merit, perfection, and superiority of an individual (Brown & Wang, 2011). Moreover, quality and value of teachers' and schools arise from such outcomes (Brown et al., 2011).

Of real interests are teachers' perceptions and opinions of the purpose behind this multifaceted phenomenon. In order to explore how the world appears to teachers, their conceptions must be probed. Conceptions have been defined as the beliefs and attitudes in response to any phenomenon inferred from experiencing the phenomenon; in other words, they are people's psychological reality about a notion. Therefore, what people believe influence their ultimate intention (Thompson, 1992).

The pattern of teachers' idiosyncratic conceptions is not constant and plain; rather, it seems to be multidimensional and interconnected (Brown, 2004a). Based on a study done on 26 New Zealand teachers it was found that teachers hold multiple and, at times, contradictory conceptions of assessment including seven types: "compliance, external reporting, reporting to parents, extrinsically motivating students, organizing group instruction, teacher use for individualizing learning, and joint teacher-student use for individualizing learning" (Harris & Brown, 2009, p. 365). Delandshere and Jones (1999) set forth three dimensions to identify teachers' beliefs towards assessment: a) intention and function of assessment, b) teachers' understanding of curriculum and their self-efficacy and c) their conceit about teaching, learning and also learners.

In a similar vein, Brown (2008) drew on Thompson's (1992) definition of conception "a more general mental structure, encompassing beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like" (Thompson, 1992, p. 130) along with Ajzen (2005) model of planned or reasoned behavior which focuses on teachers' intentions as predicators of attitudes within school environments. He determined that teachers' perception of the purpose of assessment captures four major inter-correlated factors loosely categorized as 'purpose' and 'anti-purpose'.

- assessment is for improving teaching and learning (Improvement);
- assessment evaluates and holds schools and teachers accountable (School Accountability);
- assessment ratifies students' learning and holds them accountable (Student Accountability); and
- assessment is radically irrelevant to the life and work of teachers and learners (Irrelevant).

Improvement

Improvement, sometimes known as formative assessment or assessment *for* learning, has been proved to carry positive impacts on education and provide proper feedback on student learning outcomes and teacher instructional practices (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The considerable merit of the improvement notion is that assessment improves students' learning together with the quality of teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998). According to the studies carried out in New Zealand

(Brown, 2011) and Queensland (Brown, Lake & Matters, 2011) teachers specified the improvement of teaching and learning as the basic goal of assessment.

School accountability

The second premise of assessment is that it utilizes assessment results to publicly manifest that teachers and schools do a good job and reach required standards (Butterfield, Williams & Marr, 1999). Brown (2008) suggested that although School accountability was not endorsed by his sample teachers as an effective factor, it was positively associated with Improvement. That is, teachers supposed good schools would promote learning.

Student accountability

The third theme implies that learners are individually accountable for their own learning. Placing learners into different classes or groups and entry selection examinations are examples of this kind (Brown, 2004a). Practices applying this conception embrace: assigning scores to students' works, granting certificates based on their performances, and making different decisions (Guthrie 2002).

Irrelevant

The final concept posits that the formal evaluation of students holds no legitimate position within pedagogical purposes perhaps because it is bad, neglected and unfair or causes unnecessary anxiety and damages learners' self-esteem (Brown, 2004a). Instead, teachers' continuing knowledge of students' learning plus intuitive judgments is all that is believed essential. The idea of inaccuracy (e.g. standard error of measurement) may enrich this "anti-purpose" belief similarly (Brown, 2004a). Moni, Kraayenoord, and Baker (2002) investigated the attitudes of a group of 54 Australian high school students toward assessment and discovered them highly negative due to a couple of reasons. First the frequency of assessments and second subjective decisions made upon them.

Assessment issues are so closely tied to widespread social contexts that cannot be analyzed by observers of the culture (Brown et al., 2009). Teacher belief systems concerning assessment mirror the linguistic, social, and cultural restrictions of a context as well. Simply put, as a context changes, so does thinking among teachers (Brown & Remesal, 2012). That is, teachers' belief mechanisms are compatible with the policy and cultural priorities of a society (Brown & Harris, 2009; Brown & Michaelides, 2011). In Hong Kong the concept of teaching as evaluating students was deeply correlated with the concept of assessment as contributing to improvement

(r=.91); conversely, in New Zealand the same pair of notions correlated slightly (r=.21). This conspicuous difference was attributed to cultural diversities (Brown, Lake, & Matters, 2011).

To boot, it seems that policies and practices have a substantial effect on the conceptions which preponderate in any specific setting (Brown et al., 2009). In their attempt, Brown and Harris (2009) announced that on account of the introduction of a new policy to the regional schools of Auckland and New Zealand to employ the assessment result for the purpose of schooling improvement, teachers endorsed school accountability stronger than improvement of teaching and learning.

Despite abundant resemblances, school systems vary universally in terms of teacher's role in assessing learners. For instance, when teachers have an additional role in preparing students for high-stakes tests, it is highly probable that the focus of teaching alters from nurturing to transmission aspect as was found in New Zealand secondary teachers (Brown, 2002). Furthermore, investigating teachers` work, it has always been teachers' desire to be observed functioning well by means of various tools such as assessments. In this perspective, regular assessments stimulate teachers to adopt a more transmissive teaching approach rather than a student-oriented nurturing one.

At last, it is assumed that teachers have experiences of being both a learner and a teacher. To be specific, students take in their parents' and teachers' beliefs regarding assessment and, as teachers, they convey their notions to the following generations of students (Pajares, 1992). This indicates that the more implicit the conceptions, the harder they are to change (Brown, 2008).

3. Purpose of the study

Due to the paucity of research on teachers` conceptions of assessment in Iran, the current paper attempts to investigate Iranian English teachers' conceptions of assessment with regard to degree, major, gender, experience, and age. To be more exact, this study intends to respond to the following questions:

1. How teachers in private language institutes conceive of assessment?
2. Are there any significant differences among different conceptions of assessment with respect to degree?
3. Are there any significant differences among different conceptions of assessment among TEFLers and non-TEFLers?

4. What is the role of gender in different conceptions of assessment?

5. What is the association between age and teacher experience and different conceptions of assessment?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

Our community sample consisted of 103 English language teachers working at various private language institutes of Mashhad, Iran. They were both male (N=30) and female (N=73) EFL teachers aged between 22 to 52 years old (Mean= 27) with a range of between 1 to 20 years of teaching experience (Mean= 5.5). The teachers had all majored in the various branches of English like English teaching (TEFL) (N=83), English literature (Non-TEFL), and English translation (Non-TEFL) (N= 20) at B.A. (N= 9), M.A. (N=79), and Ph.D. (N=15) levels. It is necessary to point out that in the educational context of Iran, people educated in diverse branches of English, with an acceptable level of knowledge and proficiency in English language, are permitted to teach English.

4.2. Instruments

In order to evaluate teachers' perceptions of the nature and structure of assessment "Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA)" inventory (Brown 2006) was administered to a group of EFL teachers. "TCoA" is a 27-item self-report questionnaire validated (via SEM) and constructed to evoke teachers' conceptions of assessment with regards to the four major elements i.e. Improvement, School accountability, Student accountability, and Irrelevant. Two of these major conceptions include sub-factors; improvement had four 1st order factors (i.e., improves teaching, improves learning, is valid, describes student learning) and irrelevance had three first-order factors (i.e., is ignored, is bad, is inaccurate). The response scale for the items is a six-point, positively-packed, agreement rating scale; that is, two negative options (i.e., mostly disagree and strongly disagree) and four positive options (i.e., slightly, moderately, mostly, and strongly agree) (Brown, 2004b). To boot, the overall reliability estimated by Cronbach Alpha obtained for the data in hand is 0.80.

4.3. Procedure

To begin with, in order to ascertain clarity and prevent any misunderstanding, the "TCoA" was translated into Persian. Subsequently, a couple of English teachers were asked to comment on the

quality and comprehensiveness of the translated items. Afterwards, the Persian questionnaire was both emailed and handed to 103 teachers of different English language institutes in Mashhad, Iran to complete.

Gathering the data, they were entered into and processed with SPSS 20 software. Dependent variables comprised Improvement, Irrelevant, School accountability and Student accountability. Independent variables consisted of degree, major, gender, experience, and age. To analyze the data and answer the research questions already mentioned, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Post hoc Scheffe tests were run to locate the areas of differences. For the last two variables (i.e. experience and age) Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to investigate their association with each of the four dependent variables.

5. Results

As already mentioned, the TCoA questionnaire used in this study measures four assessment factors, namely, Improvement, Irrelevant, School accountability, and Student accountability. The first research question is how teachers in private language institutes conceive of assessment. The results of descriptive statistics reveal that teachers mostly believe that assessment makes students more accountable. As can be seen in Table 1, the pattern of teacher conceptions of assessment from the most to the least is as follows: Student accountability (Mean= 4.05), Improvement (Mean= 3.77), Irrelevant (Mean= 3.46), and School accountability (Mean= 3.42).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for different conceptions of assessment

Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Improvement	3.77	.80	103
Irrelevant	3.46	.64	103
School Accountability	3.42	1.01	103
Student Accountability	4.05	.85	103

In order to determine if the differences among means are significant or not, multivariate tests (Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, Roy's Largest Root) were applied to the data. The results showed that the differences among means are statistically significant (see Table 2).

Table 2. Multivariate tests for the significance of differences among the means of variables

Effect	Test	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.988	1985.589	4.00	.00
	Wilks' Lambda	.12	1985.589	4.00	.00
	Hotelling's Trace	80.226	1985.589	4.00	.00
	Roy's Largest Root	80.226	1985.589	4.00	.00

The second research question was whether there were any significant differences among different conceptions of assessment with respect to degree. As Table 3 exhibits, except for Irrelevant (F=3.28, p<.05) there are no significant differences among different conceptions of assessment. Moreover, the results of Scheffe test show that teachers with Ph.D. degree (Mean= 3.79) more that teachers with MA (Mean= 3.43) or BA degrees (Mean= 3.14) believe that assessment is not fair and relevant.

Table 3. Results of Multivariate tests on the role of degree in the four conceptions of assessment

Source	Dependant Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Degree	Improvement	2.49	2	1.24	1.97	.14
	Irrelevant	2.58	2	1.29	3.28	.04
	School Accountability	3.45	2	1.72	1.70	.18
	Student Accountability	2.31	2	1.15	1.58	.21

Table 4. Results of Post Hoc Scheffe test for "Irrelevant"

Degree	N	Subset	
		1	2
B.A	9	3.14	
M.A	79	3.43	3.43
PhD	15		3.79
Sig.		.40	.25

The third research question was whether there were any significant differences among different conceptions of assessment among TEFLers and non-TEFLers. As Table 5 demonstrates, except for Irreverent (F=4.15, p<.05) there were no significant differences among other conceptions of assessment.

Table 5. Results of Multivariate tests on the role of major in the four conceptions of assessment

Source	Dependant Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Major	Improvement	5.13	1	5.13	.00	.99
	Irrelevant	1.65	1	1.65	4.15	.04
	School Accountability	1.16	1	1.16	1.13	.29
	Student Accountability	.10	1	.10	.13	.71

The fourth research question dealt with the role of gender in different conceptions of assessment. As Table 6 shows, there are no significant differences among different conceptions of assessment with respect to gender.

Table 6. Results of Multivariate tests on the role of gender in the four conceptions of assessment

Source	Dependant Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Gender	Improvement	1.12	1	1.12	1.75	.18
	Irrelevant	.44	1	.44	1.06	.30
	School Accountability	.34	1	.34	.33	.56
	Student Accountability	.87	1	.87	1.15	.28

The last question deals with the association between age and teacher experience and different conceptions of assessment. As Table 7 shows, there is no significant association among different conceptions of assessment and age, and except for School accountability (r=.20, p<.05) there are no significant relationships between different conceptions of assessment and teacher experience.

Table 7. The results of correlational analysis between age and experience, and the four conceptions of assessment

	Improvement	Irrelevant	School Accountability	Student Accountability
Age	.41	.10	.17	.03
Experience	.05	.03	.20*	.06

* p < .05

6. Discussion

The study aimed at examining the Iranian teachers` conceptions of assessment in private language institutes. In particular, the study was to investigate different teachers` conceptions of assessment with respect to degree, major, gender, age, and teacher experience.

As the results of the study exhibit, language teachers mostly conceive of assessment as a process of Student accountability. This implies that teachers hold the belief that students are responsible for their own learning. This finding is in contrast with the outcome of Brown`s (2004a) study in which Student accountability was not much important to New Zealand teachers. This finding can be justified in the context of language learning in Iran in which teachers do not assume responsibility for students` failures. In fact, teachers attribute students` successes or failures in language learning to students` efforts. To confirm, across different countries, teachers constantly have had positive agreement means for Student accountability and Improvement. As expected, the outcome was compatible with Hong Kong teachers who strongly correlated Improvement with Student Accountability and totally incompatible with Queensland and New Zealand teachers who endorsed Student accountability as Irrelevant (Harris & Brown, 2009). Logically, Hong Kong and Iran being located in Asia appear to share more similar educational policy systems and patterns of conceptions compared with New Zealand or Queensland.

The outcomes of the study also revealed that language teachers with Ph.D. degrees conceived of assessment as more Irrelevant than teachers with MA or BA degrees. This shows that the more educated teachers are, the more probable they may conceive of assessment as something bad or unfair. One possible line of explanation for this finding is that objective measurement is dominant in Iran`s context of education. Generally, in Iran teacher trainees get acquainted with subjective assessment during Ph.D. programs. During their studies they come to realize that assessment may not be much accurate and exact, and there is always a margin for errors.

Identically, Brown (2004a) suggested that intuitive judgment be a better way in comparison with objective scoring.

Moreover, the results of the study showed that teachers majoring in TEFL more than other teachers hold the belief that assessment is Irrelevant. This finding can be explained in terms of the contents of the courses TEFLers may pass at university. TEFLers have a course named Issues in Language Testing in which they study about validity and reliability of tests, realizing that assessment is something rough and inaccurate, while other language teachers do not study these issues at university. The idea of inaccuracy (e.g. standard error of measurement) was similarly mentioned by Brown (2004a) as an interfering issue.

In this study we also found that the more experienced language teachers are, the more they conceive of assessment as School accountability, meaning that assessment displays the performance of language institutes. In a similar line, Brown (2008) suggested that although School accountability was not endorsed an effective factor, it was positively correlated with Improvement. That is, teachers imagine high quality schools would cultivate learning. The results also showed that there was no relationship between gender, age, and teachers` conceptions of assessment. This finding is partly in line with that of Brown (2004a) in which these variables were not found to be confounding factors.

A number of implications may be drawn from the aforementioned findings. First and foremost, EFL teachers are expected to get more acquainted with their own belief systems, knowing that assessment should not be considered as something bad or unfair. In fact, this sort of thinking can have detrimental repercussions on the system of language education. Second, policy makers should implement new programs and find novel ways to transform the mindset of EFL teachers in a way that assessment is taken more seriously in class. Policy makers should delve and dig more into teacher cognition to come up with hidden and somehow negative beliefs and conceptions, trying to obliterate or modify them. Furthermore, depending on the results obtained, assessments can be reformed to better aim at improvement of teaching and learning plus raising standard of student' achievements.

Investigating the influence of assessment-related beliefs on teaching techniques, classroom practices, and contextual factors can be topics for future research. Additionally, evidence of how various conceptions of assessment may be linked to students' achievements is erquired. Our findings can also be compared with those of other settings and cultures to come up with cross-

cultural understanding. Since, our community of sample is not representative of the population of English language teachers of neither Mashhad nor Iran, generalization is not recommended. However, implication of the results might be beneficial to identical contexts.

Acknowledgement

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Title

The Impact of Critical Thinking in EFL/ESL Literacy

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Abstract

Critical thinking, rooted in critical philosophy, has long been an influential part and parcel of Western education. Today thinking critically is an ability that has to be developed in the EFL classroom because of the generalized process of globalization, immigration and poverty that is being exerted in the society by those who hold the power of speech. Literacy acquisition, the way in which learners acquire literacy, is important not only for instructional implications, but also for its impact, and on how it is defined. To study the positive effects of critical thinking in analyzing literary texts and enhancing foreign language literacy a study was conducted in which 60 Iranian sophomore students participated and were assigned to two groups of 30 each. Group A the experimental group received special treatment during the course and group B did not undergo any special treatment. Drawing upon the importance of text choice and studying literature in SLA the results of the study showed that students in group A were more critically oriented

than their counterparts in group B. This experimental study examined the effect of direct instruction on the critical thinking ability and academic achievement of sophomore students being tutored at an Iranian university.

1. Introduction

In everyday terms, "literacy" is typically described as the ability to read and write. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have drafted a definition of literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning and in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (Sensenbaugh, 1990).

In recent years, concerns with ideology and the social distribution of power have had substantial impact on the fields of language and literacy education. This impact has manifested itself in new ways of theorizing language and literacy development and, in particular, with an increased interest in critical literacy in both mother tongue and ESL education. However, data from classrooms with significant numbers of ESL students suggest that a number of questions with important implications for ESL teachers and their students remain unresolved. These questions include the following:

- To what extent does development of an effective critical literacy in English presuppose control of mainstream literacy practices?
- To what extent do critical literacy programs introduce students to the cultural and linguistic resources necessary for them to engage critically with texts?
- What recognition is there of the time and effort required on the part of both teachers and students to develop such resources and of the need for explicit and systematic teaching in order to assist students in this development?(Hammond & Macken-Horarik , 1999).

1.1. Critical thinking and literacy

Critical thinking is known as logical thinking, analytical thinking, reasonable thinking, high order thinking, reasoning skills and also scientific thinking. It encompasses the entire process of obtaining, comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, internalizing, and acting upon knowledge and values. Related to relevant and reliable knowledge critical thinking helps to achieve a productive, successful, ethical, happy and ultimately a satisfying and fulfilling life.

Critical thinking is best understood as the ability of thinkers to take charge of their own thinking. Elder and Paul (1994) say that "this requires that they develop sound criteria and standards for analyzing and assessing their own thinking and routinely use those criteria and standards to improve its quality."

Elder and Paul (2004), who consider critical thinking as the art of close reading, point out that "to learn well, one must read well"(p.37). They emphasize the importance of engaging oneself in constant questioning in the reading process. Following Elder and Paul (2004), Paul (2005) states that "a critical mind improves reading by reflectively thinking about what and how it reads" (p.32). Similarly, in terms of writing Elder and Paul (2005) point out that revision of drafts both cognitive and meta-cognitive thinking processes and thus writing could help enhance the students' critical thinking.

Critical thinking can also be described as the scientific method applied by ordinary people to the ordinary world (Schafersman, 1991). Rezaei et al. (2011) say that critical thinking is scientific thinking and believe "this is true since critical thinking is aligned with the well-known method of scientific investigation: a question is posed and a hypothesis formulated, germane data are sought and gathered, the hypothesis is further tested on the basis of the data, and conclusions are made at the end of the process. All the skills of scientific investigation map onto critical thinking abilities" (p. 770).

Critical literacy is related to critical thinking in the sense, it is more than just being able to read and write; it is the ability to comprehend, interpret, analyze, respond and interact with the growing variety of complex sources of information. Critical theories of literacy derive from critical social theory and its interest in matters of class, gender and ethnicity, and are related to critical pedagogy and critical language awareness.

Critical Literacy is a stance, mental posture, or emotional and intellectual attitude that readers, listeners, and viewers bring to bear as they interact with texts. Gee (2004) calls it "socially perceptive literacy." Luke (2004) asserts that critical literacy "involves second

guessing, reading against the grain, asking hard and harder questions, seeing underneath, behind, and beyond texts, trying to see and 'call' how these texts establish and use power over us, over others, on whose behalf, in whose interests" (cited in Shor, 1999).

Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner and to be able to make comments on texts in order to understand better power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. Critical literacy, defines the text as "vehicle through which individuals communicate with one another using the codes and conventions of society." This definition, which is implicit in much public discourse, focuses upon individual capacities, yielding research topics which include theories of initial reading and writing, reading as comprehension, and writing as composition, in both first and additional language.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The main aim of this study was to evaluate to what extent Iranian EFL university lecturers enhance literacy among EFL students through critical thinking. The purpose was to research the effect of direct instruction in critical thinking skills on academic achievement of sophomore students. More specifically, this research aimed at identifying the role of critical thinking in increasing motivation, decreased external control, giving room for the students' own realities in classroom procedures, and optimal arousal. Critical thinking (CT) suggests relating the learning experience to the students' own realities, which affects text selection, student involvement and classroom communication. In other words, CT aims at providing an environment for genuine two-way communication in the classroom, where the students can teach the teacher as much as the opposite. This study was an attempt to explore how critical thinking can be effective in critical literacy (CL) and how it may contribute to EFL learners' personal development, and also to their perceptions of a reading course with a CL orientation.   This study addressed such questions as:

1. Does critical thinking significantly characterize the successful classroom practices/processes of engaging students in activities aimed at fostering their ability to engage in the reading and composition of literary texts?

2. Will critical thinking as an aspect of pedagogy be significantly successful in developing a culturally and linguistically inclusive classroom for the teaching and learning of literature?

2. Literature Review

Literacy in the broad interpretation, examines the deployment of literacy practices in society, and has its origins in sociology and anthropology. Williams (2004) believes that this interpretation is part of an intellectual movement which came to the fore from the 1980s onward, and which turned away from a focus on the individual characteristic of the previous psychological approaches, and toward a focus on the social. The broad approach accordingly concentrates upon the meanings and values of literate behavior in social contexts. It is compatible with the notion of communicative competence, although it espouses a more critical perspective (p. 576).

Social critical theorists concerned with dismantling social injustice and inequalities developed the term critical literacy. These critical theorists contend that unequal power relationships are prevalent, and those powers are the ones who generally choose what truths are to be privileged. Through institutions like schooling and government, these ideologies are supported, thereby perpetuating the status quo. Within schools, only particular knowledge is legitimized, thus excluding groups who are unable to contribute to the process of authentication of that knowledge. Reder and Davila (2005) say that the emerging theory of literacy-as-social-practice drew on the well-developed theories and methodologies of sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication as it moved forward (p. 172). Farralelli (2009) thinks that since power and forces are unequal in society, those who are not favored by the hegemonic sectors ought to struggle to transform their disadvantageous situation. Independent thinking comes because of the preceding process in which individuals, now aware of how identities and social practices work, seek change in a more autonomous way. Therefore, they are helped to fight against dogmatisms and dominant perspectives and explore their own culture sharply (p.30).

2.1. Critical thinking and critical language awareness

Based on the same theoretical underpinnings around language and power as critical literacy, critical language study or critical language awareness – helps address the practices by which language enacts social practices and especially in understanding how language represents power structures in texts in the belief that knowledge about how language works gives students an explicit and tangible point of reference from which to both generalize from and to offer as evidence a response to their analyses of—whose interests are served by the text? (Emmit & Wilson, 2005).

Language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: it indexes power; it expresses power, and is involved whenever there is contention over and challenge to power. Kress (1985) believes that power does not derive from language, but language may be used to challenge power, to subvert it, and to alter distribution of power in the short or longer term. In some genres, creators of texts often use language in sophisticated ways to mask overt power; hence, it becomes important that students become aware of these techniques and are able to comment on the texts (cited in Emmit & Wilson, 2005).

Comber and Nixon (1999, in Emmit & Wilson, 2005) state that "Literate practices are not neutral or innocent; literate practices privilege and celebrate texts which maintain the disadvantage of minority groups (including women and girls, people of color, rural people, religious groups, aged people, and people with disabilities)" (p. 319). They further add that in classrooms, teacher commentary and questioning around text interpretation and construction may reinforce dominant cultural ideologies. Choice of texts may maintain a literary canon and exclude other genres and formations of language use and literacy, which are important in students' peer and family communities" (Comber & Nixon, 1999, p. 319).

There are a number of phenomena taking place in the world of the 21st century, which requires new capabilities and even demands specific mental abilities. The seemingly inexorable technological race, cultural, industrial and financial globalization of societies, migration and cases of massive poverty are all to be dealt with and processed by a new type of individual, who is both an inhabitant of a country and a citizen of the world (Farralelli, 2009).

Wallace (1992) maintains that the purpose of critical language awareness is to make language itself the object of critical scrutiny – both language as social practice and language as social process, evidenced in the reading and writing of texts. In the course of learning about these social practices and processes learners are made aware of how language might be differently shaped to meet needs beyond those which are closest and most familiar to them. She believes that practically speaking in the classroom this involves the provision of a wide range of text genres, frameworks for analysis and opportunities for talk around text (cited in Wallace, 2002). This means being aware of the placing and meaning of texts in a range of settings beyond the classroom. The text is necessarily recontextualized within the classroom and takes on cultural meaning by being brought into a pedagogic setting by students or teachers. Indeed the point of

critical language study is to read texts in different ways, other than everyday readings (Wallace, 2002).

2.2. Critical literacy and pedagogy

Critical literacy as pedagogy has its origins in a socio-cultural view of language (see Gee, 1996), critical theory (poststructuralist and feminist criticism, for example) and has links with critical language awareness (see Gee, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Davies, 1997; Janks & Ivanic, 1992, Janks, 2010). As an approach, it has found a place in both mainstream English/literacy classrooms and increasingly in EAL/EFL settings (Wallace, 1995, cited in Locke & Cleary, 2011).

Critical pedagogy is an approach to teaching and curriculum informed by critical social theory that "seeks to understand and critique the historical and sociopolitical context of schooling and to develop pedagogical practices that aim not only to change the nature of schooling, but also the wider society" (Pennycook, 1990b, p. 24, in Crookes & Lehner, 1998). Critical pedagogy is closely linked to critical thinking in that engaging student actively in critical thinking processes through the effective use of teacher questions, discussion and reflection in a context that supports critical thinking and values inquiry (Rezaei et al., 2011).

In keeping with critical pedagogy and transformative education which generally deal with issues such as voice and critical consciousness, critical literacy inspired by these schools of thought focuses on "self seeking" rather than meaning seeking processes (Callison, 2006), specifically by reconstructing texts in ways that are more consistent with one's own experiences(Cervetti et al., 2001). In other words, instead of being passive recipients of knowledge, they actively construct knowledge (cited in Izadinia & Abednia, 2010).

Critical literacy pedagogy according to Emmit and Wilson (2005) must provide learners with analytical tools to read and write critically; that is, to know:

- that texts are not neutral
- that text creators have choices in selecting text forms, content, language and visuals, which may privilege certain views of the world over others
- as readers, how to analyze texts for the purpose of identifying creator constructions of events and people
- as writers, how to construct texts without perpetuating long held stereotypes
- how to challenge texts and take action for a better world**.**

According to Locke and Cleary (2011), critical literacy puts a value on encouraging language-users to see themselves as engaged in textual acts which are part of a wider set of discursive practices that actively produce and sustain patterns of dominance and subordination in the wider society and offer members of society prescribed ways of being particular sorts of people (p.121). Locke and Cleary believe that all texts using a range of linguistic devices, seek to position readers to view the world in a particular way. No reader is innocent either. Each brings to the act of reading a set of discursive lens, each of which will interact with the discursive designs of a text in a particular way, ranging from submission to resistance (2011, p. 121).

One of the earliest extensive presentations of these ideas for S/FL instruction (Crawford, 1978) lists 20 principles as a basis for what might be expected of critical pedagogy in ESL/EFL. Ten of those principles were particularly important to the course we are reporting on (cited in Crookes & Lehner, 1998, p. 320-321).

- The purpose of education is to develop critical thinking by presenting students' situation to them as a problem so that they can perceive, reflect, and act on it.
- The content of curriculum derives from the life situation of the learners as expressed in the themes of their reality.
- Dialogue forms the content of the educational situation.
- The organization of curriculum recognizes the class as a social entity and resource.
- The learners produce their own learning materials.
- The task of planning is, first, to organize generative themes, and second, to organize subject matter as it relates to those themes.
- The teacher participates as a learner among learners.
- Teachers contribute their ideas, experiences, opinions, and perceptions to the dialogical process.
- The teacher's function is one of posing problems.
- The students possess the right and power to make decisions.

2.3. Critical literacy in the classroom

Critical literacy and critical language awareness cannot be achieved if students are not given the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge. Raising our students' critical thinking skills has become in the recent years a compelling need. Wallace (2002) says that,

"Literate talk – or literate English, defined to include oral and written language – is language that is not spontaneous but planned. It is more elaborated than informal speech, makes explicit its grounds and provides a useful bridge into expository written language. It is talk which is exploratory, where 'partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas' (cf. Mercer 1996), as opposed to the spontaneous and fluent speech which tends to be favored in the foreign and second language classroom" (p. 106).

Wallace (2002) further adds that a key factor in the students' progress to critique and creativity by way of literate English is their ability and willingness to resist i.e. ways in which students 'display their strategies of linguistic appropriation. It means teaching a kind of language which is not for immediate use, not to be taken out into the streets and the clubs, but which can serve longer-term needs. This necessarily centers on print literacy and literate talk and comes broadly under the auspices of 'critical language awareness' (p. 112).

2.4. Critical thinking in EFL classroom

A key challenge for teaching is how to engage students with the study of "how texts work" semiotically and linguistically (Luke, Comber & O'Brien, 1996), while at the same time taking up explicitly how texts and their affiliated social institutions work politically to construct and position writers and readers in relations of power and/or lack of knowledge (cited in Emmit & Wilson, 2005). Crenshaw, Hale and Harper (2011) believe that active engagement involves more than having students participate in a particular instructional strategy. The art of teaching and learning is found in the dynamic interaction of ideas and methods for thinking about ideas with sensitivity to the context of the classroom culture and content (p.18).

The Brazilian theorist and pedagogue Paulo Freire (1970) whose most fruitful contribution consists of changing the focus of the pedagogic practice from the teacher to the student, understood the process of education not as a mere transmission of concepts aimed at filling the student with supplies provided by the teacher –which he called 'banking' education. He conceived a new way of thinking in such processes as one where reciprocity is possible and where the traditional dichotomy educator-student was suppressed to promote mutual learning and collaboration (cited in Farrlelli, 2009).

Farralelli (2009) further adds that critical literacy (CL) seems to offer one of the most resourceful ways in which teachers and students can get together and analyze, question and finally dwell in today's dynamic world. This level of reflection can only be reached if first, they

understand that the world they experience every day is just one more among many other interpretations of reality. To understand and exemplify how interpretations change across cultures a critical approach to a text should dissect the dominant discourse and treat it no longer as the only possible interpretation, but as one among many others (p. 27).

A plural frame, which accepts a diversity of approaches, is the key to read against texts and reinterpret them: reading critically is the first step to reading the world critically. Critical thinking skills do not 'grow' in our students from one day to another. They need to be developed gradually in a consistent and systematic way. Emmit and Wilson (2005) firmly believe that teachers who subscribe to critical literacy have a stake in social change – no matter how small— and aim to encourage students to investigate, question and even challenge relationships between language and social practices that advantage particular social groups over others. (p. 2).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

80 sophomore female university students served as the subjects for this study. The English majors, all taking Simple Prose course in the Azad University of Meybod (in Yazd province, Iran) were normally supposed to be of a higher proficiency level. The only criteria for the assignment of subjects to the two groups were their major fields (English Translation) and the above-mentioned course they were taking.

3.2. Instrumentation

At first all the participants were given an Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Based on the scoring standards of the OPT, those students whose scores fell between the mean and a standard deviation above the mean were selected for this study. 60 students were found eligible for the study and they were divided to two groups of 30 each, group A and group B. Group A was the experimental group and Group B the control group. The two short stories "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" by Thomas Hardy and "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens were prescribed as texts for self study.

3.3. Procedure

In the course for 'Simple Prose' students are acquainted with a number of text genres, and for this study two short stories one, "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens and the other "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" by Thomas Hardy was prescribed for both the groups. Students in Group A

(experimental group) had undergone treatment regarding the critical analysis of texts through critical thinking. But Group B (control group) did not have any treatment.

Since the instructor wanted to base the course on the students' situation and understanding of the course (Shor, 1992), the students (group A) were invited to pose questions about the reading which could help them to critically analyze aspects of texts such as ideas expressed or reported by the author and the way the passage had been written. Students were literally taught 'how' to think instead of the normal procedure of 'what' to think. Students of group A and B in the fourth semester were studying "Patterns: A Short Prose Reader " by Mary Conlin Lou. The whole spring semester was devoted to teaching the lessons whereby the students were given instructions and directions to comprehend the text they were studying.

Students in the experimental group not only read the different text genres but they were also asked to annotate and discuss their ideas in the form of short 'Building-up vocabulary' exercises. Here students had to make very explicit connections to the gaps that may exist in the text. Not only were they encouraged to read critically but also to write down their ideas with the aim of expanding their vocabulary too. Each student was encouraged to choose one of the topics covered that week which proved to be more interesting to him/her, approach it in any way s/he preferred, and write a reflection on it. No particular order was followed for teaching the lessons. As already mentioned different topics based on different genres were selected and before each session started a briefing was given regarding the techniques used by the writer. In addition, notes on what is simple prose, style, techniques of writing and the elements of short story that was prepared by the instructor was given to the students as a self-study material for their final exams at the end of the semester.

Students were asked to assess their performance in their writings and timely feedback from the instructor was provided mainly to motivate the students to voice their personal opinions and analyze writers' ideas in a critical manner. However, when necessary, the instructor also made a few comments on linguistic aspects of the reflections. It should be noted that one cannot take it for granted that perceptions of a group of learners necessarily reflect the whole reality, especially given the fact that not all students shared the same understanding of the dynamics of the course.

After nearly 12 weeks of instruction, an exam was held for both the groups. The students had to answer the questions constructed for the text. A T-test was conducted to compare the results of the two groups.

Some of the questions were as follows:

1. Who is speaking? Who is he/she speaking to? What do you think is the speaker's purpose? What method of narration is being used? What narrative structure is being used? (Sentence(s) from the text is to be analyzed).

2. What are the main ideas or themes explored by the writer in this passage? How can these ideas influence you as a reader?

3. How does the speaker justify her/his ideas or point of view?

4. How do you think the audience (readers) in 19th might have viewed this justification?

5. How is your understanding of the text influenced by your background?

6. How is the text influencing you, e.g., does the form of the text influence how you construct meaning?

7. How does the language in the text position you as a reader, e.g., does the use of passive or active voice position you in a particular way?

8. Whose interests are served by the text? What view of the world and what values does the text present?

9. How would you discuss the grim satire and realism of the merciless laws of 19th century England in the two stories? What assumptions about your values and beliefs does the text make?

10. How would you compare the society and cultural facets of the 19th with your own society today?

4. Results and Discussions

A T-test was performed to compare the scores of the two groups A and B. The results of the posttest (Table 1) successfully revealed that it is possible to activate students' critical thinking to deduce, analyze, comprehend and transfer ideas from the source domain to the target domain. The results of the experiment showed that group A (Mean-16.2; SD- 2.15) outperformed group B (Mean- 12.8; SD-2.49).The observed t-value turned out to be p= 5.51 in the t-distribution table. The critical t-value for our selected level was 3.346 which is lower than the t-observed 5.510, and the df was 58. Since the value of t-observed was higher than t-critical, the null hypothesis was safely rejected. The results of the two groups—experimental and control groups—reveal that teaching critical thinking skills has a significant effect not only in reading but also in the writing

of EFL learners. Although group A underwent treatment for critical thinking the scores of the study do not reveal a vast difference and it is evident that students in general are capable of thinking critically while analyzing texts to enhance their comprehension.

Table 1: Results of the post test—comparison of the means between the experimental and control groups after the treatment

	VAROO 003	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
scores	0	30	16.2100	2.15940	.39425
	1	30	12.8917	2.49368	.45528

T-Test Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence of Interval of the Difference		
Equal variances assumed	.565	.455	5.510	58	.000	3.31833	.60226	Lower	Upper	
								2.11278	4.52388	
Equal Variances not assumed			5.510	56.839	.000	3.31833	.60226	2.11226	4.52441	

The results of the study shows that both critical thinking and comprehension are cognitive abilities having cognitive skills in common so that improving the first can contribute to the improvement of the other. This supports the purpose of the study that teaching critical thinking has a positive effect in motivating and enhancing students' literacy for analyzing literary texts.

The statistical analysis of the two groups shows the significant difference that exists between the two groups. Students in Group A had undergone special treatment regarding text analysis and oral discussions of literary genres. But students in group B did not have any treatment, therefore they dealt with text just as a simple text used for reading comprehension. They were not taught how to annotate or discuss or question any idea regarding the text. In contrast students in the experimental group were given comprehension strategies instruction, and they were exposed to more reading materials as compared to control group. The materials included the texts given to them for debate and the texts they might have searched for gathering information for the debate. As a result, they were involved in more structures and new vocabulary than the control group. All these can be contributing factors to improving EFL literacy. Comprehension is a constructive process, personalized by the ideas and thoughts of the individual readers. And ideas and thoughts cannot be taught; they can only be taught through personal connection.

Literacy itself changes with languages and contexts. Critical literacy and literate talk are mutually reinforcing in the sense that talk around texts offers opportunities to check out our own preferred readings against those of others. One way of doing this is to offer opportunities for students to first rehearse in small group discussion their contributions to subsequent public debate, where views are shared and reconsidered in a wider forum, thus allowing space for more extended, planned discourse than is usually available to students in communicative language classrooms, where short-burst informal talk is privileged. It will be argued that foreign language learners have these abilities well developed from their first language. This is often true. However, such learners then welcome the opportunity, which is denied them in most language classrooms, to exercise their discursive abilities at the same time as developing literate English (Bialystok, 2003).

According to Freire (1970, in Farralelli, 2009) critical pedagogy is a radical change that has to be made in the way educators and students interact with each other within the class. Critical approaches to literacy, according to Luke (1997), "are characterized by a commitment to reshape literacy education in the interests of marginalized groups of learners, who on the basis of gender, culture and socioeconomic background have been excluded from access to the discourses and texts of dominant economies and cultures" (p. 143). Luke and Freebody (1997, p.1) explain that "although critical literacy does not stand for a unitary approach, it marks out a coalition of educational interests committed to engage with the possibilities that the technologies of writing

and other modes of inscription offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement" (cited in Davies & Elder, 2004).

5. Pedagogical Implications

Iranian students are not educated as critical thinkers in their first language educational system; therefore, providing them with an appropriate context to foster critical thinking dispositions in foreign language setting is of crucial importance. As students do not display the elements of critical thinking in language skills, it will be helpful to find out whether teaching critical thinking skills could help the students improve their language proficiency. This study provides the experts in the field of language teaching with information about the relationship between critical thinking and learners' performance on reading comprehension texts applying critical thinking method. The demands made by the society today necessitate the incorporation of critical thinking skills in the curriculum. The results of this study reveal that using language and knowing the meaning don't lead the learners to be proficient. Instead they need to display creative and critical thinking through the language to express and support their ideas creatively and critically. Giving students a critical thinking opportunity, for example, allowing them the time to pause, reflect on, analyze and discuss an issue in a context that supports and values critical thinking, is indeed the key to critical thinking education.

To free the context of schooling from the culture of silence in many education systems, one such measure is incorporation of critical theories of education such as critical pedagogy and transformative education into policies and practices of language educational institutions. Education in these frameworks is considered as a powerful tool given to individuals to "better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a process of progressive social change." Therefore, in these approaches the essence of education is not mastering the A to Z of the books but developing critical thinking skills in order to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and critical literacy suggests active participation of students in the learning process through collaborative activities like dialogue. This kind of practice gradually helps students to change and redefine their world by viewing it from newer and broader perspectives, and this is the essence of literacy (cited in Izadinia & Abednia, 2010).

In critical literacy, "literacy" is considered as the ability that originates in the development of voice and contributes to the well being of oneself and society. However, in every social context, including educational settings, a democratic atmosphere that will not only help individuals to find their voices but also paves the way for freedom of expression, is necessary. However, in critical literacy-oriented courses, a close bond between the teacher and students is particularly significant due to a different reason: enabling teachers to not only talk to learners but also talk with them in a dialogical manner (Freire, 2005). That is, if teachers try to come down from their safe and impregnable position to a friendlier, more democratic, and dialogical environment, they can find the opportunity to connect with the concrete conditions of students' world, and influence ways of thinking and living (cited in Izadinia, & Abednia, 2010).

Elder and Paul (2003) point out that, an important part of critical thinking education is turning students into active questioners. They concede that it is important for learners to keep asking questions in the learning process, stressing that 'to learn well is to question well' (p.36). Facione (1992) and Paul (2004) stress the connection between critical thinking and reading comprehension. Paul (2004) states, "The reflective mind improves its thinking by reflectively thinking about it. Likewise, it improves its reading by reflectively thinking about how it is reading." Some of the mental skills employed in reading comprehension, as Grabe (1991) states, are inference, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation which are what experts include "as being at the very core of critical thinking" (Facione, 1992). The ability to analyze, solve problems, reason, and think critically has been the foundation for the success and progress of the human race.

What can teachers do to promote comprehension? We can create a set of literal conditions that activate students' thinking process, but that is probably all we can do. The most important tool is one that language teachers use to engage students in talking about books. Our classroom must be alive with literate task- rich conversation about books that apprentice students into deeper comprehension. The role of critical literacy is viewed as assisting students in developing insights into the ways in which those ideologies, identities, and power relations work in society and the ways in which language works to entrench and challenge those relations. We also see critical literacy as opening up options for students to resist or challenge the status quo if they so choose. Since our particular interest lies in assisting students to develop such control critical literacy in EFL/ESL classroom is a crucial endeavor for critical engagement with textual and cultural practices. Very often, without this double focus, EFL students either remain stranded in

commonsense ways of interpreting texts or become overly dependent on teachers' guidance and assistance. Perhaps most importantly, it is evident that any effective critical literacy program has a long lead-time in an ESL classroom.

Benesch (1993) emphasizes that critical thinking is not simply higher order thinking; instead, it is a quest for the social, historical, and political roots of conventional knowledge and an orientation to transform learning and society. Giving students space for expressing ideas and, at the same time, showing them how to respect other people's thoughts and feelings is a way of cultivating the culture of voice in students as opposed to the culture of silence (Freire, 1972, in Izadinia, & Abednia, 2010), which would hinder students from making their voice heard both in the classroom and in society.

Thinking critically is the ability, which is to be developed in the EFL class because of the generalized process of globalization, immigration and poverty. We as teachers of ESL/EFL should help promote teaching students 'how' to think instead of the very famous' what' to think. It is essential for teachers to be aware of the fact that tolerance, dialogue among cultures and deconstruction of texts need to be exercised so that students can dissect dominant discourses and allow for diversity knocking down stereotypes.

So far, this paper has dealt with what is critical literacy and how we expect critical thinking to reform our education and our knowledge. However, a different stance has been taken over by Dwight Atkinson (1997) in his article "A critical approach to critical thinking" where he presents four more-or-less independent reasons why TESOL educators should be cautious about adopting critical thinking pedagogies in their classrooms. (a) Critical thinking may be more on the order of a non-overt social practice than a well-defined and teachable pedagogical set of behaviors; (b) critical thinking can be and has been criticized for its exclusive and reductive character; (c) teaching thinking to nonnative speakers may be fraught with cultural problems; and, (d) once having been taught, thinking skills do not appear to transfer effectively beyond their narrow contexts of instruction. Therefore, he puts forward the idea by Fox (1994) that, "This thing we call "critical thinking" or "analysis" has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques— it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one's country. This is why "critical analysis" is so hard for faculty members to talk about; because it is learned intuitively it is easy

to recognize, like a face or a personality, but it is not so easily defined and is not at all simple to explain to someone who has been brought up differently " (p. 125).

In introducing this cautionary note, the suggestion is not that critical literacy is an add-on or extra available only for advanced students. Indeed, critical perspectives can effectively be incorporated at all stages of learning because thinking critically is an ability that helps to analyze and review prevalent aspects and when developed becomes very soon a 'unique' situation. The teacher is a model and the interaction that takes place between the participants can encourage social and personal developments. As Crookes and Lehner (1998) propose teachers must listen to what students are saying and pose their students' various issues as problems to be considered by the class. Neither teachers nor students should be complacent, nor should they fear raising issues. Teachers should reflect back student-generated issues to the students as problems they should work on rather than attempt to solve the problems for the students (p. 327).

6. Conclusion

In our understanding of the term critical literacy, essentially language and other social semiotic systems work together to construct the cultural and social realities within which people live, within every culture there is interplay of social ideologies, identities, and power relations that work systematically to the advantage of some people and to the disadvantage of others. Literacy does not exist outside of human action but it is embedded in our human activity in that the strong may manipulate institutions concerned with literacy in ways that disadvantage the weak.

Pally (1997) suggests that in adult ESL learners, development of critical thinking skills, as defined by EAP, cognitive psychology and transformative pedagogy, benefits from sustained content study (or studying one area over time). Sustained content study is recommended because: it allows students to accrue information, without which they are less able to question, synthesize, and evaluate what they read; it allows students to become familiar with the rhetorical conventions of a discipline; and, as these are the skills needed for university study, today's workplace and to understand the socio-political factors that affect students' lives, sustained study allows students to practice in the ESL class what they will need outside it.

Although improvement of linguistic skills is not the only concern of critical second language learning classes, it also focuses on language as a means to critical and social ends. Therefore, we see that student empowerment coincides with the development of literacy. Very often, the

feedback given back on students' work can be very effective in promoting and cultivating literacy practices and through negotiated interaction the students' self-confidence is enhanced to a great extent. They find their ideas are worth incorporating into classroom procedures. Moreover, this leads to a broadening of attitudes and self, in order to question and transform ideas and assumptions that have long been taken for granted. The critical approach to learning very soon can become an integrated one wherein the language skills of learning are ultimately integrated.

Crookes and Lehner (1998) believe that although we have focused here on aspects of classroom or pedagogical practice, critical pedagogy should be seen as a social and educational process rather than just as a pedagogical method. It is more concerned about how language can effect personal and social change than it is with "how to teach language" more effectively or in ways that simply encourage critical thinking on the part of teacher and students (p. 327).

Despite modern efforts to define critical thinking, there appears to be no one definition of critical thinking that is acceptable to current leaders in the critical thinking movement. It appears that critical thinking is so multi-faceted that one definition is simply insufficient. Researchers continue to refine the concept of critical thinking. Unfortunately, the lack of a general consensus on the definition of critical thinking hampers the efforts of researchers to develop a comprehensive assessment tool of critical thinking. Despite the fact that there are numerous assessment tools of critical thinking, there is no test that assesses all aspects of critical thinking defined by experts in the field.

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Title

The Impact of Cohesive Devices on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' Reading Comprehension Skills

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Abstract

The present paper investigates the impact of cohesive devices on Iranian intermediate EFL students' reading comprehension. In an effort with a two-fold research question regarding the role of teaching cohesive devices in reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL students and whether Iranian intermediate EFL students are able to identify and recognize the function of cohesive devices in English texts, the following procedure was taken. First 120 male and female EFL students were selected from Tonekabon Azad University. To check the homogeneity of the subjects, they were pre-tested through NTC'S TOEFL test. Having administered the language proficiency test, researchers selected 80 students as intermediate subjects according to their TOEFL band scores. Then, the subjects were randomly divided into Experimental and control groups. First, pretests of reading comprehension and cohesion identification and function recognition were administered to both control and experimental groups to assess their knowledge of

cohesive devices in reading English texts. The pre-test revealed no significant difference between the two groups' performance. Then, the treatment started and experimental group was exposed to teaching of cohesive devices. Finally, post-tests of reading comprehension and cohesion identification and function recognition were administered to students of both groups at the end of the term to assess the possible difference of performance between experimental and control group. The collected data was then processed through statistical analysis of T-TEST. Statistical analysis of the results provided some evidence in support of the positive effect of cohesive devices on reading comprehension. The results showed that cohesive devices helped students in a better understanding of English language texts. Another finding showed that EFL students may have no difficulty in learning certain rules or classification of rules, yet serious problems turn out when they are expected to practically apply those rules during reading comprehension. Our findings can have implications for the field of language learning and teaching by deepening our understanding of the nature of the cohesive devices used by Iranian intermediate EFL learners in the process of reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, Textual competence Cohesion, Coherence, Cohesive devices.

1. Introduction

The central role played by reading comprehension at academic level and studying in the modern world is undeniable since it is the main medium by which teaching and learning can take place. Reading comprehension is considered as a highly complicated activity. One fundamental component of such a complex activity is the complete recognition of text structure and organization of ideas conveyed by the text (Alderson et al, 2000). The coherence of a text evidently relies on the way ideas and opinions within the text are related to one another, either from the point of view of logical relations or along with cohesive devices that show or produce the connections between the opinions across paragraphs and sentences. Thus, it is clearly evident that one major component of a competent fluent readers' ability concerns the recognition of proper order of opinions , and identification of cohesion and coherence in the text in order to relate the opinions to each other and to make sense of the writer's intentions regarding the

sequence of ideas(Alderson et al, 2000). The emergence of the concept of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Leung, 2005) imposed a change in the view of second language learning from mastery of just grammatical forms to the acquisition of functional usage of forms in social contexts. This view implies that communicative competence involves pragmatic competence that is the ability to understand and produce meaning in context (Taguchi, 2005). Therefore, the emphasis shifted strongly from structure and grammar to function and communicative competence; from isolated sentences to text; from formalism to pragmatism and discoursism.

An earlier framework for describing language proficiency was that incorporated in skills and components. These models distinguished skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) from components of language (grammar, vocabulary, phonology), but did not indicate how skills and knowledge are related. A more serious limitation of skill / components model was its failure to recognize the full context of language use- the context of discourse and situation (Bachman, 1990). Recent frameworks of communicative competence have included several different components associated with what that is called language competence (Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Language competence │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                           ↙              ↘
          ┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
          │ Organizational Competence│  │ Pragmatic Competence │
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   ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
   │ Grammatical  │ │   Textual    │ │ Illocutional │ │Sociolinguistic│
   │  Competence  │ │  Competence  │ │  Competence  │ │  Competence  │
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 │ Voc.Morph.Synt│ │   Cohes.     │ │Ideat .Manip.Heur.Imag.│ │Sensit.Sensit.Sensit.sensit│
 │  Phon /Graph. │ │  Rhet.org.   │ │Functs.functs.functs.functs│ │To Dial.to Reg.to Nat.to..│
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Components of language competence adopted from Bachman (1990).
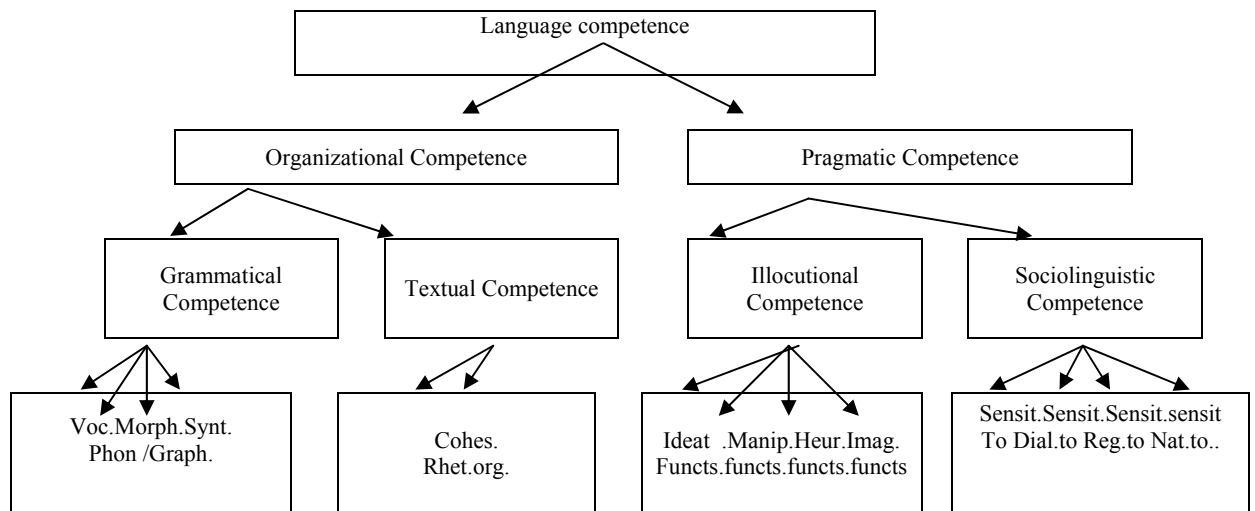
According to Gascoigne (2005) these competencies assist readers in completing a multitude of different strategies and tasks in order to facilitate reading comprehension. Textual competence includes "the knowledge of conventions for joining utterances together to form a text which is essentially a unit of language-spoken or written- consisting of two or more

utterances or sentences that are structured according to rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization" (Bachman, 1990: p.88). Cohesion compromises ways of explicitly marking semantic relationships such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Mu (2006) Reported that English teachers had better to be conscious of what communicative competence includes and the training of students' textual competence should be reinforced in communicative English classroom.

Cohesion refers to the surface structure of the text (Louwerse and Graesser, 2005). The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text. Cohesion occurs when interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. Cohesion is part of a system of language. The potential for cohesion lies in the systematic resources of reference, ellipsis, and so on that is built into the language itself. Cohesion is partly expressed through the grammar and partly through vocabulary. We can refer them therefore to grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Mc Namara et al (2005) clarify the meaning of cohesion and coherence as follows: both constructs represent how words, constituents, and ideas conveyed in a text are connected on particular levels of language, discourse, and word knowledge. In the case of cohesion the constituents are grounded in explicit linguistic elements (i.e. words, features, signals, constituents) and their combinations. Coherence, however, results from an interaction between text cohesion and the reader. Coherence reflects the degree to which appropriate, meaningful connections are established between elements of text and the readers' prior knowledge (Rapp etal, 2007). The definition of the coherence of a text involves finding an intended role in the text for every unit. Negatively, coherence is the absence of non-sequiturs (Taboada and Mann, 2006).Cohesion can be divided into local (micro-structure) and global (macro-structure).Local cohesion and coherence concern the interrelatedness between adjacent discourse segments. Global cohesion and coherence concern the interrelatedness of larger spans of discourse. Cohesion can be grammar-driven or vocabulary-driven. Grammar-driven cohesion refers to sentence structure, word structure, and the intonation of the discourse segments. Vocabulary-driven cohesion refers to the lexical vocabulary of the discourse segment. (Louwerse & Graesser, 2005).

According to Storrer (2002), there are product-based versus process-based view of coherence. Product-oriented coherence studies have focused on the analysis of coherence cues in

static text. Process-oriented coherence studies, on contrast, investigate the role of coherence in communication processes, focusing on either coherence-building and coherence design: coherence building is a key aspect of models on discourse comprehension. These models describe how recipients build coherent knowledge structures while processing text and how this process is affected by the interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Coherence design is the focus of models on discourse production. These models describe the strategies authors pursue in order to guide and promote the process of coherence-building, as well as, the linguistic and non-linguistic tools they utilize. Two main approaches, that is, coherence as a process and coherence as a product, share different views on how coherence is achieved. The former centers on what is unfolded as the reader interacts with the text, whereas the latter is explained in terms of features identifiable in the textual product itself. The researchers of the process-oriented approach directly challenged cohesion (Carrell, 1982; Steffensen, 1988). These researchers maintained that coherence is not some feature that is embedded in a text, but instead is a process of coherence-making on the part of reader and writer and is dependent on the notion of shard background knowledge.

Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion in English (1976) stimulated many studies such as Lubleska (1991), Crane (2000), Chung(2000) Al-jarf (2001), Cain (2003) Moreno (2003), Morris (2004), Yeh (2004), O'Reilly and Mc Namara (2007) to be conducted in the area of cohesion. A brief account of some of these studies is presented as follows:

Demel (1990) investigated the relationship between overall comprehension and the comprehension of coreferential pronouns for second language readers of English. The results suggest that misunderstanding of coreferential ties reflect a misunderstanding of the descriptive phrases to which pronouns refer. A comparison of L2 data with that of L1 revealed that comprehension problems regarding anaphoric relations are two pronged. First, L2 readers encounter difficulties when they are unfamiliar with the descriptive expressions used as the antecedent of a coreferential pronoun. Second, lack of comprehension of these expressions may be indicative of a lack of knowledge of target culture.

Lubleska (1991) studied some samples of materials designed to enable advanced learners to read more effectively for academic purposes. The materials focused learners' attention on the role of various cohesive devices in relating different parts of a text. The aim was to sensitize the learners to the ways these devices can help them to make sense of a text. This goal was achieved

through the use of discovery exercises applied to an authentic text. After working through these exercises learners sharpened awareness of the need to keep checking, as they read a text, that they have interpreted its cohesive devices in a way that make sense in the context of the text as a whole.

In another study, Chung (2000), investigated the relationship between signals, coherence, and reading comprehension to see whether signals contribute to the comprehension at a local level (Microstructure) or at a global level (macrostructure). Signals as devices of cohesion and coherence have long been an area of concern in reading and writing research. Two types of signals, logical connectives and paragraph heading, are assumed to be of importance to reading comprehension. Logical connectives are taken as equivalent to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) conjunctives. Signaling and its relationship to reading involve an examination of coherence, signaling being a category of linguistic cohesion or coherence. The findings of the study suggested that logical connectives do not aid understanding at the macrostructure level.

Taboada (2000) did a study of cohesion in a bilingual corpus. The findings showed that the comparison of the number of cohesive links used for each language presented the same ratio (0.068) of cohesive elements to words in both English and Spanish. The type of cohesive ties that the subjects used was also very similar in both languages. Lexical cohesion and specially the use of repetition of the same item was the most widely used type. Lexical cohesion was followed by the use of reference. Substitution and ellipsis were found to be related to since ellipsis is substitution by zero. These types of cohesive ties had low frequency of usage, but ellipsis was used more often.

One more study conducted in the field of cohesion was in the U.K, by Cain (2003) who attempted to investigate the relations between children's text comprehension, and their ability to produce a coherent and cohesive story. Cain (2003) predicted a relation between reader's ability to comprehend text and their ability to produce a structurally coherent narrative. And this prediction was based on the fact that comprehension involves the construction of an integrated and coherent representation of a text's meaning. Findings of this study demonstrate that children with weak text comprehension skill produce narratives which are poor in terms of both structural coherence and local cohesion.

Moreno (2003) studied the role of cohesion devices as textual constraints on relevance. The purpose of her study was to show how and which cohesive features play an important role in

helping the reader perceive relevance and coherence when a text is approached in the process of reading. With this aim, a comment article from Guardian Unlimited consisting of sixty coherence units was analyzed by a group of 25 subjects. The results indicated that in most cases the cohesive resources that contribute to the perception of the discourse relevance and coherence of the text at each juncture deal only with discourse meaning derived from whole sentences, larger fragments of texts and they do much more than effect a tenuous connection between isolated constituents of sentences.

Ozono and Ito (2003) examined the effect of what they call it logical connectives and the semantic relations they signal on the comprehension of written text. Japanese university students studying English as a second language were the participants of the study. The research participants were divided into two groups according to their English language proficiency: low proficiency group and high proficiency group. Three conjunctives representing three semantic relations were used. Adversatives were represented by however, causals by therefore and illustrative by for example. The findings of the study showed that both high and low language proficiency groups benefited from the explicit presence of conjunctives in the texts used for testing their reading comprehension. However, it appeared that certain types of conjunctives are more useful to reading comprehension than others. For instance, unlike the high group, the low group tended to find however more difficult than for example.

Querol (2004) presented a description of how English literature make use of substitution as a device of grammatical cohesion and the mechanism employed in transferring them into the Spanish. The results showed that how the two different languages such as English and Spanish select different devices for the same linguistic situation. It was also found that among three different types of substitution identified, nominal and verbal substitution had a similar frequency, whereas there was a lower employment of clausal type. Among cohesive ties "one" was the most common one, "do" the most widely employed in general. Notice that "so" which has been presented as a practice of clausal substitution appeared twice as nominal type.

Yeh (2004) investigated the relationship of cohesion and coherence. In order to achieve a more thorough understanding of the relationship he conducted the study from a contrastive linguistic point of view. To identify the relationship between coherence and cohesion, several Chinese texts have been analyzed with a focus on the use of reference and conjunctive relations. The analysis showed that cohesion, as surface linguistic features, cannot account fully for the

coherence of a text. Rather, underlying semantic relation as well as reader's perceptions of the text should be taken into consideration to construct a complete picture of discourse processing. Moreover, it was concluded: firstly, different languages may have different systems of cohesive devices. Devices in Halliday and Hasan's model, such as reference, lexical cohesion, and conjunction, may be present in most languages. However the importance attached to various types of cohesive devices might be different. Secondly, it is safe to assume that a text's coherence is universal in the sense that the underlying semantic relations can be grasped by the reader / speaker with the knowledge of language as well as from other sources be it the application of the schemata or interpretation of illocutionary acts. In other words, the cohesion need not surface in the text in order to contribute to its coherence.

O' Reilly and Mc Namara (2007) investigated the impact of cohesion texts on students' reading ability. They also examined whether students' comprehension skill affects the interaction between text cohesion and their domain knowledge. In this study college students (N=143) read a high or a low cohesion text and answered text-based and bridging inference questions. The results indicated that the benefit of low-cohesion text was restricted to less skilled, high knowledge readers, whereas skilled comprehenders with high knowledge benefited from a high cohesion text. This has been called the reverse cohesion effect.

1.2 Types of cohesive ties

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified five types of cohesion: reference cohesion, substitution cohesion, ellipsis cohesion, conjunctive cohesion, and lexical cohesion. The first four types fall under the category of grammatical cohesion. Lexical cohesion on the other hand refers to relations between any lexical item and some previously occurring lexical item in the text, quite independently of the grammatical category of the items in question. For example, lexical cohesion can exist in noun magistrate and the verb judge. The five types of cohesion are explained below:

A. Reference cohesion

What distinguishes this special type of cohesion is the particular nature of the information that is to be retrieved, and the cohesion lies in the continuity of reference, by which the same thing comes into the discourse for second time.

1. Personal reference

Personal reference is reference by means of function in the speech situation, through the category of person. Personal reference includes:

(a) Personal pronouns: I, Me, Him, she, Her, You, Us, They, Them, and It.

(b) Personal determiners: My, Mine, His, Hers, Your, Yours, Their, hers.

(c) Relative pronouns: who and which…

2. Demonstrative reference

Demonstrative reference is reference by means of location, on a scale of proximity.

The category of demonstrative reference includes:

(a) Determiners: This, There, that, and those.

(b) Demonstrative adverbs: There, Here, and then.

3. Comparative reference

Comparative reference is indirect reference by means of identity or similarity. Comparative reference includes:

(a) Comparative adjectives: Equal, same, identical, other, Different, more, better, etc.

(b) Comparative Adverbs: Differently, similarly, more, less, etc.

B. Substitution cohesion

Substitution cohesion consists of sense identity relation instead of a reference identity relation. It also has three subdivisions such as nominal substitution, verbal substitution and clausal substitution.

1. Nominal substitution

If the presupposed element is a noun phrase or noun the nominal substitution occurs. Look at the example below:

a) Can you give me a pen?

b) There is one on the desk.

The presupposing cohesion element is one.

2. Verbal substitution

In the case of verbal substitution, the presupposed element is a verb phrase or verb. The presupposing element which the substitution is usually the word do and its various forms, such as does did and done. Look at the example below:

All children like ice cream and my son does too.

3. Clausal substitution

When the presupposed element is a complete clause, there exists clausal substitution. The most frequent presupposing element affecting this type of substitution is so. For example:

Employees must come to work before 7:30 a.m. The manager says so.

So it replaces the whole sentence, employees must come to work before 7:30 a.m.

C. Ellipsis cohesion

Ellipsis cohesion refers to the case of absence of a word, a phrase or a clause whose meaning is understood. In other words, Ellipsis is simply defined as substitution by zero. There are three types depending on the syntactic category of the presupposed elements.

1. Nominal ellipsis

If the presupposed element is a noun phrase or noun which is actually absent from the context of discourse it is nominal ellipsis. As in:

These are my two cats. I used to have four.

The word cat has been omitted and can easily be understood or recovered from the context.

2. Verbal ellipsis

Verbal ellipsis occurs where a verb or verb phrase is presupposed, as in:

Teacher: have you done the homework?

John: yes, I have.

John's answer is elliptical in the sense that doing the homework is understood.

3. Clausal ellipsis

Clausal ellipsis occurs when both a noun or noun phrase and adverb phrase, is omitted. It is mostly seen in dialogue in yes/ no questions, as in the example below:

Mary: are you going to buy a new dress for my birthday?

Mother: yes.

Here the mother is affirming the entire clause you are going to buy a dress for my birthday. The whole clause may often be omitted, as in:

Henry: what grade did you get for French?

Paul: B

Since the whole clause has been omitted, Paul's answer constitutes a clausal ellipsis and not a nominal or verbal ellipsis.

D. Conjunctive cohesion

As Halliday and Hasan (1976: p.256) point out "conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding or following text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse".

E.g. He took a cup of coffee after he woke up

The word "after" suggests a sequence, signaling that what is expressed in the first clause followed what is expressed in the second one.

1. Additive conjunction

Under the heading Additive we may include a related pattern, in which the source of cohesion is the comparison of what is being said with what has gone before.

e.g. Similarly, likewise, in the same way, and, or…

2. Adversative conjunction

The basic meaning of the adversative relation is contrary to expectation. The expectation may be derived from the context of what is being said.

e.g. Although, though, despite, however, nevertheless…

3. Causal conjunction

Under the heading of causal relations are included the specific ones of result, reason, and purpose.

e.g. Hence, then, so, because, consequently, therefore, for this reason….

4. Temporal conjunction

It is a relation of sequence in time. The temporal relation may be made more specific by the presence of an additional component in the meaning as well as that of a succession in time.

e.g. Then, next, after that, just then, previously, at last, finally, at last...…

E. Lexical cohesion

The last type of cohesion according to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification is lexical cohesion. Despite reference, substitution, and ellipsis which are associated with syntactic elements, lexical cohesion has nothing to do with syntactic relations. Therefore it is a open-ended and the most difficult cohesive type to define which is vocabulary-driven and based on lexical relations. Some of the relations which signal for lexical cohesion through their vocabulary are presented below:

1. By repetition of a phrase or word.

2. Synonymy (words which have similar meanings, e.g. well-known, famous)

3. Antonym (the relation of opposite meaning e.g. high, low, day, night)

4. Hyponymy (the semantic relation between a more general expression that includes some related specific relations e.g. flower and rose).

5. Collocation (group of words whose meaning relates to the same certain contents, e.g. car, gas, driver).

Young people act quickly. Old people take their time

Here young and old are antonymous. They bear a relation of semantic contrast.

It is obvious that for discourse to be comprehensible and cohesive, language learners have to know who does what to whom when and where. Information about entities, people and objects, time, space and actions has to be carefully tracked and managed from one segment of utterance to the next(Gullberg, 2006).

But one major reading difficulty ESL/EFL college students encounter is inability to recognize the connections among sentences in the text and EFL learners are less aware of cohesive devices while reading English texts (Chu, Swaffer, Charney, 2002; AL-jarf, 2001).

This study is an attempt to investigate the relations between reading comprehension and textual factors, namely cohesion and cohesive ties as a way of suggesting solutions for difficulties Iranian EFL learners confront in comprehending the an English language text. One significant point which makes this study distinct from other works in the field of cohesion is the exclusion of lexical cohesion as a vocabulary- driven and problematic aspect of cohesion since lexical cohesion is not easily identified as well as grammatical ones and its relation is not justifiable on the basis of grammatical relations existing in the text (Klebanov et al, 2008; McGee, 2009). This study aimed at answering the following questions:

1. Are Iranian intermediate EFL learners able to identify the textual cohesive devices and interpret their function correctly in their reading comprehension?

2. Do Iranian intermediate EFL learners benefit from being explicitly taught about cohesive devices in their reading comprehension course?

3. If so, which part of their reading comprehension ability (factual, inferential, and referential questions) will be more remarkably influenced?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The participants who took part in this study were 80 (M = 40; F = 40) Iranian intermediate EFL students who were native speakers of Persian. The participants had no familiarity with any other foreign languages except English language. All students were majoring in English-Persian translation studying at Tonekabon branch Azad University. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 24 years old. The participants were selected from among a group of 120 EFL students by means of administering NTC's TOEFL test of language proficiency. The selected students were those with intermediate level of language proficiency. Finally, the students were randomly assigned into an experimental group and a control group.

2.2 Instrument

Two research instruments were used in this study. First a validated paper-based TOEFL test was administered at the beginning of the study to select the main subjects of the study as intermediate Iranian EFL learners. The second instrument employed by this study consisted of three measuring tests prepared as pre-post tests for the collection of data. The first step in the study that required the development of three different versions of syntactically modified texts proved to be challenging .There were a large number of texts that could serve this purpose. However, the major issue was that they were related to specific subject areas and needed certain background knowledge. To resolve this problem, first a text adopted from Alexander (1977) was modified to accommodate similar number of cohesive devices based on Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy of cohesive ties (1976). A word of caution is necessary here that in the process of modification, content and vocabulary were held constant and only cohesive ties as textual factors were modified. This test served as Cohesion identification and function recognition test. The text included about 300 words. Students were asked to read the passage and underline the cohesive devices (conjunction, substitution, ellipsis) in the text and relate the identified cohesive devices to its substituted, ellipted or conjoined part. The second test was a cloze test of cohesion. The test was in the form of cloze multiple choices reading comprehension test. It was a text selected from Mosbok & Vvanne (1976) which was manipulated to accommodate twenty cohesive ties, five for each intended type. And the test slots were supplied with four alternatives for each item. The cloze multiple choice test included 20 deletions. Regarding the deletion procedure the test utilized complete random sampling technique. The whole passage was assigned in definite number of sentences. Each sentence contained a blank corresponding to a deleted cohesive

device (conjunction, substitution, ellipsis). And the number of deletions was proportionately allocated for each class of intended cohesive devices in this study. For better understanding of students, the first and last sentences of the cloze passage were left intact. The rational for using multiple choices type of cloze test is to change the half comprehension and half production task in cloze test to a completely comprehension task. For scoring the test, each item, blank, received one point. Finally a complementary reading comprehension test was administered to participants of experimental and control groups. It included three sections as factual questions, inferential questions, and referential questions, which was adopted from reading comprehension portion of TOEFL Best (1991). The aim of this test was to determine which part of reading comprehension ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners is more effectively influenced as result of instructional treatment.

The reliability of tests was estimated by KR- 21 Method (Bachman, 1990). Thus, the magnitude of reliability, for our tests: cloze tests: 0.83 and 0.72 and for cohesion identification test: 0.73 and 0.77 which are far from zero and almost close to unity can be considered as reliable.

The validity of tests was obtained through concurrent validity method. The newly developed tests were administered concurrently with a reading comprehension portion of a TOEFL test as a criterion measure. The degree of the correlation coefficient between two sets of scores is an indication of the validity of the new tests. The correlation coefficient was calculated by *Rank-Difference* method (Harris, 1994). The validity of tests were P = 0.7295, P = 0.7973, P = 0.6795, P = 0.7830

The texts were examined to cope with the proficiency level of subjects. The readability of texts was examined through the fog index of readability. Two cloze tests had readability of about 53.48 and 54.57 and cohesion identification tests had readability score of 56.23 and 57.91 which are easily understandable by intermediate level students.

The teaching materials used in this study consisted of a division of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of cohesive devices into 12 parts. Each segment served as teaching material for one treatment session. The material consisted of two types. First, there were sentence examples containing the intended cohesive devices to be taught in each session. The aim of this material was to make students familiar with the cohesive devices and explain them at sentence level. Second, there were also short passages. Students were assigned to read the

passages and identify and recognize the function of cohesive devices through an analysis of the texts. The aim of presenting this type of material was to make students actively engaged into an interactive process with the text and make sure of the efficiency of teaching in each session. The material used in treatment sessions was selected from intermediate level materials in order to cope with the proficiency level of subjects.

2.3 Data collection and analysis procedure

This study was carried out in two phases. First, the participants were administered pretests of reading comprehension to assess subjects' knowledge of cohesive devices in identifying and recognizing their function within English language texts. The tests consisted of one cohesive devices identification test, for which, subjects were asked to identify the cohesive items and underline or circle them. Moreover, they were asked to connect the items to its substituted or ellipted part. The second kind of test was cloze test of reading comprehension with multiple choice alternatives to assess the subjects' ability in using the cohesive devices to understand the text. In the second phase, the actual study was conducted. There was an instructional treatment for participants of experimental group. The aim of treatment class was teaching cohesive devices(substitution, conjunction, ellipsis, reference) on the basis of operational definition of Halliday and Hasan (1976) followed by further working on some within text examples related to the taught material in each treatment session.

Generally, the teacher started each session in experimental group as follows: first, each cohesive type was explained and illustrated at the sentence level and some examples were used for more analysis and identification of cohesive ties. Then students were assigned to practice the taught materials, by identifying each cohesive type and connecting to its antecedent, substitute or conjoined part in the short texts such as short stories. This procedure was followed in each session of treatment classes for Experimental group. The treatment instruction ran for 12 sessions and the allocated time for each session was 45 minutes. There was no special treatment for the participants of control group concerning explicit teaching of cohesive devices unless some irrelevant practice, placebo, on some aspects of language with the same time allocation and the same number of sessions e.g. subjects were asked to read some passages and summarize the text they had already read. Finally, participants of both experimental and control group took the same reading comprehension tests as post-test at the end of course of instruction. The content of

tests was based on the material taught for experimental group as treatment. The allocated time for each test was about 60 minutes. Students' answer was marked by the researcher.

3. Results and discussions

By conducting the study and in an attempt to answer the first research question, following results were obtained from the performance of experimental and control groups in pre-post tests. The data collected came from the analysis of scores mean through T-TEST done by SPSS.

3.1 Statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of pretest

The data obtained from pretest indicated a difference between the two groups' mean scores; the experimental group scored higher than the control group. The statistical analysis of the results of the pretest, and the group mean comparison revealed that T.observed to be .85, with probability value: $P < .05$. It is clear that the value of T.observed does not exceed T.critical that is 2. Therefore the difference between two groups was not significant at $P < .05$. It means that the two groups turned out not to be significantly different at the beginning of the study.

Table.1. statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of pretest

Groups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	14.20	1.13	.17	.395
Control	40	14.00	.94	.14	.395
T-observed	.85				

3.2 Statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of posttest

As table .2. Demonstrates, a clear difference between means of experimental and control group in posttest can be observed.

Table.2. statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of posttest

Groups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	16.30	1.80	.28	.000
Control	40	14.30	1.27	.20	.000
T-observed	5.71				

The analysis of the results of posttest, and the group means comparison showed the T.observed to be 5.71 with the probability level of $P < .05$ and is much higher than T.critical 2. It

means that there is significant difference between the experimental and control group. Therefore this significant difference between the experimental and control group can be attributed to treatment effect as teaching of cohesive ties.

In an attempt to answer the second research question concerning the impact of explicit teaching of cohesive devices on reading comprehension skill of Iranian intermediate EFL learners, following scores and results were obtained from the performance of experimental and control groups in pre-post tests.

3.3 Statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of pretest

The data obtained from pretest revealed a difference between the means of experimental and control groups. But the t-test analysis of means of two groups showed the T.observed to be 1.01, with probability value: $P < .o5$. That is lower than T.critical 2. Therefore, based on this data analysis the difference between two groups is not significant at $P < .05$.

Table.3. statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of pretest

roups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	14.30	1.33	.21	.314
Control	40	14.02	1.07	.17	.314
T-observed	1.01				

3.4 Statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of posttest

Table.4. statistical analysis of independent sample t-test of posttest

roups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	16.15	1.77	.28	.000
Control	40	14.33	1.42	.22	.000
T-observed	5.03				

The statistical analysis of t-test showed the T.observed to be 5.03 at probability level of $P < .05$ that is much higher than T.critical 2. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control group. Since posttest was administered after treatment, this improvement in subjects performance and accordingly the difference between experimental and control group can be attributed to treatment effect that is explicit teaching of

cohesive devices indicating a positive relationship between cohesive devices and reading comprehension.

After finding evidences concerning the positive impact of teaching cohesive devices on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension skill, an attempt was made to determine which section of learners' reading ability will be more significantly influenced. For this aim a complementary reading comprehension test consisting of factual questions, inferential questions, and referential ones was administered to students of both control and experimental groups. Below the result of complementary test is presented through various tables and figures.

3.5 T-test statistical analysis of posttest on factual questions

By comparing the means of experimental and control group gained on factual questions part of a complementary reading comprehension posttest, it was revealed that T. observed is .59. It means that there is no significant difference between experimental and control group concerning their performance on factual questions section of reading comprehension test.

Table.5. T-test statistics of posttest on factual questions

Groups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	4.02	1.29	.20	.555
Control	40	3.85	1.35	.21	.555
T-observed	.59				

3.6 T-test statistical analysis of posttest on inferential questions

Now let us consider the results of statistical analysis of t-tests made between means of experimental and control group obtained on inferential questions section of a reading comprehension posttest which is shown in table (6).

Table.6. T-test statistics of posttest on inferential questions

Groups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	4.32	1.36	.21	.234
Control	40	3.95	1.43	.22	.234
T-observed	1.19				

The results of statistical T-test analysis of means revealed the T.observed to be 1.19 which is lower than T.critical, indicating the fact that there is no significant difference between experimental and control group concerning their performance on inferential questions section of reading comprehension test.

3.7 T-test statistical analysis of posttest on referential questions

Statistical analysis of t-test of control and experimental group means gained from scores of subjects on referential questions section of the complementary reading comprehension test showed the T.observed to be 7.02 which is much higher than T.critical, indicating a significant difference between the experimental and control group. Thus, it is concluded that the referential section of complementary reading comprehension posttest is more remarkably influenced by explicit teaching of cohesive devices and this difference is clearly obvious regarding the higher mean of experimental group.

Table.7. T-test statistics of posttest on referential questions

Groups	N	Means	St.Deviation	St.Error Mean	Sig(two-tailed)
Experimental	40	5.22	1.31	.20	.000
Control	40	3.17	1.29	.20	.000
T-observed	7.02				

The differences reported between the performance of experimental and control group post-test results could have the following explanations:

1. Although the participants of this study were selected from intermediate EFL learners, their English language level was not good enough to enable them to tackle any written text. It means that some of the subjects' reading skills were not powerful enough to comprehend a given text appropriately. This may be partly because of their limited vocabulary knowledge. This finding is consistent with what Kaivanpanah and

Zandi (2009) state, since they believe that vocabulary knowledge plays an increasingly important role concerning reading comprehension development not only in first language context but also in second language learning context. It means that as the level of learners' language proficiency develops, their knowledge of vocabulary will be accordingly increased and this is possible only through long term exposure to language (Kaivanpanah and Zandi, 2009; Qian, 2002; Qian and Schedl, 2004).

2. It seems that students usually have no problem in comprehending certain classifications of rules; however, they sometimes fail to apply them properly when they are expected to do so. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studied as Geva (1992) "found that second language learners may demonstrate familiarity with the meaning of cohesive devices, yet fail to utilize them in extended discourse". The ability to use and perceive the logical connections in an extended discourse will increase as the proficiency level increases.

3. The participants of this study were students learning English as a foreign language. This means that they were educated in their native Persian language. For this reason it was expected that Persian language reading strategies interfere in the strategies used when reading in English. Since second language readers have access to their native language as they read a text in second language, they may use it as a strategy to facilitate the comprehension of a second language text (Upton and Lee-Thompson, 2001).

4. Second language readers are by definition less fluent than their first language partners because their low level linguistic processing skills such as the efficiency of syntactic and lexical involved in comprehension of a text (Bates and Mc Whitney, 1989 in Nassaji, 2002).

5. It seems that an appropriate recognition of semantic functions existing in a written text which utilizes the correct cohesive devices to make the semantic relations explicitly known necessitates practice and time. Moreover it seems that the ability of recognition and determination of cohesive devices in a written text needs to be practiced in the context of connected discourse not in isolated sentences. Because the resolution of cohesive devices in a context of connected discourse is much easier than an isolated one.

6. It seems that EFL learners' problems in processing a text and particularly analyzing cohesive devices is somewhat related to availability of various antecedents in a text from among which the readers have to select the correct one. It means that when an antecedent which is in a close proximity with the intended cohesive device is unfamiliar to the readers, they tend to select and relate the anaphor with a distant phrase or word regardless of being correct or not.

7. Another problem found in EFL readers' performance concerning the analysis of cohesive devices is interference of semantic relations namely synonymous or near synonymous relations. Sometimes students associate an intended anaphor with a word or phrase which is synonym or near synonym of that target form.

8. Spelling or orthographic interference seems to be another cause of EFL readers' inability in performing an appropriate analysis of cohesive devices. There were cases when learners selected an incorrect anaphor to an antecedent since the anaphor had a similar orthographic appearance with the intended antecedent e.g. they and their.

As the final note it should be mentioned that Text cohesion is as a component of textual competence, knowledge, which is used in this study and helped learners improve their reading comprehension. Various statistical analyses indicated the effectiveness of the treatment by focusing on English language text cohesion.

4. Conclusion and implications of the study

Convincing evidence was found that shows the influence of teaching cohesive devices on the performance of test takers in reading comprehension tests. The conclusion that might be drawn from the results is that syntactic manipulation in the form of analyzing textual cohesive devices promotes comprehension and assists learners in finding out true intersetnensial relations and integrated meaning of the texts. These findings are consistent with the results of other studies conducted in this field e.g. Yeh (2004) reported that developing awareness of cohesive devices can certainly aid an inexperienced reader to find his / her own way to the writer' intention. The present study arrived at this conclusion that EFL learners' reading comprehension problems are partly related to their deficient knowledge of cohesive devices.

As Sharp (2002) states one neglected, yet significant feature of reading comprehension process is related to the impact of textual factors such as cohesive devices. Having argued in favor of textual cohesive Al-jarf(2001), asserts that EFL learners' failure in constructing a mental representation of the opinions and ideas included in a text, and lack of appropriate ability to maintain the global unity of the text as a whole may be related to certain textual elements including substitution, reference and ellipsis. Moreover, Alavi and Kaivanpanah(2007) believe that lack of awareness of sentential constraints or organizational features of the text result in comprehension problems. In other words, learners' difficulties in comprehension of the meaning of the words and in grasping the overall meaning of the text may be partly attributed to lack of such awareness. Thus, one way for helping EFL learners to become better readers is to develop their awareness of syntactic structures of the text.

This study has also concluded that EFL readers' perfect performance in analyzing textual factors, particularly dealing with cohesive devices, lies in provision of enough, appropriate and long term practice and input. Developing an awareness of contained rhetorical patterns in a text will contribute to comprehension of that text. It is also confirmed that second language readers show better comprehension performance if they are supplied with enough practice and information concerning the text structure organization (Sharp, 2002). It seems that the most suitable approach for reading comprehension instruction is an interactive approach, a balanced one, which pays equal attention to significance of both bottom-up and top-down processes including processing of textual factors (Abbott, 2006).

While this study dealt specifically with the impact of cohesive devices on English learners' reading comprehension skill, it has implications for learners in that it demonstrates the importance of cohesive devices as textual factors which ensures the true comprehension of a text. If use of cohesive devices facilitate reading comprehension, as evidenced by findings of the present study, these textual factors should be more practiced in EFL reading classes. This research also suggests further support for a text-based teaching approach in practice, which includes explicit classroom analysis of textual factors. The findings of this study suggest a lot of possibilities for further research that will illuminate and illustrate how cohesive ties affect reading comprehension. One area of research that can be attempted is a comparative study of the performance of the students in cohesion at various levels of proficiency. Another recommendation is to investigate the impact of cohesive devices on other language skills such as writing in isolation or along with and integrated to reading skill. This study could be replicated with a larger subject sample in order to generalize the findings to a larger population.

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Title

The Evaluation and Comparison of Two Most Widely Used Textbooks for Teaching English to the Iranian Students of Medicine

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study evaluated and compared Medical Terminology (MT) (Cohen, 2008) and English for the Students of Medicine (ESM) (II) (Tahririan & Mehrabi, 1994), the two most widely used textbooks for teaching English to the Iranian students of medicine. This research was performed on the basis of a teacher's and a number of students' attitudes for two reasons: first, to investigate the extent to which each textbook addresses the teacher's and students' expectations; and second, to find the textbooks' strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for their improvement. Survey questionnaires were used to elicit the perspectives of 50 students and 1 teacher. There were a teacher textbook evaluation questionnaire containing 37 items and a students' textbook evaluation questionnaire consisting of 23 items under 7 main categories. The data was subjected two descriptive statistics analysis first, and then inferential statistics analysis of the results were conducted. Three sets of computations were made: per-statement analysis, per-category analysis, and

comparative analysis of the two textbooks through conducting paired samples t-test. The results of category analysis indicated that from the both teacher's and students' perspective, MT was significantly better than ESM with respect to the categories of layout and design, activities, language type and subject and content.

1. Introduction

The role of textbooks in the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) and one of its major branches, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is a controversial issue. Surprisingly, the controversy has also extended to the teaching of ESP courses (see Maleki, 2008). The most important issues of controversy which are the major reference points of the current study include:

-whether these commercially prepared materials meet the needs and preferences of teachers and students who are using them,

-weather they foster and allow room for teachers' and students' innovation in teaching and learning processes,

-weather the language used in them is authentic and appropriate for those who are using them,

-whether the layout, design, organization and progression of materials are clear, appropriate and effective,

-whether the subject matter and content are interesting, challenging, motivating and responsive to the students' needs,

-whether the materials in the textbooks are practical and methodologically valid,

-whether gender, social classes and cultural components are presented appropriately and without any negative stereotypes.

According to Riazi (2003) the textbooks "are considered the next important factor in the second/foreign language classroom after the teacher" (p.52); however, some professionals in ELT field such as Allwright (1982) supported using teacher-made materials and regarded textbooks as too inflexible tools that had generally reflected the pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors.

Whatever role was attributed to textbooks in TESL/TEFL classrooms, the textbooks have constantly been used by language teaching institutions and teachers. As Dawn Garinger (2002) puts it, "Even with the development of new technologies that allow for higher quality teacher-generated material, demand for textbooks continues to grow, and the publishing industry responds with new series and textbooks each year" (p.1).

As such, textbook evaluation is of great importance for the managerial and teaching staff of different language teaching institutions or organizations. It helps them in several ways. First, it differentiates between all available textbooks on the market and helps select those that address teachers' and their students' specific aims, needs, interests and expectations. Second, it makes them aware of a textbook's weaknesses and strengths so that they can decide whether to make use of supplementary materials in some parts or to modify or eliminate some other parts. Third, the evaluative criteria developed by textbook evaluators and the results of evaluative practices and research activities may enhance the material developers' insights into the types of materials that will most likely meet the intended learners' specific needs and the course designers' or teachers' aims and values, and hence assist them in developing such materials. Fourth, conducting a textbook evaluation is a professional practice that improves teachers' performance and fosters their professional growth because it increases teachers' information about how to evaluate a textbook systematically and objectively rather than subjective and impressionistic judgments.

The present study is an evaluation and comparison of two ESP textbooks available on the Iranian market for teaching English to the students of medicine. It was performed on the basis of both teachers' and students' viewpoints about different aspects of the textbooks. MT is a first Canadian edition which is produced to meet the specific needs the Canadian students of medicine. ESM on the other hand, is one of the series of textbooks compiled by professional experts and TEFL professors in Iran and is published by SAMT Organization. The content of these textbooks is subject to criticism by researchers and curriculum writers now (e.g. Zangani, 2009).

The authors decided to evaluate and compare MT and ESM for two reasons; first, to investigate the extent to which each textbook addresses the teacher's and the students' needs and expectations at Zanjan Medical Sciences University in Iran; second, to discover the textbooks' strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for their improvement.

1.1. Textbook evaluation background

According to Cunningsworth (1995) the evaluation of teaching material is a fundamental action which should be performed to ensure "… that the materials selected closely reflect the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program" (p.7).

Ellis (1997) made distinctions between different types of material evaluation: predictive evaluation versus retrospective evaluation, impressionistic evaluation versus empirical evaluation and micro-evaluation versus macro-evaluation. He defined them as follows:

- Predictive evaluation is carried out by teachers for choosing the teaching materials available to them in order to determine which are best suited to their purposes

- Retrospective evaluation is carried out once the materials have been used to determine whether it is worthwhile using them again, which activities 'work' and which do not, and how to modify the materials to make them more effective for future use. It can be used as a means of testing the validity of a predictive evaluation and improving its instruments as well

- Impressionistic evaluation is carried out during the course while teachers assess whether particular activities 'work' (usually with reference to the enthusiasm and degree of involvement manifested by the students), while at the end of the course they make summative judgments of the materials

- Empirical evaluation is carried out through collecting information in a more systematic manner and making judgments on the basis of them

- Macro evaluation calls for an overall assessment of whether an entire set of materials has worked while in a micro-evaluation one particular teaching task is focused and is submitted to a detailed empirical evaluation.

Jordan (1997) referred to some subjective elements that could attract us to a book in the first place such as its over, publisher's blurb, list of contents, appropriate language level, informative teacher's notes, size, price, availability and so forth. However, in order to make as objective comparison between textbooks as possible, he proposed the evaluators to pose a number of questions, provide a list of headings, consider a checklist of features or notes the absence or presence of some items and then assign some value or weighting to the features. He maintained

that the inevitable subjectivity would be reduced if this points-system or scale was arrived at by a consensus of a group of teachers.

Litz (2005: 9-10) suggested that similar components of the most of the standardized evaluation checklists could be used as helpful starting points for ELT practitioners in a wide variety of situations. He mentioned some of these components as follows:

1. Physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics.

2. Textbooks' methodology, aims, approaches and the degree to which they conform to the individual teacher's approach as well as the organization's overall curriculum.

3. The specific language, functions, grammar, and skills content that are covered by a particular textbook as well as the relevance of linguistic items to the prevailing socio-cultural environment.

4. Representation of cultural and gender components.

5. The extent to which the linguistic items, subjects, content, and topics match up to students' personalities, backgrounds, needs, interests and learning styles as well as those of the teacher and/or institution.

1.2. What ESP is and what ESP textbooks must contain

Richards and Rogers (2001) defined English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as one of the subfields of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). They defined LSP as "a movement that seeks to serve the language needs of learners who need language in order to carry out specific roles (e.g. student, engineer, technician, nurse) and who thus need to acquire content and real-world skills through the medium of a second language rather than master the language for its own sake" (p.207). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (p. 19).

Carter (1983) identified three features common to ESP courses: (1) authentic materials, (2) purpose-related orientation, and (3) self-direction. Robinson (1991) defined authentic materials in ESP courses as "… material normally used in the students' own specialist workplace or study situation" (p.54). He also suggested that authentic goals and activities could be set with regard to students' real-world roles. Gatehouse (2001) defined purpose-related orientation as "… the simulation of communicative tasks required of the target setting" (p.4). An example provided by

Carter (1983) was simulation of a conference, involving the preparation of papers, reading, note taking, and writing. Self-direction is concerned with "turning learners into users" (Carter 1983, p. 134). Gatehouse (2001) pointed out that "… in order for self-direction to occur, the learners must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what, and how they will study" (p.4). Thus, the materials developed or selected for ESP courses must be authentic, incorporate simulation of communicative tasks, and encourage self-direction.

1.3. Some empirical ESP textbooks evaluation studies

Elizabeth Crandall and Helen Basturkmen (2004) suggested that L2 material should be evaluated according to more pragmatic concerns and their worth should be assessed on the basis of whether or not they embraced the imperatives of teaching conversational/practical linguistic skills. They investigated the effectiveness of a set of pragmatic-focused materials in EAP classes. They used a content-based task evaluation method proposed by Ellis (1997) which required three types of information:

a. Student-based evaluation that investigated students' attitudes towards the task by asking 'did they like it?' and 'did they think they had learnt anything?'

b. Response-based evaluation that investigated the outcomes—products and processes—of the task by asking 'could the students do the task?'

c. Learning –based evaluation that investigated the extent to which any learning or skill/strategy development has occurred by asking 'did they learn anything?'

The information was collected through video recording of the classes and via some questionnaires. The results indicated that by and large, the conventional approach to teaching speech acts in most currently available EAP speaking textbooks was inadequate.

Zangani (2009) evaluated ESP textbooks in Humanities used in undergraduate programs at Iranian universities. He investigated whether the textbooks were satisfactory in terms of favorability; whether they incorporated new goals in language learning and teaching; and whether they predicted the language and learning needs of students. He made use different types of checklists such as Skierso's checklist (1991), Sheldon's checklist (1988), and Grant's questionnaire (1987) to develop the study's questionnaires and to elicit the attitudes of both the instructors and students who taught/studied the textbooks.

The results of both descriptive and inferential analyses of data indicated that from the students' point of view, word formation and vocabulary exercises, vocabulary study through examples, reading comprehension and comprehension questions were inappropriate; whereas, pronunciation practice and vocabulary study through definition, the grammar and translation exercise were appropriate. The results also indicated that from the instructors' point of view word formation exercises, grammatical exercises and translation practice were inappropriate; whereas, pronunciation practice, vocabulary study through definition, reading comprehension texts and vocabulary exercises were appropriate. Concerning the incorporation of new goals for language learning and teaching in the textbooks, the respondents' perceptions indicated that the textbooks had not incorporated new goals. In other words, they had not been properly designed so as to enhance linguistic and communicative competence. Concerning the inclusion and consideration of language and learning needs of students, the respondents' attitudes indicated that the objectives and materials of the textbooks were not in line with students' language and professional needs.

Jebahi (2009) used an ESP textbook, Science Vistas by Dean Curry (1981), to teach English to first year students of Biology at the Higher Institute of Applied Biology, Medenine, Tunisia. He evaluated different aspects of the textbook according to the emotional and intellectual reactions and attitudes of his students, and according to the lesson contents after the first six lessons had been covered. He made use of the most recurrent criteria in the three frameworks (Sheldon, 1988; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ur, 1996) and investigated the students' emotions and attitudes via both questionnaire and interview.

The results of the study revealed that the students found the topics and tasks uninteresting, boring, and lacking any sort of creativity. They are not also satisfied with listening materials, pronunciation explanation and practice, taking part in conversation, revision and recycling exercises, four language skills coverage, and skill integration. On the contrary, they were satisfied with clarity of instructions, sequence of tasks, vocabulary explanation and practice, grammar explanation and practice, extended writing exercises, and reading comprehension exercises involving skimming and scanning.

Rahimy (2008) evaluated Medical Terminology: An Illustrated Guide by B.J. Cohen (2008). He studied the extent to which the grammatical point, lexicon, pronunciation practice, illustrations and each of the four language skills had been covered in the textbook on the one

hand and the objectives of the Iranian curriculum for medical sciences on the other hand. He then investigated the compatibility of the book with the Iranian curriculum for medical sciences.

The results indicated that the content of the text and the syllabus defined by the Iranian curriculum for medical sciences had nearly 100% compatibility concerning reading and were close to each other concerning writing while they were incompatible concerning listening and speaking.

1.4. Research questions

The study aims to answer the following questions about each textbook:

1. How satisfactory, appropriate, effective and responsive to the teacher's and learners' expectations and opinions is the textbook with respect to the seven categories of the study?

2. What categories of the study are perceived as strengths of each of the textbooks?

3. What categories of the study are perceived as weak aspects of the textbook and need change?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference between the students' attitudes towards each textbook with respect to the seven main categories of the study?

5. Is there a statistically significant difference between the teacher's attitudes towards each textbook with respect to the seven categories of the study?

1.5. Hypotheses

H1: Medical Terminology and English for the Students of Medicine (II) satisfy the teacher's and the students' expectations with respect to the seven main categories of the study.

H2: Medical Terminology satisfies the teacher's and the students' expectations more than English for the Students of Medicine (II) with respect to the seven main categories of the study.

H3: English for the Students of Medicine (II) satisfies the teacher's and the students' expectations more than Medical Terminology with respect to the seven main categories of the study.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Fifty second-year medical students, 27 females and 23 males aged 19-22 and one teacher participated in the research. The teacher was a Ph. D. in TEFL with more than 22 years of

experience in teaching English in different courses including ESP courses. The students were interested in the ESP course and took part willingly in the research effort.

2.2. Material

The evaluated textbooks were:

1. English for the students of Medicine (II) (Tahririan and F. Mehrabi, 1994)
2. Medical Terminology: (Cohen, 2008)

2.2.1. Layout and design of each chapter and various types of activities in Medical Terminology (MT)

In MT, there are 21 chapters. Each chapter begins with a list of the chapter content followed by a list of objectives which the students must achieve by the end of the chapter. A pretest is also included to help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses, so that they know what to focus on while working through the chapter content. There are some medical texts accompanied by detailed illustrations emphasizing important terms and concepts. Each text is followed by a number of exercises, except for chapter one where concepts of medical terminology are introduced. There are some feature boxes that call out important information or provide historical or other interesting information on the selected terms. Additional useful components in each chapter are word part tables and various lists of key terms, supplementary terms, key clinical terms and abbreviations. Each chapter ends with review exercises designed to test users' knowledge of the chapter material and some case studies which present terminology in the context of a medical report.

Various types of activities in Medical Terminology are as follows: asking students to write the names of body structures and organs specified by numbers on illustrations, filling in blank spaces with appropriate terms, add prefixes and suffixes to roots to form words with special meanings or to form adjectives, matching terms with appropriate descriptions, underlying a word that does not fit in with other words in a set and explain the reason for their choice, writing definitions for some terms, writing synonyms and antonyms, writing the meanings of some abbreviations, dividing words into their constituent parts (word analysis) and identifying roots in different words. There are also multiple choice reading comprehension tests, crossword puzzles, true/false exercises and pronunciation activities.

2.2.2. Layout and design of each chapter and various types of activities in English for the students of Medicine (ESM)

There are 25 units in ESM with four sections in each unit: reading comprehension, further reading, translation activities and recommended exercises. Reading comprehension section consists of a text followed by two types of exercises: comprehension exercises and language practice. Further reading section consists of a text followed by comprehension exercises. At the end of each unit a vocabulary glossary is included.

Various types of activities in ESM are listed below:

1. Reading comprehension exercises includes true/false statements, multiple choices, and questions demanding oral or written answers.

2. Language practice includes vocabulary multiple choice tests, filling in blank spaces with appropriate word form, and forming a paragraph by writing sentences in the right order.

3. Translation exercises include translating an English passage into Farsi, and determining the Farsi equivalents of some English terms.

4. Recommended exercises include finding equivalent terms in the texts for some given words or phrases and analyzing terms by separating the suffixes and/or prefixes and determining their contribution to the meaning of the whole word.

2.3. Procedure

At the end of the first Iranian academic term, a survey was conducted to gather the required data. The student textbook evaluation questionnaires related to both textbooks were distributed among the students and the teacher textbook evaluation questionnaires related to both textbooks were given to the teacher to collect the data.

2.4. Research instrument

There were a teacher textbook evaluation questionnaire consisting of 37 items and a students' textbook evaluation questionnaire containing 23 items. The items were prepared on the basis of the seven main categories of the study: practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject and content and conclusion or overall consensus. Each statement in the textbook evaluation questionnaires represented one characteristic of the textbook (see appendixes A and B).

Questionnaires were adopted from a survey that was conducted at the Sung Kyun Kwan University Science & Technology Campus in Suwon, South Korea (200-2001) for the purposes of evaluating and analyzing a textbook. However, they were considered and modified by specialists in order to be used in the specific context of the present study.

In order to maximize the students' comprehension of the questions, the student questionnaire was translated into Farsi-the national language of Iran.

To determine the reliability of the study questionnaires, the researchers used Cronbach's alpha formula to estimate the items internal consistency. The alpha values of questionnaire categories ranged from .885 to .994.

In the questionnaires a five-point Likert Scale was implemented. Rating scales were numerically coded as (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) almost agree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. This greatly facilitated the statistical analysis. Initially, the data was subjected to analysis through descriptive statistics, and then inferential statistics of the results were presented. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) release 17 was used to analyze the data.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The results of statement analysis in relation to MT

In this part of the study, the frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to each statement are computed and presented. This gives insight into how each characteristic of the textbooks is viewed by the respondents.

The analysis of the students' responses to MT evaluation revealed that 18 out of 23 statements in the questionnaire had means more than average (3) (Appendix A). This means 78% of the items received positive or almost positive responses from the students.

The statements with the highest means represent the best aspects of Medical Terminology and its desired qualities from the students, point of view. These aspects are:

- Price and accessibility
- Appropriate and clear layout and design as well as effective organization
- Authentic and realistic English, right language level for the students' current English ability, and the language functions that the students will be likely to use in the future
- Appropriate progression of vocabulary items
- Sufficiently various, generally realistic, interesting, challenging, motivating, relevant and culturally unbiased subject and content
- Impact on increasing the students' interest in further English language study

The statements with the means from 3 to 3.50 represent the aspects of the textbook that are almost acceptable from the students' point of view. They include:

1. Introducing grammatical points and vocabulary items in motivating and realistic contexts
2. Incorporating the activities that promote creative, original and independent responses
3. Focusing on the skills that the students need to practice

The statements with the lowest means represent those desired qualities that are not present in MT. These are regarded as the weak points of the textbook. They can be listed as:

- It does not provide appropriate balance between activities and four language skills
- It does not provide sufficient communicative and meaningful activities and practice in sub-skills
- It does not promote pair and group work

The analysis of the teacher's responses to MT evaluation revealed that 29 out of 37 items in the questionnaire had means more than average (3) (Appendix B). This means that about 78% of the items received positive or almost positive responses from the teacher.

3.2. The results of statement analysis in relation to ESM

The analysis of the students' responses to ESM evaluation revealed that 7 out of the 23 items in the questionnaire had means more than average (Appendix A). This means that 30% of the items received positive or almost positive responses from the students.

The statements with the highest means represent the best aspects of English for the Students of Medicine and the desired qualities that are present in it from the students' point of view. These aspects are price, accessibility, and culturally unbiased materials.

The statements with the mean from 3 to 3.50 represent the aspects of the textbook that are almost acceptable from the students' point of view. These include appropriate and clear layout and design, focus on the skills that students need, authentic and realistic English, and various subjects and topics that are relevant to learners' needs.

The statements with the lowest means represent those desired qualities that are not present in the ESM from the students' point of view. All statements in the student questionnaire other than those described as strong and almost acceptable points of the textbook are regarded as the weak points of it.

The analysis of the teacher's responses in ESM evaluation revealed that 18 out of 37 items in the questionnaire had means more than average (Appendix B). This means that 49% of the items received positive or almost positive responses from the teacher.

3.3. Results of category analysis in relation to both textbooks

Table 1 displays the results of category analysis on the basis of the students' responses. The categories of practical considerations, layout and design, language type, subject and content and overall consensus in MT have means more than average; therefore, they can be considered satisfactory, but still in need of improvement. The categories of activities and skills are, on the other hand, unsatisfactory to some extent because they have means less than the average (3). The categories of layout and design and subject and content with the greatest means are the most attractive ones, while skills category with the lowest mean is the least attractive one. In addition, the statements within the category of layout and design which show the lowest standard deviation are the ones answered most consistently; whereas, the widest range of answers are related to the statements within the skills category, which show the highest standard deviation.

Table 1 also indicates that from the students' point of view, the three categories of practical considerations, layout and design, and subject and content in ESM are satisfactory but still in need of improvement; whereas, the categories of activities, skills, language type and overall consensus are unsatisfactory because they have means less than the average (3). The category of practical considerations with the greatest mean is the most attractive one, while the category of activities with the lowest mean is the least attractive one in ESM. In addition, the statements within the category of practical considerations, which show the lowest standard deviation, are the ones answered most consistently; whereas, the widest range of answers are related to the statements within the category of subject and content, which show the highest standard deviation.

In order to compare the students' attitudes towards each textbook with respect to the 7 main categories of study, the authors conducted paired sample t-tests. The results are displayed in table 1. The probability values (Sig.) indicates that in each category there is a significant difference between MT's mean score and ESM's mean score except in the category of skills. The comparison of the means indicates that all categories are scored higher in MT than in ESM except for the categories of practical considerations and skills. However, the difference is not significant in skills category. Therefore, from the students' perspective, MT is significantly better than ESM with respect to the categories of layout and design, activities, language type, subject and content and overall consensus and ESM is significantly better than MT with respect to the category of practical considerations (price and availability).

Table 1

The results of category analysis and comparison on the basis of the students' responses

Category	df	Sig	t-value	Correlation	Mean		SD	
A-Practical considerations	75	.002	-3.174	.938	MT	4.0132	MT	.91642
					ESM	4.1316	ESM	.92869
B-Layout and design	75	.000	13.672	.812	MT	4.2763	MT	.90331
					ESM	3.2237	ESM	1.15006
C-Activities	189	.000	6.002	.941	MT	2.7632	MT	1.02957
					ESM	2.5842	ESM	1.18668
D-Skills	113	.167	-1.392	.963	MT	2.7281	MT	1.23579
					ESM	2.7719	ESM	1.15241
E-Language type	151	.000	20.901	.907	MT	3.7632	MT	1.05941
					ESM	2.9145	ESM	1.18458
F-Subject and content	189	.000	23.904	.901	MT	4.1526	MT	.97745
					ESM	3.1947	ESM	1.23399
G-Overall consensus	75	.000	20.121	.887	MT	3.8026	MT	1.00691
					ESM	2.5921	ESM	1.13346

Note. The difference is significant if P<0.05

Table 2 shows that from the teacher's perspective, the categories of practical considerations, layout and design, subject and content and conclusion in MT are satisfactory, but still in need of improvement; whereas, the categories of activities, skills and language type are unsatisfactory because they have means less than the average (3). The categories of layout and design and subject and content with the largest means are the most attractive ones, while skills category with the lowest mean is the least attractive one. In addition, the statements within the categories of conclusion and layout and design, which show the lowest standard deviations, are the ones answered most consistently; whereas, the widest range of answers are related to the statements within the category of language type, which shows the highest standard deviation.

Table 2 shows that from the teacher's perspective, the categories of subject and content and conclusion in ESM are satisfactory, but still in need of improvement; the category of conclusion is almost satisfactory; and all other categories are unsatisfactory because they have means less than the average (3). The categories of language type, skills and activities with means less than two are the least attractive ones in ESM. In addition, the statements within the categories of conclusion and language type, which have the lowest standard deviations, are the ones answered most consistently; whereas, the widest range of answers are related to the statements within the category of practical considerations, which show the highest standard deviation.

In order to compare the teacher's attitudes towards each textbook with respect to the main categories of the study, the researchers paired samples t-tests. The results are displayed in table

2. The probability values (Sig>) indicate that in no category there is a significant difference between MT's mean score and ESM's mean score except for the category of layout and design. Therefore, from the teacher's perspective, MT is significantly better than ESM with respect to the category of layout and design. The other categories are also scored higher for MT than for ESM by the teacher. The difference is, however, is not significant.

Table 2
The results of category analysis and comparison on the basis of the teacher's responses

Category	df	Sig	t-value	Correlation	Mean		SD	
A-Practical considerations	4	.189	1.581	.635	MT	3.8000	MT	.83666
					ESM	2.8000	ESM	1.78885
B-Layout and design	7	.000	7.333	.379	MT	4.6250	MT	.74402
					ESM	2.2500	ESM	.88641
C-Activities	6	.522	.679	.220	MT	2.0000	MT	1.00000
					ESM	1.7143	ESM	.75593
D-Skills	4	.407	408	.408	MT	1.8000	MT	1.09545
					ESM	1.6000	ESM	.89443
E-Language type	3	.058	3.000	.662	MT	2.7500	MT	1.25831
					ESM	1.2500	ESM	.50000
F-Subject and content	4	.099	2.138	.563	MT	4.4000	MT	.89443
					ESM	3.6000	ESM	.89443
G-Conclusion	2	.225	1.732	-	MT	4.3333	MT	.57735
					ESM	3.3333	ESM	.57735

Note. The difference is significant if P<0.05

3.4. Results of comparative analysis of the two textbooks

In statement analysis on the basis of the students' responses, 18 out of 23 items in the questionnaire related to MT and 7 out of 23 items in the questionnaire related to ESM had means more than average. That is, MT received 11 positive responses more than ESM from the students.

In statement analysis on the basis of the teacher's responses, 29 out of 37 items in the questionnaire related to MT and 18 out of 37 items in the questionnaire related to ESM had means more than average. That is, MT received 11 positive responses more than ESM by the teacher.

In category analysis on the basis of the students' responses, there was a significant difference between MT's mean score and ESM's mean score except for the category of skills. In addition, all categories were scored higher for MT than for ESM except for the categories of practical considerations and skills. The difference, however, was not significant in skill category. This means that from the students' perspective, MT was significantly better than ESM with respect to

the categories of layout and design, activities, language type, subject and content and overall consensus, but ESM was significantly better than MT with respect to the category of practical considerations.

In category analysis on the basis of the teacher's responses, there was not a significant difference between MT's mean scores and ESM's mean scores with respect to the 7 main categories of the study except for the category of layout and design. All categories were also scored higher for MT than for ESM. This means that from the teacher's perspective, MT was significantly better than ESM with respect to the category of layout and design.

The results also revealed that, although some categories received a high score, no one of them received a total score; therefore, not any of them was totally satisfactory. This indicates that from the teacher's and the students' point of view both textbooks still need improvement regarding these categories.

4. Conclusion

Regarding the research questions and hypotheses, the study can be concluded by putting together the following points:

First, Medical Terminology satisfies the teacher's and students' expectations regarding practical considerations to a great extent. However, the author's views on language and methodology are not completely comparable to those of the teacher.

Second, with respect to practical considerations, price and availability, ESM meets the teacher's, and the students' needs to a great extent; however, it lacks teacher's guide and its author's views on language and methodology are not completely comparable to those of the teacher.

Third, MT satisfies the teacher's and students' expectations regarding layout and design; however, the teacher's book does not contain guidance as how to exploit the textbook advantageously.

Fourth, ESM's layout and design does not satisfy the teacher's and students' needs, because it does not incorporate an effective organization, a detailed overview, review exercises, quizzes, testing suggestions and teacher's guide and it does not make the material objectives clear for teachers and students.

Fifth, Neither MT nor ESM does satisfy the teaches' and students' expectations in incorporating free and controlled activities, communicative and meaningful exercises, pair and group work, activities that promote creative responses, tasks that are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language, activities that can be modified or supplemented easily, and introducing vocabulary items in motivating and realistic contexts.

Sixth, Neither MT nor ESM does satisfy teachers' and students' expectations in incorporating materials that focus on the skills that the students need to practice and materials that provide an appropriate balance between the four language skills, in paying attention to sub-skills and in integrating individual skills into the practice of other skills. ESM also does not pay any attention to pronunciation.

Seventh, MT almost satisfies the teachers' and students' expectations in incorporating authentic language which is at the right level for the students, language functions that exemplify English that the students will be likely to use and in sequencing vocabulary items appropriately.

Eighth, ESM does not satisfy the teachers' and students' expectations in incorporating authentic language which is at the right level for the students, language functions that exemplify English that the students will be likely to use and in sequencing vocabulary items appropriately.

Ninth, MT satisfies the teacher's and students' expectations in incorporating content which is interesting, challenging, motivating, sufficiently various, relevant to the students' needs and culturally unbiased.

Tenth, ESM almost satisfies the teacher's and students' expectations in incorporating content which is interesting, challenging, motivating, sufficiently various and relevant to the students' needs.

Eleventh, MT increases the students' interest in further English language study. In addition, it is appropriate for the learning aims of the course.

Twelfth, ESM almost increases the students' interest in further English language study and it is almost probable that they will choose to teach/study it again. In addition it is almost appropriate for the language learning aims of the course.

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Appendix A
Student textbook evaluation form

Please note: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=almost agree, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree

Statements within categories	Text book	Choices					M	SD
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %		
A/Practical considerations:								
1. The price of the textbook is reasonable.	MT	32	42	16	10	0	3.94	0.95
	ESM	45	29	18	8	0	4.10	o.98
2. The textbook is easily accessible.	MT	37	40	18	5	0	4.07	0.88
	ESM	42	37	16	5	0	4.15	0.88
B/Layout and design:								
3. The layout and design is appropriate and clear.	MT	37	37	16	10	0	4	0.98
	ESM	21	34	21	24	0	3.52	1.08
4. The textbook is organized effectively.	MT	66	26	5	3	0	4.55	0.72
	ESM	13	13	34	32	8	2.92	1.14

C/Activities								
5. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).	MT	3	31	32	29	5	2.97	0.97
	ESM	11	21	31	29	8	2.97	1.12
6. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.	MT	2	16	29	37	16	2.52	1.03
	ESM	8	18	18	24	32	2.47	1.33
7. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.	MT	3	16	37	31	13	2.63	0.99
	ESM	0	29	26	24	21	2.63	1.12
8. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	MT	11	26	29	29	5	3.07	1.09
	ESM	8	18	16	24	34	2.42	1.34
9. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	MT	10	32	39	16	3	3.31	0.96
	ESM	0	13	32	39	16	2.42	0.91

		Choices						
Statements within categories	**Book**	**1 %**	**2 %**	**3 %**	**4 %**	**5 %**	**M**	**SD**
D/skills:								
10. The materials include and focus on the skills that I need to practice.	MT	16	40	26	18	0	3.52	0.97
	ESM	8	37	24	16	15	3.05	1.22
11. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.	MT	5	13	26	45	11	2.57	1.03
	ESM	0	24	37	21	18	2.65	1.04
12. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills-i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.	MT	5	10	16	24	45	2.07	1.23
	ESM	8	13	26	37	16	2.60	1.15
E/Language type:								
13. The language used in the textbook is authentic-i.e. like real-life English.	MT	21	45	24	10	0	3.76	0.91
	ESM	13	34	21	16	16	3.13	1.29
14. The language used is at the right level for my current English ability.	MT	37	32	18	5	8	3.84	1.21
	ESM	8	24	26	29	13	2.84	1.17

	Book	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
15. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.	MT	21	47	24	5	3	3.78	0.93
	ESM	0	29	34	24	13	2.78	1.01
16. The language functions exemplify English that I will be likely to use in the future.	MT	26	37	19	13	5	3.65	1.16
	ESM	13	19	26	29	13	2.89	1.24
F/Subject and content:								
17. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my needs as an English language learner.	MT	50	29	16	5	0	4.23	0.91
	ESM	16	24	29	18	13	3.10	1.26

	Book	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
18. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.	MT	24	42	24	5	5	3.73	1.05
	ESM	0	24	39	24	13	2.73	0.97
19. The subject and content of the materials is interesting, challenging and motivating.	MT	61	21	10	8	0	4.34	0.96
	ESM	0	21	37	21	21	2.57	1.05
20. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	MT	42	32	13	8	5	3.97	1.17
	ESM	11	29	29	18	13	3.05	1.20
21. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.	MT	47	53	0	0	0	4.47	0.50
	ESM	50	50	0	0	0	4.5	0.50

			Choices					
Statements within categories	**Book**	**1 %**	**2 %**	**3 %**	**4 %**	**5 %**	**M**	**SD**
G/Overall Consensus:								
22. The textbook raises my interest in further English language study.	MT	21	45	24	10	0	3.76	0.91
	ESM	0	19	34	26	21	2.5	1.03
23. I would choose to study this textbook again.	MT	32	46	12	10	0		
	ESM	8	14	30	30	18		

Appendix B
Teacher textbook evaluation form
* PLEASE NOTE: 1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= almost agree, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree

				Choices		
Statements within categories	**Book**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
A/ Practical Considerations:						
1. The price of the textbook is reasonable.	MT		*			
	ESM		*			
2. The textbook is easily accessible.	MT	*				
	ESM	*				
3. The textbook is a recent publication.	MT			*		
	ESM			*		
4. A teacher's guide, workbook, and audio-tapes accompany the textbook.	MT		*			
	ESM				*	
5. The author's views on language and methodology are comparable to mine (Note: Refer to the 'blurb' on the back of the textbook).	MT			*		
	ESM			*		
B/ Layout and Design:						
6. The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions, structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit.	MT	*				
	ESM				*	
7. The layout and design is appropriate and clear.	MT	*				
	ESM			*		
8. The textbook is organized effectively.	MT	*				
	ESM				*	
9. An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.	MT	*				
	ESM			*		
10. Adequate review sections and exercises are included.	MT	*				
	ESM			*		
11. An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.	MT		*			
	ESM			*		
12. The teacher's book contains guidance about how the textbook can be used to the utmost advantage.	MT		*			
	ESM				*	
13. The materials objectives are apparent to both the teacher and student.	MT	*				
	ESM				*	

				Choices		
Statements within categories	**Book**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
C/ Activities:						
14. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).	MT			*		
	ESM				*	

	Book	1	2	3	4	5
15. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice	MT			*		
	ESM					*
16. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.	MT					*
	ESM				*	
17. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	MT					*
	ESM				*	
18. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	MT			*		
	ESM			*		
19. The tasks are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language.	MT					*
	ESM					*
20. The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.	MT				*	
	ESM					*
D/ Skills:						
21. The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice	MT			*		
	ESM			*		
22. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.	MT					*
	ESM			*		
23. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills - i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.	MT					*
	ESM					*
24. The textbook highlights and practices natural pronunciation (i.e. - stress and intonation).	MT			*		
	ESM					*
25. The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.	MT					*
	ESM					*

		choices				
Statements within categories	**Book**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
E/ Language Type:						
26. The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.	MT					*
	ESM					*
27. The language used is at the right level for my (students') current English ability.	MT		*			
	ESM				*	
28. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.	MT			*		
	ESM					*
29. The language functions exemplify English that I/my students will be likely to use.	MT	*				
	ESM					*
F/ Subject and Content:						

30. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs as an English language learner(s).	MT	*				
	ESM		*			
31. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.	MT			*		
	ESM			*		
32. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.	MT		*			
	ESM			*		
33. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	MT	*				
	ESM			*		
34. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.	MT	*				
	ESM	*				
G/ Conclusion:						
35. The textbook is appropriate for the language-learning aims of my institution.	MT	*				
	ESM			*		
36. The textbook raises my students' interest in further English language study.	MT		*			
	ESM			*		
37. I would choose to teach this textbook again.	MT		*			
	ESM				*	

Title

Conversational Analysis in EFL Learners: A Case Study on Iranian English learners

Author

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Biodata

Asghar Bastami Bandpay is a Ph.D. candidate of English at the Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan Republic. He has an M.A. in TEFL. He is now the President, Founder and Instructor of **SEI** (Shokouh's English institute) Rudsar's Branch in Gilan. He is going to be the faculty member of the Islamic Azad University, Payame Noor and State Research Institute of Higher Education in Gilan and Mazandaran. His main research interests are contrastive analysis, motivation, discourse analysis, psychology of language learning and teaching. He has published in international journals and presented papers in international conferences.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to provide insights into the extent of why learning a Foreign Language has always been a serious concern. The question this study tries to answer is whether there is a relationship between learning a foreign language and classroom (environmental) factor or not. To answer this question, a group consisting of 30 female students from an Iranian English Institute at the pre-Intermediate level which can be a sample of students who are in their learning stage was selected to be taught by a trained teacher with the teaching strategy that is currently being used in the respective institute. The above-mentioned class was video-clipped and was then converted into manuscript and analyzed in terms of the teacher's errors and student's feedback. Factors like teaching strategy, teaching materials, teaching environment, the effects of praising, having fixed rules, and positive and negative effects of each one were taken into consideration during teaching time in order to have an active and a significant class and finally, it was found out that the factors which have positive effect could facilitate the learning process. It was also found out that the teacher who

considered those factors would probably be far successful in his/her teaching and would have more active and successful students.

1. Introduction and Review of Literature

Celcia-Murcia (1979), (Allan 1991; foley 1993) and Andrews, S. (2007) point out that *Conversation* is a progression of exchanges among its participants. Each participant is a "learning system" that is, a system that changes internally as a sequence of experience. This highly complex type of interaction is also quite powerful, for conversation is the means by which existing knowledge is conveyed and new knowledge is generated. The question this study tries to answer is whether there is a relationship between learning and classroom (environmental) factors or not. Nunan (1993) and Brown, H. D. (2006) found the biggest challenges in EFL classroom to be lack of motivation, getting students to speak (a cultural issue for some were speaking in class is prohibited except when called on) and the use of the first language. In addition, large classes are often the norm overseas, limiting both students' opportunities to talk and the teacher's opportunities to provide feedback. Celcia-Murcia (1979) ,Chastin, K. (1976) and Cohen, D. A. (2007) stated that "learning will happen if there is much use of tapes, language laboratories and visual aids." and "One of the more recent trends in oral skills pedagogy is the emphasis on having students analyze and evaluate the language that they or others produce. In other words, it is not adequate to have students produce lots of language; they must become more metalinguistically aware of the many features of language in order to become competent speakers and interlocutors in English. One speaking activity which is particularly suited to this kind of analysis is conversation, the most fundamental form of oral communication".

The Basic Model of Communication
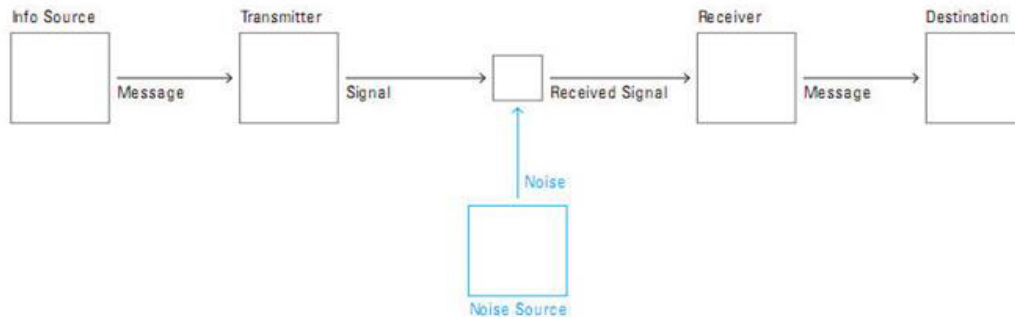
Conversation at its simplest process takes place when participants perform the following tasks:

1.1 Opening a channel.

When participant A sends an initial message, the possibility for conversation opens. For conversation to follow the message must establish common ground; it must be comprehensible to participant B.

Conversation for Agreement:

As a result of conversation, participants agree on their understanding of a concept in that they share a similar model, and they believe that they agree.

Conversation for agreement.

me   you

Concept
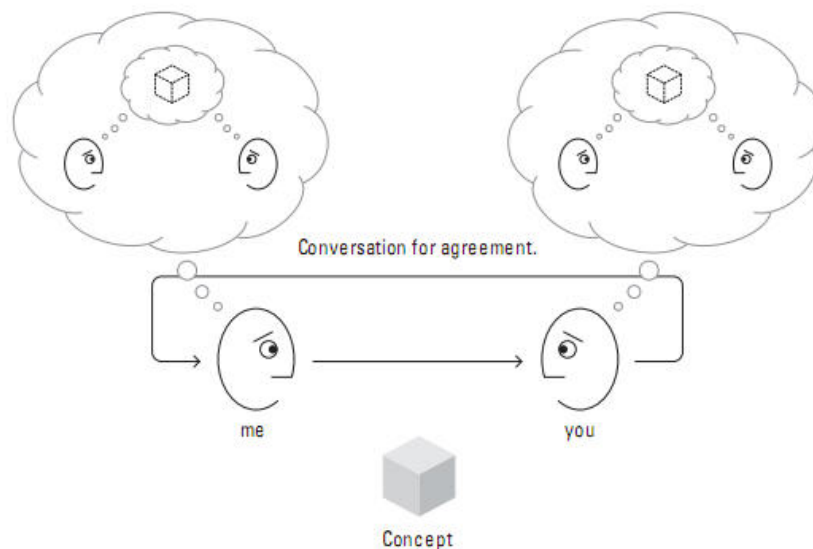
1.2 Committing to engage.

Participant B must pay attention to the message and then commit to engaging with A. Such a commitment may amount to nothing more than continuing to pay attention. For conversation to persist, the commitment must be symmetrical, and either side may break off for any reason, at any time. Put another way, each participant must see value in continuing the conversation, which offsets the personal cost of being engaged.

1.3 Constructing meaning.

Conversation enables us to construct (or reconstruct) meaning, including meaning that is new to the destination. Messages are composed with topics or distinctions that are already shared, on the basis of prior conversation or shared contexts, such as common language and social norms. Participant A uses the message channel to convey what these topics are and how they are distinct from one another (descriptive dynamics), along with a kind of "glue" that explains just how these topics interact to make up the new concept (prescriptive dynamics). Participant B "takes all this in" and "puts it all together" to reproduce A's meaning (or something close enough).

1.4 Evolving.

Participant A or B (or both) are different after the interaction. Either or both hold new beliefs, make decisions, or develop new relationships, with others, with circumstances or objects, or with themselves. Here we define an "effective conversation" as an interaction in which the changes brought about by conversation have lasting value to the participants.

1.5 Converging on agreement.

Participant B may wish to confirm understanding of A's concept. To do so, B must create and transmit a different formulation of the topic(s) under discussion, one that captures his model of the concept. On receipt, participant A attempts to make sense of B's formulation and compares it with her original intention. This may lead to further exchanges.

1.6 Acting or Transacting.

Sometimes one or more of the participants agrees to perform an action as a result of, and beyond, the conversation that has taken place. For example, they may agree to play a game together or enter into a relationship. Or they may agree to an exchange, as when money is traded for a product or service.

Thus, a simplified description of conversation has carefully been explained, that is, all learners were unsuccessful and even had failure in performing in conversations; it is near miraculous that we understand each other at all. But if you comprehend this, the process of conversation is working right now.

Conversation enables participants to:

a) Learn.

We learn a great deal via conversation, including conversations with ourselves.

Conversation to Learn:
Conversation is a means to convey concepts and to confirm agreement.
When a conversation changes one of the participants, we say the participant has "learned."

Questions and testing understanding.

Conveying concepts.

me   you

Conversation as a means to convey concepts
and to confirm agreement.
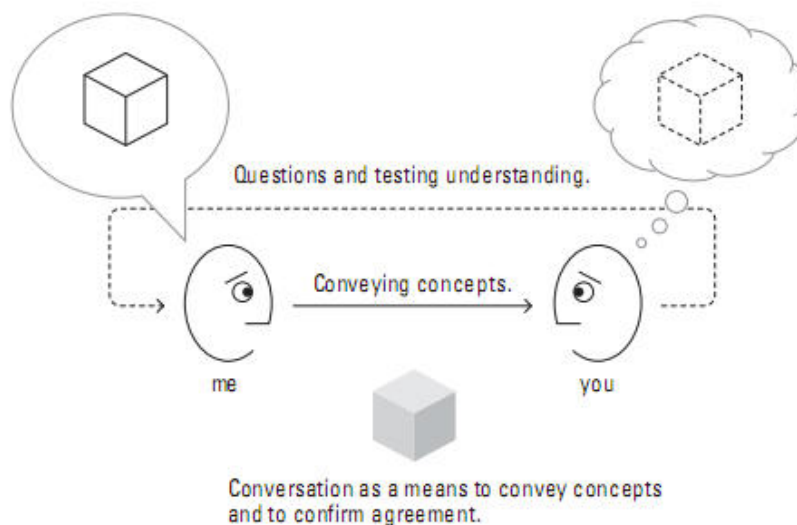
b) Coordinate.

We spend a great deal of time with others not merely synchronizing ("You've arrived, so let's start!"), but also coordinating our actions in ways that are mutually beneficial.

c) Collaborate.

Coordination of action assumes relatively clear goals, but many times social interaction involves the negotiation of goals. Conversation is a requisite for agreeing on goals, as well as for agreeing upon, and coordinating, our actions.

Conversation to Coordinate:
Participant B agrees to trade an action for payment from participant A.
B performs the action and confirms that his action has created the correct result.
A confirms her goal is achieved and compensates B as agreed.
Compensation may be monetary, return of favor, barter, etc.

Conversation to agree that you will act to achieve my goal; in exchange, I will compensate you. (Receiving compensation is one of your goals.)

Agreement leads to acting in the world.
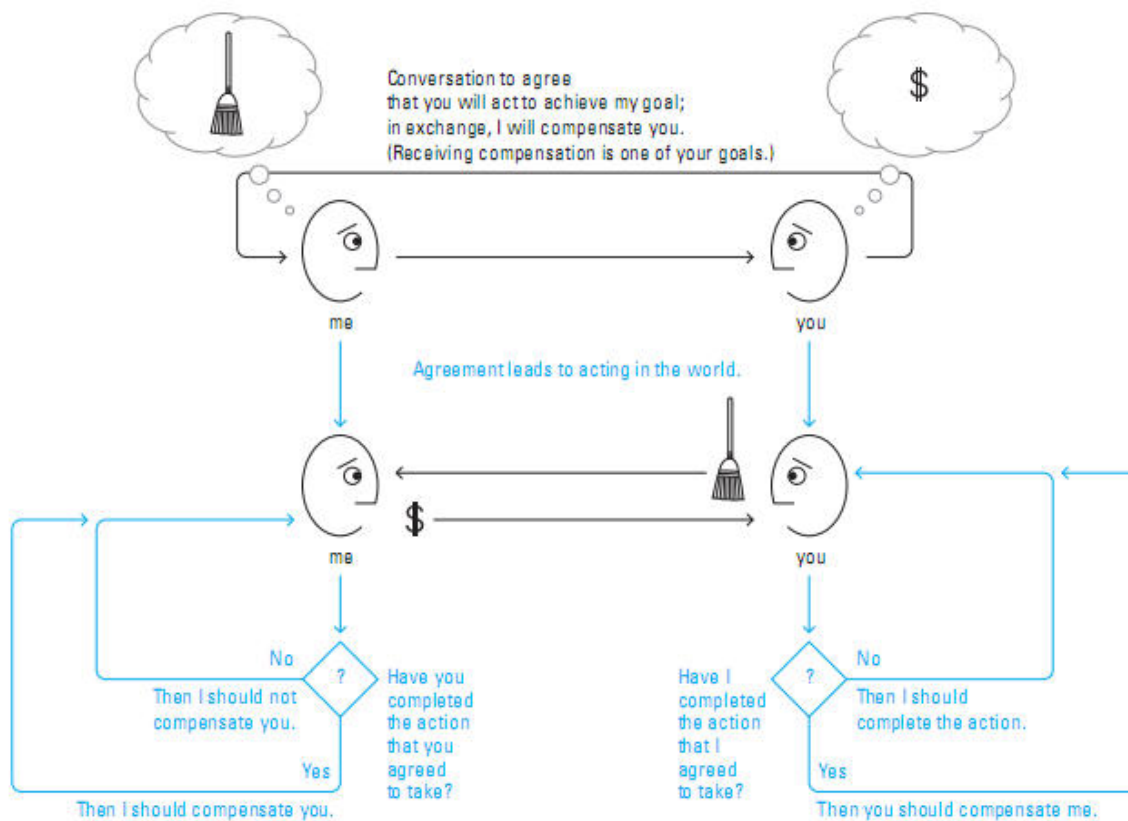
Finally, by considering the importance of this study from pedagogical point of view it can probably be a useful educational (language teaching) system for ministry of education. In order to solve the learning problem, two tasks for a literature review were delineated: Finding out what is conversation and try to show two kinds of conversations in learning second or foreign language. One of them is "planned conversation" and the other one is "Classroom (natural) conversation".

1.7 Definition of Two Types of Conversation:

Two different types of conversation exist: **Planned Conversation:** Lewis, and Hills (1985) point out that planned conversation usually degenerate into silence or involve only a small number of student. That is, if the topic is too general, it will not excite interest. If it is too specific, some students will be interested, and others not. And **Classroom conversation** which is also called

"natural conversation" and is spontaneous. It ebbs and flows and different people contribute in different ways. The feature of classroom conversation should be incorporated into the class activity. It will be most effective if it arises naturally and spontaneously from the text. That is, natural conversation is a relaxed activity.

The purpose of conversation in a lesson is to give the students a chance to talk about something that interests them. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of classroom (environmental) factors on learning process.

2. Method

2.1 Subject

The participants of this study consisted of a group of 30 female students who were the same age (high-school students) and level were from an English institute in Iran and were taught by a non-native teacher who had got her B.A. in English and participated in the Teacher Training Course (TTC) each year for promoting her knowledge and level and eventually she was an experienced teacher (She had begun her teaching career with the audio-lingual method since 1998 and had been teaching English in different levels and was never a state-run formal school teacher who uses the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which is a traditional method that consists of reading and directly translating texts and is currently applied in the educational system of Iran). Therefore, there was no interference in her teaching method because she obeyed and followed all the useful tips and teaching strategies which had been learned.

2.2 Material

The material (Dialogue) of this study consisted of six parts (A-F) containing 62 sentences made up of 289 words including related illustrations and three characters (named Patty, Paul, and Mrs. Sasa) and "Figure it out" section which is related to a few questions about the lesson by choosing "True or False" as a comprehension check and finally a listening section which is related to the taught dialogue (choosing the best answer between A or B) respectively. It should be mentioned that the teacher was supposed to teach only dialogues (a dialogue named "any suggestions" from unit 2 p12) from the book "Spectrum 1B" written by "Diana Warshawsky" in her allowed time (see the appendix) with the audio-lingual method. That is, "Audio lingual method is a method of foreign and second language teaching which (a) emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing, (b) use dialogues and drills and (c) discourages use of mother tongue in the classroom and often use contrastive analysis". The class was equipped with a computer, cassette player and teaching CD package and the other routine items that each class had to have and were

among essentials for teaching, and also some tasks were supposed to be followed in the class like *Question and Answer (Q & A)* that is, few predefined and related questions that the teacher was supposed to ask the student in order to involve them. *Choral, Individual , Choral (C.I.C)* a set of repetition as a drill and practice, that is, the teacher was supposed to ask the whole class to repeat the sentence 2 or 3 times, then some students were randomly asked to repeat the sentence (of course, asked from strong to weak student). *Backward-Forward Drill (B.F.D)* is a set of repetition that is, the teacher will break the sentence in 2 or 3 parts and students are asked to repeat the broken parts once from the back (shortening from right to left) and the other time from left to right by joining the parts in order to involve more students. *Piggy bank* is a kind of bank or box that when students shift their language to Farsi they are forced to put a coin in it as they were told already as a monitoring tool.

2.3 Procedure

The time limitation of teaching was about one and half hour that the teacher was supposed to teach based on the *lesson plan* which the institute assigned."L P" is a set of systematic steps or stages which is defined to the teachers in *Teacher Training Course* (TTC) for having a systematic teaching. The steps are shown briefly *in table 1* and a complete *Sample Lesson Plan of Audio-Lingual Method* has been bought (see the appendix). The teaching started with posing the question that is called *Stage one" warm up* "."What are you going to do next week?" and "Do you have any plans for the weekend?" by the teacher in order to have a classroom, not planned conversation. First, some of the students who were eager to answer raised their hands as volunteers and answered the questions, but some of them did not participate in the conversation. An important matter is that the teacher would correct the students indirectly if the students had any trouble with grammar while answering the questions. This means that the teacher just repeated the correct sentence; no interrupting, no teasing, no humiliation, etc. It was found out that the students who made mistakes automatically discovered their errors. When another student was asked to answer the same question she made the same error and this process continued. This *Q&A* (*as task one*) process lasted 10 minutes. After involving the whole class by her predefined questions and managing the class in an appropriate way, the students were asked to open their books and read or say from their heart the summary of the new lesson. Once again the volunteer students were the first ones to start reading their summaries.

Table 1.1. Teaching stages as a lesson plan in a conversational EFL class

Stage 1	**Greetings &Warm-up**	Is concerned with greetings and few rather related questions in order to involve students….
Stage 2	**Introduction(Presentation)**	Has 3 steps: talk about the dialogue, use props and involvement. The teacher is *informant*.
Stage 3	**Practice**	Has 4 steps :read, teach, reread and listen The teacher is *guide*
Stage 4	**Application**	Role play
Stage 5	**Assessment**	To assess by asking question… The teacher is observer.
Stage 6	**Cooler**	The teacher help, encourage students and give them self-confidence being involved

It should be mentioned that the teacher had already told the students as a ***first fixed rule*** that they were supposed to prepare the next session's lesson and that is why they had written summaries. During the summary not only did the teacher make corrections indirectly in case of an error, but she also encouraged the students. Sometimes she stopped as if she wanted to say something to the students and she gave them time and opportunity to discover their errors themselves, because the goal of the class was natural conversation. The students were able to find where the problems were. Repeating the same error once again seems to be unlikely. This way (technique) of correction was so effective and practical because the students got extra energy and self-confidence and believed in themselves and their abilities and were eager to answer over and over during the participation time.

Table 1.2. Sample fixed rules in a conversational EFL class

First Fixed Rule	Prepare next session's lesson at home
Second Fixed Rule	DO NOT speak Persian in the class
Third Fixed Rule	If there is a question, ONLY raise your hands
Fourth Fixed Rule	ALWAYS keep your dictionary with you in the class

Technically, those who answered the questions felt that they belong to the social group. Finally, the positive point of the class of the experienced teacher which was getting extra energy and courage became the students' turning point to be interested in learning willingly. After only a few students read their summary, the teacher started to teach the lesson. **Stage two** first, the teacher held the book in front of herself as **a *prop*** in order to enable the students to see it obviously (as she had learned in the TTC class). While showing the pictures of the page she explained them to the students to have a better understanding. When the summarization was completed she immediately asked several related questions with respect to the lesson as a comprehension check. By virtue of this way of teaching the students answered the questions. Once again the teacher gave the successful ones clap.

Second, she read the dialogue line by line and wherever she found a difficult word or expression she explained it at the first place and then gave the definitions, synonyms, antonyms and some cultural close-up. Vocabulary was strictly limited and learned in context. Meanwhile, the teacher had told the students not to speak Persian in the class and not to write Persian meaning of the words and expressions, either as a **second** *fixed* **rule**. A very effective tool for having a better teaching was **"Piggy Bank"** (**task two**). *Piggy bank is a kind of bank or box that when students shift their language to Farsi they are forced to put a coin in it as they were told already.* This is a way of indirect controlling.

Another **(third)** **fixed rule** was that whenever there were any questions they were supposed to only raise their hands and not to make disorder in class. All the questions will be answered without any hesitation and reluctant. During teaching it was found out that she tried to keep calm, because she had followed all the principles and tips of teaching respectively as she was asked to do so in the class. This meant that after giving a piece of information she gave them time to write it down. It should be mentioned that the teacher also involved the students in saying the meanings of words they knew. In as much as she wanted them to be more active and the students were asked to look the meaning of the word up in the class and that was another attention that she realized she had to pay during teaching. On one important side, all the students were forced and supposed to bring their dictionary in accompany with their other items. She desperately emphasized on bringing the dictionary to the class and if they do not do so they will receive a negative point. This was another **(fourth)** **fixed rule** mentioned at the first session. In this line, she explained why it is important for them to keep their dictionary with them, and that is because of being informed as possible as they

can. Then, she asked students to find the definition of those new difficult words. By virtue of this the process of new words learning will occur more effectively. Being taught how to use the dictionary with a little disappointing still very few students could not use it properly. Anyway, as the old people said "practice makes perfect".

The teacher asked questions after giving each piece of information during teaching. She spoke in English all the time and she did not let students shift the class into Persian. Speaking in English, praising, encouraging, giving hope and letting them take time to speak in group were the real social key factors of learning process. Feeling that they were able to learn a non-native language under supervision so easily in their own country was the reason of their progress.

After finishing the dialogue, teacher used the cassette player for the listening purpose. She could have used the computer, but she preferred to use the cassette player for the repetition part. First a sentence was played by the teacher and then paused and the students have been asked to repeat the sentence chorally one time and randomly some of them have been asked to repeat it once individually. Then the whole class repeated the sentence chorally again. This ***"choral, individual, choral"*** process has been repeated two or three times respectively. Meanwhile she gave them the equivalent of some sentences and then one more time the ***"C.I.C"(task three)*** process has been done and this repetition of predetermined sentences has been continued to the end of the dialogue. Practice and exercise are two terms of audio-lingual method of learning. The teacher drew the attention of the class to the constructive factor of repetition and made them sure that if they repeat the dialogue willingly like the "parrot repetition" and imitate from a native speaker and that there is nothing to be ashamed of and not to underestimate the power of repetition after a few months, they will realize a big positive change in their learning from all aspects. The most important thing was by repeating a lot it will become a habit, because "learning is a permanent change in behavior. Language learning is a habit formation and learning takes place when learners have the opportunity to practice making the correct response to a given stimuli." The teacher also mentioned that they will not be disappointed if they follow this procedure; "Try it out by comparing yourself with whomever you like and has started to learn with you simultaneously" she said.

After finishing the whole lines respectively students were asked to answer the "Figure it out" part in the book as usual. She checked and corrected the students' problems and finally she finished the rest of the part.

Table 1.3. Sample tasks in a conversational EFL class

Question and Answer (Q & A)	Teacher asks questions from students and gives them time to answer. This process warms the students up.
Choral Individual Choral (CIC)	For repeating a sentence, first all of students are asked to repeat, then some of them are chosen randomly and repeat and finally once more the whole class repeats the sentence.
Backward Forward Drill (BFD)	is a set of repetition that is, the teacher will break the sentence in 2 or 3 parts and students are asked to repeat the broken parts once from the back (shortening from right to left) and the other time from left to right by joining the parts.
Piggy Bank	is a kind of bank or box that when students shift their language to Farsi they are forced to put a coin in it

The other program of the class after finishing the lesson concerned with watching a film using the computer. *The film watching process* was made up of the following: ***First,*** students watched a 5 minutes part of the movie and the teacher paused the film and asked some questions related to the movie and once more the volunteer ones responded. ***Second***, Re-watching has been done and the teacher asked students to write down whatever they understood from the played part of the movie. And ***finally*** the third step again Re-watching the film and students were supposed to retell the story. Meanwhile when there was a question teacher answered it warmheartedly. After working on the movie and covering it finished the time of the class was over.

Table 1.4. Sample Steps of watching a Film in a conversational EFL class

Step 1	**Watching the film**	Questions asked by the teacher about the film

| Step 2 | **Re-watching the film** | Writing what students have understood from the film |
| Step 3 | **Re-watching the film** | Oral retell of the story by the students |

3. Discussion and Conclusion

Some interesting educational and instructive tips and points which can be applied in any other model class by all instructors were investigated in this article. The teacher has to follow the fixed rules of the institute and remind them to his/her students at the first session. He/she should also have a lesson plan, too. These two (fixed rules and lesson plan) together are called "teaching strategies" which as we witnessed from the students' feedback and reactions make the class management much easier. The teacher did her best to remove the learning barriers which are the factors that prevent the students from learning by praising, reinforcement, giving them chance and time to speak freely without any limitation and show themselves, etc. Because the feedback from the students have been excellent and considering the teacher followed a specific teaching method all the time we can conclude that the teaching method was an effective one and its collaboration with an experienced teacher has led the students to have a meaningful learning. We can also realize that between planned and classroom conversation techniques, the latter one can be more effective. Ausubel(1964), Richards, J. C. and Platt, J. (1992) mention that "students could be overwhelmed by language spoken as its natural speech and they could benefit from more deliberative speech from the teacher". This article can be useful for learners in large parts because of the context provided and the controlled language learning method in case of being repetitive and predictable which is the characteristic of audio-lingual method.

Because the teacher has followed the lesson plan and stages like Q&A and CIC, etc and also indirect correction without any humiliation and teasing and has told the fixed rules of class as a means of teaching technique and strategy at the beginning of the term and also used piggy bank, props, etc in class, the teacher can be defined as a more rather successful teacher than the others who do not care about those procedures.

- The teacher was supposed to do the "roll-call" as soon as she entered the classroom, but she did not. Doing roll-call has a positive psychological effect on students, because it helps them to enhance their relationship with their respective teacher. The teacher must know students' full

names, specially the first names. As the experiences have proved knowing the students' first names will facilitate learning. Another technique is using nicknames given to student by the teacher associated with a word related to his/her characteristic. For example a girl who likes cooking is called "*chef*" in the class or one who speaks a lot is called a "*chatterbox*", or a fat students is called "*potbelly*" and finally the girl who was very quick at finding the meanings compared to the others was named "*whiz*". This way not only did they learn a new word, but also they got a good sense for learning.

- The date should have been written on the top right side of the white board, because it will tell the students in which day, month and year they are and technically will teach them how to write the date on a paper.

- The teacher was supposed to use the whiteboard as an effective means of teaching, but she did not. e.g. she could use the "Backward Forward Drill" technique which could have been very useful.

- Considering the students have already been asked to write and present their summaries, the teacher was better not to ask them again during teaching; because the teacher herself became one of *distraction* factors.

- The teacher could have used intonation while repeating to make the class more active and attractive. Brazil (1980) says "introduce learners to how intonation affects the communicative values of an English utterance".

- Her class was monotone because she only focused on the book and it was much better if she used more of her own knowledge (gave more examples, equivalents, and has classroom conversation, etc.).

- The class was lacking "pair work". Pair work means giving the roles of a conversation to groups of two students and asking them to practice it in a specified time and then presenting it to the class. This is a real WORK SHOP essential for any ELT class.

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Appendix 1

An image of taught pages:

8. Any suggestions?

Patty and Paul Sasa are spending their honeymoon in New Orleans.

A

Patty What a beautiful day! Are you having a good time?
Paul Yeah, I'm having a wonderful time.
Patty I am too. I just love New Orleans!
Paul I do too!

B

Patty Paul . . . What are you doing?
Paul I'm calling my mother. *(Dialing phone)*
Mrs. Sasa Hello?
Paul Hi, Mom. It's Paul.
Mrs. Sasa Paul! How's New Orleans?
Paul Great! We're sightseeing and going to museums.
Mrs. Sasa How's the weather?
Paul Oh, it's sunny and beautiful.
Mrs. Sasa Lucky you. It's cold here, and it's snowing.

C

Patty Uh-oh . . .
Paul What's wrong?
Patty Uh . . . I think it's . . . raining!
Paul Come on! Let's run.

D

Paul What do you want to do? Any suggestions?
Patty Let's go to a movie. *Love on a Rainy Afternoon* is playing near the hotel.
Paul But we go to the movies all the time at home.
Patty O.K., then, let's go to a museum.
Paul Good idea. Oh, wait—what time is it?
Patty It's a quarter after five.
Paul Too late. The museums close at five.
Patty Oh, right. They're open from ten to five.

B 12　Unit 2

E

Paul I'm hungry.
Patty Me too. Let's go out to dinner.
Paul O.K. What do you want to eat?
Patty How about oysters? New Orleans
       is famous for its oysters.
Paul You know I don't like oysters.
Patty Well, how about a French
       restaurant?
Paul No. That's too expensive.
Patty Well, where *do* you want to go?

F

Patty I'm exhausted. Let's go back to the
       hotel.
Paul It's too early. It's only twenty to
      ten! Let's go to a jazz club. Now let's
      see . . . who's playing?
Patty Oh, honey . . . I'm too tired.
Paul Oh, look! Toots Bixler is playing at
      the Savoy. The show starts at ten
      o'clock. Come on! Let's go!

Figure it out

1. **Listen to the conversations.
   Say *true*, *false*, or *it doesn't
   say*.**

1. Patty and Paul don't like New
   Orleans. *False.*
2. Patty calls her mother from
   New Orleans.
3. Patty likes oysters.
4. Paul likes French food.
5. Patty and Paul go to a French
   restaurant.
6. At twenty to ten, Paul wants
   to go back to the hotel.

2. **Listen again and choose
   the best response to each
   sentence.**

1. I just love New Orleans!
   a. I do too.
   b. I am too.

2. How's the weather?
   a. That's good.
   b. It's beautiful.

3. Any suggestions?
   a. Let's go to a movie.
   b. We're sightseeing.

4. Let's go to a museum.
   a. Me too.
   b. That's a good idea.

5. What time is it?
   a. It's a quarter after five.
   b. It's sunny.

6. What are you doing?
   a. I'm calling my mother.
   b. Let's go back to the hotel.

7. Who's playing?
   a. *Love on a Rainy Afternoon.*
   b. Toots Bixler.

Unit 2 **B 13**

Answer Key for the Taught pages (Figure it out part):

Exercise 1:

1) False
2) False
3) True
4) It doesn't say
5) False
6) False

Exercise 2:

1) A
2) B
3) A
4) B
5) A
6) A
7) B

Appendix 2

A Sample Lesson Plan of Audio Lingual Method

1. Greeting &Warm-up:

After greetings the teacher will start the class with few questions (the greetings itself can be a kind of warm-up and it is better the questions be related to lesson whatever it depends on the teacher's art) just to involve students with each in order to learn something during the warm-up.

2. Introduction (presentation):

It has 3 steps which are as follow:

Step one: the teacher should talk about the situation and setting of the dialogue.

Step two: the teacher should use props/pictures in order to convey the meaning well.

Step three: the teacher should involve the student (that is, after every piece of information the teacher should ask question).

3. Orientation:

It has 4 steps which are as follow:

Step one: the teacher should read the first line of the dialogue

Step two: the teacher should teach new vocabulary and expression in each line if there is, from known, concrete, easy to unknown, abstract and difficult respectively. And can use the following terminology:

a. Realia

b. Pictures

c. Replicas

d. Dramatization

e. Opposites

f. Simple definition

g. Translation

Step three: the teacher should read the other lines of the dialogue to the end and teach the lesson as explained above respectively.

Step four: the teacher should play the tape/CD for listening the dialogue.

4. Development:

It has two steps which are as follow:

Step one: the teacher should read the first line or play the tape/CD and have students repeat (*books are closed*).

Step two: the teacher should model the line of the dialogue

a. chorally 3 times

b .individually 4 times but the teacher should randomly call the students to repeat but it must be from clever to weak students and finally

c. chorally 2 times.

5. Application:

The teacher should ask students come to board and become *A &B* and play the roles of the dialogue.

6. Original dialogue:

The teacher should read or play the whole dialogue one more time but not the selected one (*books are opened*)

7. Comprehension:

The teacher should check the students by asking questions about the dialogue (*inferential and referential questions*) and few different related questions in order to denote their strength and weakness.

8. Meaningful activity:

The students should be given time to take the role (*role play*) and practice and also should be able to change some words/parts of the sentences up to here

9. Summarization: (optional)

The students should be called to go to board to retell the story.

One important thing that should never be forgotten in the above steps is the *teacher should cheer and encourage the students who participate in class and more specifically, ask the students to give clap to those who answered the questions correctly and also to those who went to the board.*

THE MORE YOU USE THIS LESSON PLAN, THE MORE YOU DISCOVER ITS BENEFITS.

Title

A Clever and Witty Genre in the World of Prose Literature

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Abstract

Although short stories have grown up beside the genre of novel, it is mostly considered as a separate genre from novel. This genre has its own characteristics in literature. Its number of words is limited, it is read in one single sitting and unities are observed in it. On the other hand, novels, also belonging to the world of prose, are not limited in a sense a short story is limited. This paper looks at these two different genres and opens the different dimensions of each. It starts from the early days of short story writing and discusses the issue chronologically.

Keywords: Prose, Literary genres, Short story, Novel, Literary features.

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition

Stories come to us from the ancient past. They drew their first breath from oral tradition and have existed as a portion of much of human literary expression in all ages. In the early centuries of story-telling, people had only one purpose in mind and that was narrating for the joy of the telling and hearing. It can be said that these stories had no origin more specific than the inherent creative spirit of human beings satisfying their desire to tell and to hear stories, and the story-tellers sacrificed unity and totality of effect, as well as originality for an entertaining method of reciting their incidents. A clever and witty remark by Professor Reid (1977) clears our task of defining short story when says: "Observing where something has come from is not the same as defining what it has become" (p.15).

A short story is a kind of prose fiction which has grown up besides the genre of novel and has its own important and recognized place in the world of literature. It may be defined as a prose

narrative "requiring from half an hour to one hour for its perusal."(Poe 5). In other words, brevity is the key-note of a short story. It is a story which is physically possible to be read at one sitting. But it must not be supposed that the short story is a novel on a reduced scale. It has a definite technique of its own, and has its own specific requirements of matter and treatment. As Hamilton (1989) says: "The aim of a short-story is to produce a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means that is consistent with the utmost emphasis." (p.62)

The concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (2003) defines short story as:

> A fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own, as <u>novellas</u> sometimes and <u>novels</u> usually are. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background…the short story as we know it flourished in the magazines of the 19th and early 20th centuries (p.320).

Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006) also defines short story as a:

> Brief fictional prose narrative. It usually presents a single significant episode or scene involving a limited number of characters. The form encourages economy of setting and concise narration; character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but seldom fully developed. A short story may concentrate on the creation of mood rather than the telling of a story. Despite numerous precedents, it emerged only in the 19th century as a distinct literary genre in the works of writers such as E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov (p.531).

In *Columbia Encyclopedia* (2003) we find short story defined as a:

> Brief prose fiction. The term covers a wide variety of narratives—from stories in which the main focus is on the course of events to studies of character, from the "short short" story to extended and complex narratives such as Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice.* Most often the short story is restricted in character and situation and is concerned with creating a single, dynamic effect. Its length usually falls between 2,000 and 10,000 words. Short stories date back to earliest times; they can be found in the Bible, <u>*Gesta Romanorum*</u> of the Middle Ages, Boccaccio's *Decameron,* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (p.445).

Colombia Encyclopedia is the only source that mentions something about length of short story, its different kinds and its history.

Ian Reid (1977) in his book called *"The Short Story"* believes that: "Short story is generally applied to almost any kind of fictitious prose narrative briefer than a novel" (p.9).

Fred Pattee (1966), in his historical survey *The Development of American Short Story,* points out that:

> The term 'short story' itself, used generically to designate an independent literary form rather than just a story that lacks length, is as recent as the 1880s. Washington Irving, author of '*Rip Van Winkle'* and '*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'*, called his writings 'sketches' or 'tales', and the latter term was preferred by Poe, Hawthorne and Melville (p.69).

Brander Mathews (1901) in his *Philosophy of Short Story* says: "A true short-story is something other and something more than a mere story which is short" (p.5). Mathews actually distinguishes between short story and a story which is short.

M. H. Abrams (2005) in his *Glossary of Literary Terms* defines short story as: "a brief work of prose fiction" (p.295), and defines novel as: "an extended narrative" (p.197). Cuddon in his *Literary Terms* considers short story as: "one of the most elusive forms" (430), and defines novel as an: "extended piece of prose fiction" (p.623).

Critics believe that the roots of the novel come from different sources. It comes from a) Elizabethan prose fiction b) French heroic romances in the mid-17th century c) Spanish picaresque tales-strings of episodic adventures held together by the personality of the central figure; such as *Don Quixote*. The word "novel" (which wasn't even used until the end of the 18th century) is an English transliteration of the Italian word "novella"-used to describe a short, compact, broadly realistic tale, popular during the medieval period.

E.M. Forster (1989) in his *Aspects of the Novel* cites the definition of the novel by a Frenchman named Abel Chevalley. He writes that a novel is "a fiction in prose of a certain extent" and adds that "he defines 'extent' as over 50,000 words." (p.40). In *The Art of Fiction* John Gardner (1971) defines novel. He writes:

> A novel is like a symphony in that its closing movement echoes and resounds with all that has gone before. . . Toward the close of a novel. . . . unexpected connections begin to surface; hidden causes become plain; life becomes, however briefly and unstably, organized; the universe reveals itself, if only for the moment, as inexorably

moral; the outcome of the various characters' actions is at last manifest; and we see
the responsibility of free will (p.184).

Novel is not actually an 18th century invention; it was an alternative for romances and as it was earlier mentioned it comes from the Elizabethan prose fiction in 1613 and is basically any story told for its spectacular or revealing incidents.

1.2 A historical survey

1.2.1 Ancient times

Story-telling has a long history and no one can say when, where and by whom story-telling was begun. Egyptian papyri dating from three thousands to four thousands B.C. reveal how the sons of Cheops regaled their father with stories and narratives. Some three hundred years before the birth of Christ, we had Old Testament stories as those of Joseph, Samson, Jonah and of Ruth. Tales told in *The Arabian Nights, Panchatantras, the epic of Gilgamesh, Shahnameh, the Decameron, Canterbury Tales, Ramayana and the Mahabharata* testify to the popularity of the short story all over the world.

But these tales of adventure and moral tales of the past have no resemblance with the modern short story. Short story in the hands of the modern masters is a perfect work of art. As an artistic work, it has undergone a gradual evolution and has developed into a popular form of modern literature.

The Greeks did very little writing in prose until the era of their decadence, and showed little instinct to use the concise and unified form of the short-story. But oral narrative and oral story-telling produced *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The conquering Romans followed closely in the paths of their predecessors and did little work in the shorter narratives. Both the Greeks and Romans left us episodes and incidents in their early classics. Fables[1] as the Greek historian Herodotus has written "have been invented by a Greek slave named Aesop in the sixth century BC." And they "are known today as Aesop's fables." (Wikipadia)

1.2.2 The Medieval Era

In this period, story-tellers and stories appeared everywhere. Even one may consider the ballads of the Middle Ages as a kind of verse story with "their swift moving narratives" and presenting "the elemental themes-love, courage, enmity, death" and "they reflect the lives of people" (Pooly

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[1]- fables are considered as folk tales with an explicitly moral message.

et.al, 1968, p.52). These ballads focus on narratives that could be told at one sitting and can be considered as folk tales. The impulse to story-telling in this era manifested itself in fables, epics and in the medieval romances. The uneducated story-tellers of the era produced the fable, and the educated ones produced the simple, crude and disjointed tales. Many of these story-tellers did not have really something to say. Herbert Gold (1968) is quite right when in an International Symposium on short story says: "the story-teller must have a story to tell, not merely some sweet prose to take out for a walk" (Kenyon Review Vol: xxx.4). About 1250, some two hundred well known tales were collected in the *Gesta Romanorum,* and this is a wonderful collection of the mediaeval stories. It is said that the collected tales in *Gesta Romanorum* are anecdotes[2] that were popular during the Roman Empire and remained popular until the 18th century.

In the middle of the fourteenth century Giovanni Boccaccio assembled his stories in a book called *Decameron.* In the *Decameron,* Boccaccio deals with traditional and contemporary materials. In the same century, Geoffrey Chaucer, wrote his collection, *Canterbury Tales,* which is also "considered a source book of information on fourteenth century England" (Pooly et.al, 1968, p.66). Charles Sears Baldwin (1904) when talking about the stories of the Middle Ages writes:

> More than half are merely anecdotes, and the remaining stories are bare plots, ingeniously done in a kind of scenario form ... Boccaccio was not conscious of a standard in short-story telling, for he had none in the sense that Poe and Maupassant defined and practiced it. Chaucer in England told his stories in verse and added the charm of humor and well defined characters to the development of story-telling (p.103).

In the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Mallory, in his *Death of Arthur*, gathered a series of long narratives recounting the exploits of ancient knighthood. According to Pooly (1968), this text "is the most complete single version of the tales of King Arthur and his court that has been written in English" (p.85).

In the Medieval era, story-telling was also strengthened from the eastern parts of the world. Reid (1977) writes:

> "From Medieval times onwards, several large mobile tale-clusters infiltrated from

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[2]-Anecdote as Abrams (2005) defines it, is "the unelaborated narration of a single incident." (295) It is also said to be a short interesting or amusing narrative or a short biographical incident.

eastern cultures into European literature by various routes… The most indefatigably migratory is the *Panchatantra*. In its original Sanskrit form it dates back at least to the early sixth century A.D.; in a variety of translations it spread through Europe in the Middle Ages; Thomas North rendered it into English in 1570-'from an Italian version of a Latin version of a Hebrew version of an Arabic version of a (lost) Pahlavi (Middle Iranian) version of some (lost) Sanskrit version of the original *Panchatantra'* (according to Franklin Edgerton *The Panchatantra*, London,1965,p.13)"(p.18).

1.2.3 The Renaissance and the Elizabethan age

Renaissance or rebirth refers particularly to renewed interest in classical learning. In this era, many writers used the term 'novella' when referring to short stories.

Boccaccio had a great influence on the Renaissance narrative. In France, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron* (1558) borrowed the structural formula by which Boccaccio linked and framed his tales. During the Elizabethan Age, short story made on humble beginning. Thomas Nash and Robert Green are two of the earliest writers of short stories. Green wrote many stories, but his great defect was that he undertook to point a moral before he had learnt to tell a plain tale. Thomas Nash wrote long stories which are destitute of the art of construction. Another short story writer of the Elizabethan Age was Thomas Delony who appeared to be more successful than the other two. Delony's best collection of short stories are, *The Gentle Craft, Jack of Newbury,* and *Thomas of Reading*. In all these stories Delony shows greater skill in construction than any of his rivals. His characters are better drawn, his humor is richer and his wit less strained. The reason for his success was that he was content to tell a plain story drawn from his own experience and depicting men and women whom he knew.

1.2.4 Seventeenth century

In the seventeenth century, Cervantes combined Boccaccio's anecdotal liveliness and interest in psychological motivation with a new dimension of moral seriousness. He gave the world its first great novel, *Don Quixote*. Cervantes did not write short-stories, but tales that are fairly brief. His *The Liberal Lover* is near to the sense of short story, as this period came to producing a real short-story. Spain added to the story a high sense of chivalry and a richness of character that the Greek romance and the Italian novella did not possess. France followed this loose composition and lack of beauty in form. Scarron and Le Sage, the two French fiction writers of this period,

contributed little or nothing to the advancement of story-telling.

1.2.5 Eighteenth Century

The story-telling of the seventeenth century was largely shaped by the popularity of the drama. In the eighteenth century the drama gave place to the essay, and it is to the sketch[3] and essay that we must go to trace the evolution of the story during this period.

This century also saw the development of the informal essay, which frequently derived some of its interest from such episodes and sketches as Joseph Addison uses in the "Sir Roger De Coverley papers." The growth of the periodicals and magazines like those published by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, such as *Tatler, Spectator, Adventure, Rambler*, etc. facilitated the publication of short stories. But it is believed that Addison and Steele toyed with the tale as a kind of decorations to their essays in the *Spectator*.

Addison and Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* developed some real characters of the fiction type and told some good stories, but even their best, like *Theodosius and Constantia*, fall far short of developing all the dramatic possibilities, and lack the focusing of interest found in the nineteenth century stories. Some of Charles Lamb's *Essays of Elia*, especially the *Dream Children*, introduce a delicate fancy and an essayist's clearness of thought and statement into the story. In France, Voltaire had a burning message in every essay, and he paid far greater attention to the development of the thought of his message than to the story he was telling.

During the eighteenth century, short story was given a new lease of life. Novel grew and appeared in the eighteenth century. It actually came from the picaresque[4] novel of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All these forms are the representation of human love of narration and narratives and factors in the development of a formal kind of story- telling.

But during this century the short story writers were mainly concerned with pointing a moral and did not care to provide pure pleasure and delight to the readers. Thus in the stories of *Hawkesworth and Goldsmith*, we find the presence of the instructive tendency which spoils the artistic effect of their stories.

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[3]- Sketch according to Cuddon (1984), is: "a) a short piece of prose, often perhaps a thousand or two thousand words and usually of a descriptive kind commonly found in newspapers and magazines. In some cases it becomes very nearly to short story. Dickens' *Sketches by Boz.* is a good example. B) A brief dramatic piece of the kind one might find in a revue or as a curtain raiser or as part of some other kind of theatrical entertainment. A good example is Pinter's *Last Bus*" (p. 632).

[4]- According to Abrams (2005), "Picaro is Spanish for rogue and a typical story concerns the escapades of an insouciant rascal who lives by his wits and shows a little if any alteration of character through a long succession of adventures (p.198).

At the close of this century German romanticism began to seep into English thought and prepare the way for things new in literary thought and treatment.

1.2.6 Nineteenth Century

The first historical evidence in the development of the story shows no conception of a short-story other than that it is not so long as other narratives. This judgment of the short-story obtained until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a new version of its meaning was given, and an enlarged vision of its possibilities was experienced by a number of writers almost simultaneously.

The nineteenth century is a great period of short story writing in English literature. The rapid growth of journalism and magazines facilitated the growth and development of the short story. In the mid nineteenth century, after Poe's review of Hawthorne's "*Twice-Told Tales*" the structure of short story was formulated. Little by little, theories about short story were emerging. One of the first of these theories is Poe's *The Philosophy of Composition* that appeared in 1846 and the other is professor Matthews' *The Philosophy of the Short Story* published in 1901.In this century came Sir Walter Scott, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Merimee and Balzac, Gautier and Musset, Maupassant, Chekhov and Hoffman. With these writers, the short story as a distinct literary genre came into being.

Poe and Maupassant have reduced the form of the short-story to an exact science; Hawthorne and Harte have done successfully in the field of romanticism what the Germans, Tieck and Hoffman, did not do so well; Bjornson and Henry James have analyzed character psychologically in their short-stories; Kipling has used the short story as a vehicle for the conveyance of specific knowledge; Stevenson has gathered most, if not all, of the literary possibilities adaptable to short-story use, and has incorporated them in his *Markheim*.

The short stories in the nineteenth century are equally remarkable for their variety. They cover nearly the whole range of human interest and appeal to every emotion, from horror and fear to tenderness and pity. They touch heaven and earth and hell. They are dreamy or intensely active, domestic or adventurous. They illustrate crime almost inhuman or virtue almost superhuman. In short, we may say that during the nineteenth century the short story attained a high degree of perfection both in construction and aesthetic pleasure.

In view of this long development, it seems foolish to name one person as the founder of the short story or to credit one nation with its development. It was in this century that a group of

writers did consciously formulate the short story as an art form notable among them being Nathaniel Hawthorn and Edgar Allan Poe in America, Merimee and Balzac in France and Hoffman in Germany. This development flowered with such speed and force in America that the modern short story is often called an American art form.

This century opened with a decided preference for fiction. Washington Irving, reverting to the *Spectator*, produced his sketches and, following the trend of his time, looked forward to a new form and wrote *The Spectre Bridegroom* and *Rip Van Winkle*. It is only by a precise definition of short-story that Irving is robbed of the honor of being the founder of the modern short-story. He loved to meander and to fit his materials to his story scheme in a leisurely manner. He did not quite see what Hawthorne instinctively followed and Poe consciously defined and practiced, and he did not realize that terseness of statement and totality of impression were the chief qualities he needed to make him the father of a new literary form.

Scott's *Wandering Will* is almost faultless in construction. Bert Harte's and Stevenson's stories are models of literary art. These writers know their purpose and rigidly exclude all that comes in the way of their design and thereby attain the unity of impression which is highly essential to the short story.

France with her literary newspapers and artistic tendencies, and the United States with magazines calling incessantly for good short-stories, and with every section of its conglomerate life clamoring to express itself, lead in the production and rank of short-stories. Maupassant and Stevenson and Hawthorne and Poe are the great names in the ranks of short-story writers.

1.2.7 Twentieth Century and modern short story

During the twentieth century the short story has been considerably improved and developed. It has been practiced with perfection by such writers as Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wild, H. G. Wells, A. E. Coppard and Catherine Mansfield. Meanwhile in France and Russia, we can see great writers as Maupassant, Flaubert, Anatole France, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov who have made the short story an exquisite medium for catching the most evanescent moods and subtlest ironies. They are perhaps the greatest continental short story writers, standing alone in grace, wit and charm.

The twentieth century short story writers, while taking full care of the art of construction and characterization, have considerably widened the scope of the story. The short story is now used by the English, French and Russian masters as a mirror to social conditions, intellectual

movements and historical upheavals. But the best example of the short story, besides being a mirror to life, do not show any decline in imaginative power and creativeness. Such stories as are written by W.H. Hudson, Joseph Conrad and Walter De La Mare, set the mind roaming in mystique realms. They have a spiritual foundation which has no counterpart in the earlier stories. In the hands of Katherine Mansfield, the short story does not remain a mere narration of incidents but is a deeper and deeper probing of the human consciousness. Her later stories have the effect of the plummet dropped into the pool of human consciousness. The stories of A. E. Coppard, at least the earlier ones, have a sweet lyrical quality about them. His stories are based on the theory that the short story should not be a written affair but a tale told. His earlier stories are marked by the natural grace and spontaneity of a lyric. His style became sophisticated as he advanced in his literary career and this change in his style was due to the influence of Henry James.

Another significant writer of short stories is Rudyard Kipling. Rudyard Kipling's stories are as a rule located in remote British colonies and among the territorial armies, where detail may be minutely realistic, but is still rich in romantic association to the untravelled reader. Thus he has supplanted Bert Harte, The famous American short story writer as the acknowledged master of local color in the short story. Local color of this kind that always puts an emphasis on things that are vivid or full of rich tints is very prone to exaggerate. His stories dealing with India and Indian life are most exaggerated and are probably no nearer life than Bert Hate's *Argonauts*. Kipling's best stories are to be found in *Many Inventions* (1983), *The Jungle Book* (1895), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895) and *The Day's Work* (1898).

Short story has also been tried by John Galsworthy, George Moore, and Somerset Maugham. It has also been cultivated by numerous writers like Leslie Howard, Pauline Smith, James Haney, Elizabeth Bowen, C. F. Green, T. O. Beachcroft, Dorothy Edwards and others. A large number of women writers have also contributed to the development of the present day short story. This fact together with, the recent flood of manuals on short story technique have inspired hundreds of unprepared and unqualified people to take to the short story.

2. Discussion

2.1 Modern short story and its immense popularity

Modern short story as a work of art originated in the second quarter of Nineteenth century in America. Edgar Allan Poe, who leapt into fame with the publication of his *An MS found in a Bottle* in 1883 is considered as a great pioneer. He holds his readers attention with the skill of his narration and the atmosphere that he creates. His influence on the modern short story writers can not be overestimated.

It is now gradually recognized that the modern short story is one of the most popular, if not the most popular form of literary composition. As Bernard Bergonzi (1970) believes "the modern short-story writer is bound to see the world in a certain way" (p.67) and this can be a reason for its popularity. Its immense popularity is the result of many co-operating causes.

First, the numbers of magazines and journals that publish short stories have increased and the demand for short stories is so great.

Secondly, there is a hurry and bustle of modern life. The modern reader has no time or the inclination to read the "large still books" over which people liked to linger in the past when life passed on in a leisurely fashion (as it was seen in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). He can no longer find times to read novels like *Tom Jones* which require much patience and must be continued day after day. He wants and sometimes needs something which he can read in a short time and in one sitting, whenever he finds time. The short story comes in handy for the purpose. It entertains him after hard days; work, without wasting much of his precious time. In this way the demand for short story is so great and high in the twentieth century, so that "Hemingway's novella (long short story) sold 5,300,000 copies in only two days." (Wikipedia)

Thirdly, the spread of education and the enormous development of journalism are other factors which have contributed to its popularity. With the universal extension of education the demand for reading matter has increased. It is obvious that all can not read higher literature which is meant for deep meditative study and not for recreation. The public wants light works and this demand is satisfied by the short story.

In addition to the above mentioned features; it can be said that a large number of magazines and journals which came into being simultaneously with the spread of the education did much to increase the popularity of the short story. Long novels could not be published at one time. If they were published in serial installments, by missing a single issue the continuity broke, and the reader felt them to be unentertaining. Then, they published short stories complete in one issue and providing the reader with the kind of entertainment he wanted. Hence it is true to say, as

Bates (1941) has said: "The evolution of short story has something to do with the evolution of the general reader" (p.89).

2.2 Characteristics of short story

As it was already mentioned, a short story is a relatively brief fictional narrative in prose. It may range in length from the short short story of five hundred words up to the long short story of twelve thousands to fifteen thousands words. Reid (1977) writes:

> "Somerset Maugham in the preface to his *Complete Short Stories* notes that the smallest item there comes to about 1600 words in all, the longest to about 20000, and that is approximately the median range – though some authors would include brief and longer work: in frank Sargeson's collected stories a few pieces are less than 500 words while one runs to about 32000" (p.10).

Short story may be distinguished from the sketch and the tale in that it has a definite formal development, a firmness in construction; however, it finds its unity in many things other than plot – although if often finds it there – in effect, in theme, in character, in tone, in mood, even on occasion, in style.

It was not until well along in the nineteenth century that any one attempted to define the short story. Bret Harte says: "Crude at first, it received a literary polish in the press, but its dominant quality remained. It was concise and condensed, yet suggestive. It was delightfully extravagant, or a miracle of understatement." (qtd. in Baets, p.49)

The primary aim of short story is to entertain. Hence *a short story must be interesting above everything else*. It may convey some moral lesson, it may ridicule human follies, but it must do all this in an interesting manner. It must absorb the reader and make him forget the worries of his life for the time being. If it does not do so, it cannot be regarded as a good short story in spite of all the other excellent qualities that it may have.

The short story must have only one aim or purpose. *It must have singleness (unity) of effect.* All the events, all the incidents, all the characters of the story must be invented to create that preconceived effect. The story must have one pivot of interest and by focusing the attention on that one point or powerful effect must be created on the reader. The satisfaction of the reader is the real test of its success. According to what Reid (19770 has written:

> Poe said that the chief formal property of 'the short story tale' was 'unity of impression', which he regarded as the product of conscious artistry; the author first

'conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out'

and then devised an appropriate narrative vehicle for conveying that (p.54).

Every subject between heaven and earth is fit for the short story, but it must be as such that can be effectively developed within the short space prescribed for it. Whatever may be its subject, the story must leave us with the impression that even if nothing would have been lost at least nothing would have been gained by further elaboration. *It must be complete without any suggestion of overcrowding.* The attention must be focused throughout upon the single purpose of the story and everything not directly connected with that purpose must be rigorously excluded. Concentration on the aim or the motive of the story is essential for its success. Subject is not so important as the method of telling the story.

Owing to the exigencies of space, a short story writer cannot portray a character in full. He can only exhibit some one phase or at the most a few salient features of a character. *The searchlight is focused on some important phase of character and it is thrown into prominent relief.* Men and women are placed in such telling situations as are sufficient to develop the prominent traits of their characters. Here the novelist has an advantage over the short story writer. He has ample space at his disposal, and so can place his characters in as many situations as he likes and display different qualities of his characters. He can gradually develop the characters of his men and women and can lay their very souls bare before us. All this is not possible in a short story. Besides a short story writer can not introduce a dozen or even half a dozen characters in a story, as it would result in overcrowding. None of the characters would then be effectively developed. This drawback has given rise to the one-man story. The plot hinges on the actions of one man. All our attention is concentrated upon him and this, results in a powerful impression and the story gains much in effect.

As in novel and drama, in the short story also the dialogues occupy a very prominent place. They add to the interest of the story and make it charming and easy to read. In characterization, the dialogue counts for much. Every word of it is made to tell. In a novel, we know much about the character of an individual by what he says, by what others say about him and/or by what the author says about him. But the dialogue in a short story should be brief and to the point. Unlike novels, long speeches in a short story would be considered a serious defect.

A suitable atmosphere is necessary for a short story. The atmosphere may be one of tragic gloom, or of love and laughter or of suspense. But there should be consistency in the creation of

this atmosphere. If, for example, the story is a detective story, it must have the atmosphere of horror and mystery throughout. In a tragic story, the atmosphere must be one of gloom and a humorous or comic atmosphere would be out of place.

A short story writer has limited space, so he must use extreme economy of words. Because of its extreme condensation and extreme economy of words, every word and sentence must take the action of the story a step further. Every superfluous word or sentence is considered a defect. Moreover, the language used should be easy and simple. Long and involved sentences are out of place in a good short story.

The short-story must always have a *compact unity* and a *direct simplicity*. In such stories as Bjoernson's *The Father* and Maupassant's *The Piece of String,* this simplicity is equal to that of the anecdote but in no case can an anecdote possess the dramatic possibilities of these simple short-stories; for a short-story must always have that tensity of emotion that comes only in the crucial tests of life.

The short-story *does not demand the consistency in treatment of the long story*, for there are not so many elements to marshal and direct properly, but the short-story must be *original and varied in its themes*, cleverly constructed, and lighted through and through with the glow of vivid imaginings. *A single incident in daily life* is caught as in a snap-shot exposure and held before the reader in such a manner that the impression of the whole is derived largely from suggestion. The single incident may be the turning-point in life history, as in *The Man Who Was*; it may be a mental surrender of habits fixed seemingly in indelible colors in the soul and a sudden, inflexible decision to be a man, as in the case of *Markheim;* or it may be a gradual realization of the value of spiritual gifts, as Bjoernson has concisely presented it in his little story *The Father*.

The short-story is *stripped of all the incongruities* that led Fielding, Scott, and Dickens far afield. All its parts harmonize in the simplest manner to give unity and "totality" of impression through strict unity of form. It is a concentrated piece of life snatched from the ordinary and uneventful round of living and steeped in fancy until it becomes the acme of literary art.

The aim of the short-story is always to present a *cross-section of life* in such a vivid manner that the importance of the incident becomes universal. Around the turn of the century, however, the impact of realism and the advent of naturalism joined with the example of Chekhov's *slice of life* stories to force upon the formula for the serious writer, and such masters of the form as Somerset Maugham and Catherine Mansfield in England and Sherwood Anderson, F, Scott Fits Gerald and

Ernest Hemingway in America began producing short stories of great integrity that reflected the complex formlessness of life itself.

It was around the end of the nineteenth century that the tightly constructed *surprise ending* story of O. Henry was added to the formula of short story and the short story came to be thought of as corresponding to a formula, a pattern that was repeated in endless retellings of its limited variations in the popular short story.

A short story is a story that *can be read at a single sitting*. Edgar Allan Poe said that "a 'tale' (which for the moment can be taken as a synonym for short story) is capable of being perused at one sitting" (qtd. In Reid, (1977), p.9). Hence *brevity is another important characteristic of the short story*. Absolute economy of means is to be used and everything superfluous is to be strictly avoided. There is to be no word written of which the tendency direct or indirect is not to further the action of the story. The art of short story writer is, therefore, a difficult one. It requires a long training and practice to master the art and become a successful short story writer.

Some short-stories are told with the *definite end in view of telling a story for the sake of exploiting a plot. The Cask of Amontillado* is all action in comparison with *The Masque of the Red Death*. Hawthorne, above all writers, is most interested in ethical laws and moral development and Henry James and Bjoernson turn the x-rays of psychology and sociology on their characters; Stevenson follows with the precision of the tick of a watch the steps in Markheim's mental evolution.

The types of the short-story are as varied as life itself. Addison, Lamb, Irving, Warner, and many others have used the story in their sketches and essays with wonderful effect. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is as impressive as any of Scott's tales. The allegory in *The Great Stone Face* loses little or nothing when compared with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. No better type of detective story has been written than the two short-stories, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Purloined Letter*. Every emotion is subject to the call of the short-story. Humor with its expansive free air is not so well adapted to the short story as is pathos. There is a sadness in the stories of Dickens, Garland, Page, Mrs. Freeman, Miss Jewett, Maupassant, Poe, and many others that runs the whole gamut from pleasing tenderness in *A Child's Dream of a Star* to unutterable horror in *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

2.3 limitation and differences with the genre of novel

"The wrong word, a misplaced paragraph, an inadequate phrase or a convenient explanation, starts fatal leaks in this kind of writing which is formally very close to poetry." (qtd. In Reid, p. 54-55). Perhaps this dictum by Poe makes the difference between short story and other genres of literature quite clear. Frank O'Connor (1957) when asked in an interview "Why do you prefer the short story for your medium?" He answers: "Because it's the nearest thing I know to lyric poetry for a long time, then discovered that God had not intended me to be a lyric poet and the nearest thing to that is short story." (p.165)

Structurally a novel is an extended fictional narrative, usually written in prose. It naturally deals with human characters in social situations. Professor Matthews Writes: "The short story is the single effect, complete and self contained, while the novel is of necessity broken into a series of episodes. Thus the short story has, what novel can not have, the effect of 'totality', as Poe called it, the unity of impression." (p.5). The traditional novel has: a) a unified and plausible plot structure b)sharply individualized and believable characters c)a pervasive illusion of reality. A novel aims for a comprehensive unified effect in which all of the elements of fiction intertwine to make a comment on the human condition.

As the short story writer is handicapped by *little space* and *little time,* or *short period of time* he has to concentrate his attention on a *particular event* or idea or a *particular aspect of character.* He can give us merely a slice of life. *He has to aim at a single effect* and has to unite closely together all such events which are best likely to produce that effect. *Everything superfluous and unnecessary has to be skillfully sorted out.* In the whole composition, there should be no word written, of which the tendency is not to further the effect sought to be produced. This singleness of aim, this directness of method and this brevity and concentration, result in a powerful impression. But it requires greater care and greater skill in all the details of composition, than is necessary for a novel. Any defects in the composition of the short story would stand out with greater clearness, than the same defects in the novel. *A short story requires a better artist than the novel, and is a higher literary form.* Leibowitz (1974) asserts that: "In general terms,… the novels selectivity differs from the short story's because the novel's narrative task is elaboration, whereas the short story's is limitation." (p.125).

But in another respect, the novel is far superior to the short story. *The short story can not exhibit life in all its variety and complexity like the novel,* for it needs a larger canvas than is provided by the story. Reid (1977) says:

The action of a short story…need have no completed pattern at all. It may be virtually without start or finish, representing only a state of affairs rather than a sequence of events. This is generally true of the work of some writers; Galthworthy said Chekhov's stories are 'all middle, like a tortoise', and Chekhov himself once remarked : I think that when one has finished writing a short story one should delete the beginning and the end'" (pp.62-63).

Brander Matthews (1901) in *The Philosophy of the Short-Story* writes:

A true short-story differs from the novel chiefly in its essential unity of impression. In a far more exact and precise use of the word, a short-story has unity as a novel cannot have it.... A short-story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation (p.3).

Short story may be distinguished from the novel in that it tends to reveal character through a series of actions or ordeals, the purpose of short story being accomplished when the reader comes to know what the true nature of a character is (James Joyce called a short story an epiphany[5] because of this quality of revelation), the novel tends, on the other hand, to show character development as a result of actions and under the impact of events. This generalization like every generalization about the short story and the novel, grossly overstates its case; yet in a broad sense it does define a basic difference between the genres.

In *Wikipedia* we find that

The Short stories are not as complex as novels. Novels contain certain elements as: exposition (introduction, setting, characters) complication (The event that introduces the conflict), rising action, climax and resolution. In this way, short stories may not follow this pattern. Some modern short stories only occasionally have an exposition, and some have an abrupt beginning or the story starts in the middle of the action, and some longer short stories may have a climax, or a turning point, in any case, the ending of many short stories are open.

Short story can not exhibit the gradual evolution of character, which is possible only for a novel. The spiritual history of Levil in *Anna Karenina,* and the study of Tito Meleema's moral downfall

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[5]- Epiphany as Abrams (2005) defines it; is "a manifestation," or "showing forth." It is the "manifestation of God's presence within the created world." (p.85)

in *Romola*, would be impossible within the framework of the short story. *In a short story we meet men and women only for a few minutes and can know only one aspect of their character.* The concentration of attention on one particular quality may result in a powerful impression, but the men and women who live long in our memory are the men and women of the novels and not necessarily those of short stories. In short stories some particular qualities of men and women and thus brings them out into bold relief. Searchlight is focused on some particular incident in a man's life, and some particular phase of his character is brilliantly illuminated. Robert Creeley (1953) in the preface of his book writes: "Whereas the novel is a continuum, of necessity, chapter to chapter, the story can escape some of that obligation, and function exactly in terms of whatever emotion best can serve it" (p.iii).

In a novel, the character unfolds itself before us, as the action develops. No such gradual evolution of character is possible in the short story. But like the novelist, the short story writer can, if he likes, constitute himself the official interpreter of his characters and tell us himself all that we need to know about them. Like a novelist, he can dissect his characters and lay bare before the readers their innermost souls. Also like the novel, short story can be both subjective and objective. He can introduce his personality into the story and mix freely with his men and women, lay their thoughts and feelings before us and pass judgment upon them.

3. Conclusion

Though immensely popular in modern times, the short story is not a modern product. It has been popular in every age and in every country. From times immemorial, people, old and young, have always liked to be entertained and the short story has been their most popular entertainment. The earliest forms of short story were the tales of adventure, dealing with the deeds of valor or of chivalry of some popular hero. If we really want to appreciate short story as a form of art, we must not limit ourselves to any one country but must try study the great masters of this art in many countries.

In spite of all the features mentioned for short story and its differences with the genre of novel, it seems really problematic to determine what separates a short story from longer fictional works. A practical definition of short story must be broad enough to include the surprise ending story of O'Henry and Maupassant, the tale of unified effect of Poe, the slice of life story of Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield and Sherwood Anderson and the symbolic and mythic stories that

are popular in the little magazines today. At the same time within breadth that such a statement must have, there should be distinguishing characteristics that set of the short story from other prose fiction forms.

However natural and formless, the short story may sometimes give the impression of being much more than it may appear rather than being simple narrative as in Somerset Maugham's stories, or the unadorned report of an action, as in Hemingway's or John O'Hara's, a distinguishing characteristic of the genre is that it is consciously made, that it reveals itself, on careful analysis, to be the result of conscious craftsmanship and artistic skill. Furthermore, however slight the short story may appear, it consists of more than a mere record of an incident or an anecdote.

It is clear that the short story and the novel are two entirely different forms of literary art, each having its own rules of composition, its own usefulness and importance. Sometimes extravagant claims are put forward for the short story. It is claimed that the short story is the future form of fiction and it would gradually replace the novel. However popular the short story may be, it is no likely to displace the novel for the very good reason that it can not do what the novel does. So long as the people are interested in the variety and many sidedness of life, the novel is going to live as the representative type of modern literary art. Hence the short story must not be regarded as arrival to, or as a substitute for the novel, but as a separate literary form which has grown side by side with the novel, and has come to occupy an important place in the literature of the world.

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Title

The Relationship between Reading Anxiety and Locus of Control among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners (Prospective Language Teachers)

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Abstract

This paper searches to explore the possible relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control among Iranian EFL learners (prospective language teachers).Two measurement scales of FLRAS and FLCAS were administered to 170 undergraduate students at a private university (Tabaran) in fall semester, 2009. The result confirmed the statistically linear and meaningful correlation between reading anxiety and locus of control. Additionally, according to the results, it was indicated that there was a negative correlation between external locus of control and reading anxiety. In the other words, to some extent, it can be concluded that, the more intensive external control the learners benefit, the less reading anxiety they expose to. Accordingly, it was demonstrated that, there was a negative correlation between internal locus of control and reading anxiety, but this correlation was not so strength and meaningful. Finally, considering gender through the estimating the degree of relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control, it was revealed that, gender did not make any interference, or play any major role in this relationship.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foreign language Anxiety, Reading anxiety, Locus of control.

1. **Introduction**

Due to complex nature of anxiety in psychology scope, there are many definitions regarding this issue. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined FL anxiety as "a distinct complex of self perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128). Horwitz et al. (1986) describe three components of foreign language anxiety, as communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation and test anxiety. Language learning situations are particularly susceptible to anxiety arousal (Price, 1991). As an example, Horwitz and Young (1991) discovered amazing amount of anxiety experienced by .The majority of researches consider anxiety in its general scope or for instance with some skills such as listening, speaking and to some extent reading and writing. According to this study, a kind of language specified anxiety, reading anxiety is considered with a psychological factor, locus of control as an important aspect of personality, among English majored Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' (prospective language teachers)

Research on language anxiety shows that, it plays a detrimental role in the students' performance and achievements in language learning. The majority of language learners have been reported to suffer from some degree of language anxiety that hinders the learning process and impedes their success in mastering the language. Therefore, an identification of the precise role of anxiety in the learning process, the way it debilitates the students and the way it can be prevented are all of paramount importance. Anxiety is one of the crucial affective barriers that the majority of language learners are reportedly afflicted with. Understanding the nature of anxiety in different areas of language skills and its relationship with other psychological factors is a major issue. An interesting question to look at as far as reading is concerned is the possible link between reading anxiety and locus of control. This will be a central area of concern in this research.

This research will be concerned with the relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' (prospective language teachers) reading anxiety and their locus of control. In this study, the researcher touches upon possible relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control in a quantitative study carried out by means of two questionnaires. The first one used in this study is FLRAS, developed by Saito, Garza, and Horwitz, (1999). It includes 20 questions that are assessed on a 5-point Likert Scale, and the second questionnaire used in this study is internal control index, that is comprised of 28 items designed to measure where a person looks

for, or expects to obtain, reinforcement, and each item is scored in a 5-point scale from A (rarely) to E (usually). The second questionnaire refers to internal Control Index. It was developed and tested using several samples of junior college, university undergraduate, and continuing education students.

The present study is based upon and guided by the four research questions presented below:

1. Is there a relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' (prospective language teachers) reading anxiety and locus of control?
2. Is there a relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' (prospective language teachers) reading anxiety and external locus of control?
3. Is there a relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' (prospective language teachers) reading anxiety and internal locus of control?
4. Does gender have any major effect on the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control among Iranian Intermediate EFL learners?

2. Review of literature

2.1. Foreign language and Reading Anxiety researches

Learning a foreign language can be quite a challenging task. One principal question in second language acquisition theory is why some people are more successful at learning a second language than other people. Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning. In earlier studies researchers believed that not only, oral activities are not the only class activities that provoke language anxiety, but also, it is common to associate foreign language anxiety with the oral aspects of language performance. Although speaking skill has received more attention from researcher, and anxiety experienced in the classroom has been observed to be the major caused by tasks that are oral in nature, other skills such as reading and writing can make anxiety in language learners.

Chastain (1975) considered anxiety and it's relation to achievements of German and Spanish students who studied French in a traditional way, and he found a positive correlation between these two variables. In addition, this study is against the other one, that considered these variables on other condition referred to students who studied by modern method based on

listening, and it was concluded that this correlation was negative. Backman (1976) in another study investigated anxiety and its influence on the progress of students from Venezuela in English who studied this language in United States, but the conclusion did not refer to any significant relationship between students achievements in different language tests and any of the anxiety measures. Furthermore Swain and Burnaby (1976) considered anxiety in their study, and found a negative correlation between anxiety and the children's skills in French, but they could not find any correlation between anxiety and other skill measures. Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977) by comparing beginning, intermediate, and advanced students of French before and after an intensive language course, mention that, the highest level of anxiety is shown by the beginners and the least by the advanced students, and they suggest anxiety levels increase at the early stages of language learning, and by increasing the proficiency level , decrease.

From the cognitive prospective, human beings are limited in their attention and processing capacity (Shiffrin and Schneider, 1977), and Since attention is an aspect that reading skill as a cognitive process involved in the coordination of attention, memory, perception and comprehension process, in addition to some factors such as language ability, cultural background and learner motivation, is dependent to it, the occurrence of language anxiety causes some diminishes in the amount of attention that the learner has to dedicate to learning task itself (Eysenck,1992, Sarason,1988), then there is an assumption that language anxiety has an effect on reading process. According to cognitive approach, by increasing the level of anxiety, attention is directed away from reading process. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) suggest a kind of anxiety that is only referred to learning another language and calls it foreign language anxiety. For this kind of anxiety, they prepared and developed FLCAS to measure the level of anxiety in foreign language students. Sparks, Ganschow and colleagues criticized foreign language classroom anxiety scale (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986), used to measure student's anxiety in learning a foreign language. By comparing students respond to FLCAS with the other measures such as trait anxiety measure, Horwitz et al. (1986) concluded that, Foreign Language Anxiety is discriminated from other constructs, and there is a negative relationship between this variable and grades in foreign language courses.

There are not many researches on the scope of reading anxiety and its effect on reading comprehension, because most of the time the role of anxiety is considered in oral communicative situations. Saito, Garza, and Horwitz (1999) introduced reading anxiety as an independent

construct from general language anxiety. They found out that while general foreign language had been found to be independent of target language, levels of reading anxiety varied by target language, and were dependent to the writing system of the language being learned. According to them reading anxiety has caused by 2 factors of unfamiliar scripts and writing systems and unfamiliar cultural material are the main causes of reading anxiety. The first one refers to sound symbol correspondence and the less reliable this correspondence, the more anxiety the reader is exposed to, and the second one refers to this fact that anxiety does not occur immediately, but when the reader tries to encode the text and realizes that the decoded words do not constitute a comprehensible message, then he begins to experience anxiety (Saito et al., 1999, p.203).

The study conducted by Ghonsooly (2003) on reading anxiety revealed a comparison between the two well known international English tests, IELTS and TOEFL, considering the degree of anxiety test takers expose during taking them. The results indicated that novice readers had the most anxiety and that the IELTS is generally a more anxiety provoking test than the TOEFL, in addition this case was so obvious in female society.

2.2.   Locus of control and different perspectives

Locus of control is a concept that was developed by Rotter in 1954, and refers to a person's beliefs about control over life events. He believes that, persons with internal locus of control have two characteristics - high in achievement motivation, and low in outer-directedness. This was the basis of the locus of control scale proposed by Rotter in 1966; although this was actually based on Rotter's (1954) belief that locus of control is a uni-dimensional construct. According to Levenson (1973) who makes some debates on uni-dimentional nature of locus of control, different dimensions of locus of control (belief that events in one's life are self-determined, are organized by powerful others and are due chance-based) must be separated. Weiner's (1974) early work in the1970s, suggested that, differences between those who are attributed to stable causes, and those who are attributed to unstable causes are essential factors that must be considered (Weiner, 1974). This meant that, attributions could be ability (an internal, stable cause), effort (an internal unstable cause), task difficulty (an external stable cause) or luck (an external, unstable cause). In Other studies by Lefcourt and Siegel (1970), lefcourt and Telegdi (1971), lefcourt, Gronnerud , and Mcdonald (1973) , it is concluded that learners possess internal locus of control are more deliberate , sensitive, active, exclusive in intrusive thoughts and concentration, verbally fluent and more humorous, but less dogmatic, and on the other study,

according to Haanstand (1978), learners with external locus of control are eager to put more value on any trait that resulted in more influence by them on their surroundings.

Some people believe that, it is their responsibility to control everything happened around them, as an example, university students with strong internal locus of control believe their abilities and efforts that control their grade, but others think that, everything positive or negative, happens to them refers to others actions; for example, students possess external locus of control believe that, their grades are the result of good or bad luck, and hence, they are less likely to work hard for high grades. The first one is called internal locus of control and the second one refers to external locus of control. It is one of the most significant factors in determining people's motivation to act in various ways and retaining their interest and involvement (Findely and Cooper 1983).

According to Findley and Cooper (1983), peoples with more internal beliefs are referred to feeling of being in control of events, that causes greater academic achievements, and this relationship is stronger in males than females. Those people with high internality or internal locus of control are those who show a great deal of persistence and willingness to delay rewards in order to maximize them, and they are completely eager to find information for solving different problems. On the other hand, those possess external locus of control are more passive, compliant and inattentive (Wang, 1983). Smith (1986) in his research on 43000 high school sophomore and senior students regarding locus of control found out that, this factor can be considered as a major predictor of reading achievements and grade point average. Lewis and Lawrence- Patterson (1989) investigated different kinds of locus of control by comparing learning disabled children with non disabled children. The results indicate that, those children possess disability in language learning are more external or they possessed external locus of control than internal. In addition they found out that this externality is discovered by their parents rather than their teacher. In some situations, people think that, they are between these two extremes, but it is clear that, ultimately, they are involved in one of this continuum.

According to the studies performed of anxiety it can be conclude that anxiety is of different forms and has been demonstrated to have different sources. In language teaching and learning, it is primarily concerned with foreign language anxiety as a distinct form of anxiety, distinguishable from general anxiety. Since, there is unanimity among all researchers and teaching practitioners in maintaining that, anxiety can have a harmful effect on the students'

learning, using various teaching methods and approaches that make learning a more enjoyable and less anxious activity by proposing techniques and procedures that could hopefully alleviate the fear and anxiety experienced by students in the classroom can be helpful. Much of the anxiety felt by students is due to the particular methodology used in class, but other factors such as teacher's personality factors and the type of activities the students engage in, as well as personal factors and attributes related to the learners themselves can contribute to foreign language anxiety. There is a large body of research about different kinds of anxiety and those referred to specific skills, however, there are many dubious points regarding the other factors affect the level of reading anxiety or generally, language specific anxiety, the role of language teacher in arousing or alleviating feelings of stress and tension in class and the ways that show how anxious students can be assisted in the skill of reading. On the other hand , many researchers conducted different investigations on the realm of anxiety by examining individuals with different majors; accordingly, this study that examined a specific kind of anxiety, reading anxiety and a personality factor, locus of control, on prospective English language teachers, provided some beneficial solutions for future language teachers who can eventually using different methods and techniques regarding the type of locus of control and the level of anxiety put everything under the control. In addition, they could use different techniques and activities to prepare the best opportunities for the students regarding their achievements. Doing this research by considering reading anxiety with locus of control as a psychological factor can through more light on the nature of these factors, and possibly the way they should be tackle in the realm of SLA.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The subjects taking part in this research were prospective language teachers learning teaching English at a private university, Tabaran, in Mashhad, Iran. The total number of participants was 107, but certain subjects were omitted due to their unsuitability. The selected society included junior intermediate learners of English. It is important to note that these learners did not belong to any single age group. The participants in the study were at different ages, with the youngest participant 19 years of age, and the oldest 38. Both men and women were included in the study,

but women were the majority, 64 learners were female and 36 learners were male. It should be noted that the subjects had the same academic background.

3.2. Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this quantitative research. The first measurement scale was FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) originally developed by Satio, et al, in 1999 and that it is made up of 20 questions, measured using a Likert scale, and the second one was ICI (internal control index), a 28-item instrument designed by Duttweiler (1984) to measure where a person looks for, or expects to obtain, reinforcement, containing two factors as self-confidence, and called autonomous behavior (behavior independent of social pressure), which were administered together. The time set for both questionnaires was 30 minutes. In the following two subsections, the two instruments used in the study are described in detail.

4. Data analysis

In this research, the main hypothesis was based on the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control, however, before analyzing the relationship between these variables, it was logical to become sure about the consistency of the questionnaires used throughout this research. The reliability of the tests was computed using Cronbach Alpha Formula, internal consistency between items was calculated, and the obtained results for both questionnaires, FLRAS and ICI, show an internal consistency of .85 for FLRAS and .73 for ICI, based on a sample of 100 participants. According to the mentioned results; it is revealed that the items of these scales were sufficiently reliable to estimate the degree of reading anxiety and locus of control.

The researcher used descriptive statistics to summarize data and describe the entire variables. In this part measure of central tendency, variability and distribution index are considered.

Table1. Descriptive statistic for reading anxiety, locus of control and its categories

		Locus of control	External locus of control	Internal locus of control	Reading anxiety
N	Valid	78	80	80	94
	Missing	22	20	20	6
Mean		100/13	47/7125	3/1250	55/2553

Median		101	49	3	56
Mode		98(a)	50	3	69
Std/deviation		12/951	8/25725	1/15150	11/61750
Variance		167/724	68/18212	1/32595	134/96637
Skewness		-/283	/4640-	/3010-	/2290-
Kurtosis		/1460	/0620-	/4620-	/3790-
Minimum		66	28	1	28
Maximum		128	65	5	83
percentiles	10	80	35	1	40/5000
	25	91	43	3	47
	50	101	49	3	56
	75	108	52/7500	4	64/2500

4.1.Investigating the shape of distribution regarding main variables:

Examining the shape of variables distribution has been done using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the results have been summarized as follow:

Table 2: Test of normality for quantitative variable

Quantitative index of reading anxiety	Quantitative index of external/L	Quantitative index of internal /L	Quantitative index of locus of control	
.852	.907	.511	.502	Kolmogorov -Smirnov Z
.462	.383	.956	.963	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)

Investigating the shape of distribution regarding all variables in this research indicates that all four quantitative indexes had a normal distribution (sig>0/05). Therefore, examining the statistical relationship between variables, the parametric test has been used.

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control.

Before analyzing this hypothesis, the relationship between two variables of reading anxiety and locus of control   by using two way frequency table has been analyzed. The results have been summarized as follow:

Table 3: Two way frequency

Total	Qualitative index of reading anxiety						
	S/A	A	Neither D/nor A	D	S/D		
100.0 %		66.7%	33.3%			S/W	
100.0 %	9.1%	45.5%	18.2%	27.3%		W	
100.0 %	3.7%	22.2%	48.1%	25.9%		Moderate	Qualitative index of locus of control
100.0 %		18.2%	22.7%	40.9%	18.2%	S	
100.0 %		18.2%		54.5%	27.3%	V/S	
100.0 %	2.7%	25.7%	28.4%	33.8%	9.5%	Total	

 According to table 3, 66.7 percent of participants who had weak and low degree of locus of control, also had great level of anxiety. In addition, 54.5 percent of participants with a complete control or great locus of control had also low level of stress. To estimate the degree of significance in this relationship, Pearson correlation coefficient has been used, and the results have been summarized as follow.

Table 4: Correlation between locus of control and reading anxiety

Quantitative index of reading anxiety		
-0/515	Pearson correlation coefficient	Quantitative index of
0/000	Level of	

	significance	locus of control
74	Frequency	

According to table 4, there is a strong reverse or negative correlation between reading anxiety and locus of control. P-value has been calculated as -0.515 and the significance level is less than 0.05. In other words, the more and the greater control individuals benefit, the less and lower level of anxiety they expose to.

Hypothesis 2: there is no meaningful relationship between External locus of control and Reading anxiety:

To analyze whether there is a meaningful relationship between external correlation and reading anxiety, Pearson correlation coefficient has been used and the results have been summarized as follow:

Table 5: Correlation between reading anxiety and external locus of control

Quantitative index of locus of control		
-0/461	Pearson correlation coefficient	Quantitative index of external locus of control
0/000	Level of significance	
76	Frequency	

According to table 5, there is a meaningful reverse or negative relationship between external locus of control and reading anxiety. P-value has been calculated as -0.461 that is less than α=0.05. In other words, the more the degree of external locus of control, the less the level of reading anxiety.

Hypothesis 3: There is no meaningful relationship between reading anxiety and internal locus of control.

To investigate and estimate the meaningful relationship between these two variables, Pearson correlation coefficient has been used and the obtained results have been summarized as follow.

Table 6: correlation between reading anxiety and internal locus of control

Quantitative index of reading anxiety		
-0/295	Pearson correlation coefficient	Quantitative index of internal/L
0/004	Level of significance	
92	Frequency	

According to table 6, there is a weak and reverse or negative linear relationship between internal locus of control and reading anxiety. The result indicates that, P-value is equal to -0.295 and smaller than α=0.05. In other words, the more and the greater the internal locus of control individuals benefit, the less the degree of anxiety they expose.

Hypothesis 4: Gender does not have any effect on the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control.

To analyze the role of gender on the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control, the partial correlation coefficient has been used; then, the difference between these quantities indicates the effect of moderator variable.

Table 7: The effect of gender on the relationship between reading anxiety and Locus of control

Quantitative index of reading anxiety		
-0/551	Pearson correlation coefficient	Locus of control
0/000	Level of significance	
71	Frequency	

Comparing the mentioned result with Pearson correlation coefficient result (analyzed in the first hypothesis)   indicates 0.04 percent change regarding the (r). In other words, gender does not have any effect on the relationship between the mentioned variables.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The present study is an attempt to address issues concerning reading anxiety and locus of control among EFL learners. This study provides a definition of reading anxiety and addresses the questions of whether reading anxiety or a kind of skill-specific anxiety has any relationship with locus of control and its different dimensions, internal and external locus of control. According to Seller (2000), anxiety is a complex psychological construct consisting of many variables…in its simplest form, anxiety can be associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, insecurity, or apprehension and is intricately intertwined with self esteem issues and natural ego-preserving fears , and Foreign language anxiety is a distinct complex of self perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. According to the different researches in the scope of general language anxiety, foreign language anxiety and skill-specific anxiety, there are various controversies and evidences that show the different possible sources of anxiety, the relationship between anxiety and different subject matters, such as personal attributes, or language skills and the different ways to overcome or reduce the degree of anxiety. The majority of researches revealed that oral production skills such as speaking are the most anxiety evoking skills. Individuals, especially in the primitive stages of learning expose to this kind of anxiety because of the apprehension of peer evaluation, the existence of competitive feelings…

Most of the researches and investigations on the scope of anxiety are conducted according to the quantitative techniques, and there are no more researches which consider this issue according to qualitative techniques such as interview, dairy and journals. Studies conducted quantitatively could not reflect the actual nature of anxiety, because it is a personality factor that could not be defined, estimate and manipulate only according to some assumptions concluded according to the quantitative techniques. According to a qualitative research conducted by Price (1991), results indicate individual mental reflections about the nature, sources and the problems originated from anxiety, that are different with the previous investigations. According to this research, by interviewing the students, results revealed that the instruction had a major role in

provoking anxiety, that was because of teacher's behavior, criticizing students, walking around the classroom in an un-amicable way, and the restricted time dedicated to the process of learning. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) considered anxiety as a resulted of repeated, negative experience with the second language. In addition Saito, Garza and Horwitz (1999), according to their research on foreign language reading anxiety claimed that reading anxiety is a result of actual difficulties in text processing rather than reading difficulties stemmed from anxiety reactions. They showed that, foreign language measured by FLCAS is distinguished from reading anxiety that is measured by FLRAS. Both of these researches were an objection to the research conducted by Spark and Ganshow (1995a), according to this fact that, the mentioned research considered language anxiety as a cause of differences in student's language skills.

MacIntyre & Gardner (1989) claimed that communicative apprehension and social evaluation anxiety has a negative effect on production. Some other researchers such as Jackson (2002) and Oh (1992) stated that the anxiety is provoked when learners try to express their ideas effortlessly, because they believe that they are enable to do it, in other words because of the low degree of self esteem and exposing to some confusions, they become anxious, then anxiety in this research is defined as a result not a cause for deficiencies in language learning. Accordingly, this one supports the other researchers conducted by Saito et al. (1999) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1986).

According to the research performed by Kunt (2001), the concluded results show a sort of similarity with other previous researches regarding the effect of language anxiety on Turkish speaking prospective English language teachers, but actually the level of anxiety estimated in this research was lower than the results of previous investigations. There is one assumption according to the results, that usually the mentioned anxiety occurs because of some institutional circumstances, but in this research, providing different opportunities such as re-attending the same class if students fail, reduce the anxiety provoked according to this problem, and it is revealed that Turkish students are less anxious comparing to other types of language students(those who study languages without intention to teach them) and subjects in previous studies in this scope.

As it is mentioned earlier, there is not a variety of studies regarding language anxiety and reading comprehension, and the majority of them are restricted to listening and speaking skills, but Abu- Rabia and Argaman (2002) in their research on the effect of anxiety on reading and

writing skills, disclose new facts. The results of their research show that, language anxiety had highly significant but moderate negative correlation with reading comprehension and writing achievement. In addition, this study was an objection to some researches such as the one conducted by Spark et al.(1997) according to the fact that, the results of that research did not show any significant relationship between language anxiety and both of reading comprehension and language achievement.

Since 1970s, different researches have been conducted to find different sources of anxiety and different ways to reduce this affective factor, and according to the obtained results, a variety of methods have been used since that time, but despite using them, anxiety continues to exist in foreign language classroom.

The current research, investigated the degree of the relationship between this affective factor and another factor in the realm of psychology called locus of control. Williams and Burden (1997) stated that, considering the results in different studies shows that, students with internal locus of control, who believe, are more successful than the others with this belief that others are responsible for their success. Different studies indicated that, particular forms of classroom practices can change individual's locus of control, especially for those who has been taught that they could themselves internally control their success in learning. According to this assumption and different researcher done in this scope, it is clear that, locus of control as a psychological factor the same as language anxiety has many effects on language learning, but whether it acts independently or accompanied by other factors is a major question that resulted in conducting current research. The main objective of the study was to understand how reading anxiety and locus of control can be interrelated. Variables, reading anxiety and locus of control, were studied in terms of possible relationship between them.

The present study was a statistical/quantitative study of reading anxiety and its possible relationship with locus of control. Approximately, 100 intermediate students were chosen to take part in this study. The researcher used two instruments: the FLRAS Questionnaire and ICI, Internal Control Index, both in Farsi version. The FLRAS questionnaire was administered to measure the reading anxiety of the participants. In addition, ICI was administered to estimate the degree of locus of control among those learners. Statistical procedures were performed on the FLRAS and ICI scores, which indicated that, there was a strong linear and meaningful negative or reverse relationship between locus of control and reading anxiety. However, by considering

two separate dimensions of locus of control, internal locus of control and the external one , it was revealed that the degree of correlation between them and reading anxiety was not as strong as considering this variable as a whole. As it is indicated in data analysis part the degree of relationship between internal-L and reading anxiety was less than External-L and reading anxiety.

In addition, by considering gender through this study, the result indicates that, gender did not have any considerable effect on the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control. This result by comparing to the other studies such as the one conducted by Findley and Cooper (1983), stated that people with more internal beliefs are referred to feeling of being in control of events, that causes greater academic achievements, and this relationship is stronger in males than females makes some controversies .In the other word, since there is a reverse correlation between the dimensions of locus of control such as internal locus and anxiety, and according to the results of different studies that indicate the nature of changes on locus of control according to the sex, it is dubious that why the results in this study does not support those ones.

Considering various studies regarding anxiety, skill specific anxiety and locus of control, many recommendations can be put into practice in the context of the language classroom. Creating the stress free and amicable atmosphere, and encouraging a sense of collaboration among the learners will definitely help to alleviate much of the tension and apprehension experienced by the more sensitive and anxious individuals. In addition by revealing the type of locus of control they benefit, teachers can modify the methods and techniques to achieve better results regarding the learning process. Since the role of the language teacher in arousing or alleviating feelings of stress in class is unavoidable and the teacher's attitude toward certain language skills can influence the students' view of those particular skills and the importance they attach to learning them, administering some diagnostic tools such as FLRAS and ICI at the beginning of language courses , to identify the amount of learner's reading anxiety and locus of control would probably be helpful for those afflicted with high degree of reading anxiety and the kind of locus of control they benefit resulted in some changes on the level of their anxiety and ultimately better achievement.

Relating research findings to practical applications or solutions in the language classroom may not be easy at all times. Academic research and empirical work in applied linguistics and SLA have long sought to make language teaching/learning an easier and more pleasant

undertaking. There has been some success, but there have been numerous failures too. There is a lot more to L2 reading and its teaching that can ever be covered in one single study. However, certain practical points can be discerned from the present study. These implications will be discussed here in some details. This study found a significant relationship between locus of control and reading anxiety revealed that learners with different kinds of locus of control expose to different degree of reading anxiety in the classroom. The instrument in this study has not been designed to examine the role of the language teacher in the arousal or alleviation of reading anxiety, but it seems likely that part of learners' positive or negative attitude toward reading is indeed shaped by their teacher. Therefore language teachers must be aware of how their personal preferences and beliefs about language learning can shape the student's idea of what it takes to be a successful language learner. Many language learners may feel that they are the only people who feel stressed and apprehensive when dealing with a particular language skill. Measures ought to be taken to educate students and make them aware that anxiety is a prevalent and common problem.

Sharing ideas and experiences with other learners with similar sentiments may help to lessen the severity of the problem, and make anxious students understand that anxiety is a manageable problem not an insurmountable obstacle. Setting workshops for both students and teachers can be resulted in raising awareness about language anxiety and locus of control and its practical solutions should be incorporated into language curriculum. As related measures, it would probably be helpful if language teacher administered the FLRAS and ICI at the beginning of their language courses as a diagnostic tool, which will identify those afflicted with high degrees of reading anxiety and the kind of locus of control they benefit resulted in some changes on the level of their anxiety. Many of the suggestions and the recommendations mentioned in the literature review can be put into practice in the context of the language classroom. Creating the stress free and amicable atmosphere, and encouraging a sense of collaboration among the learners will definitely help to alleviate much of the tension and apprehension experienced by the more sensitive and anxious individuals. In addition by revealing the type of locus of control they benefit, teachers can modify the methods and techniques to achieve better results regarding the learning process.

 Much of the empirical research carried out on language anxiety has been of a quantitative nature. Price (1991) noted that only a small number of the studies in this area have been

conducted through qualitative methods (Baily, 1983). A qualitative method in the study of both of reading anxiety and locus of control gives the researcher the chance to view this psychological construct from the perspective of the subject and as result, make new findings and gain new insight into the matter. The present study examined the relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control quantitatively, but a qualitative phase of study such as utilizing think aloud protocol; analysis can open further in depth analysis of the language anxiety and locus of control construct.

Researchers have long stressed the role of the language instructor in arousing or alleviating feelings of stress and tension in class. It is equally likely that the teacher's ideas and general attitude toward certain language skills can influence the students' view of those particular skills and the importance they attach to learning them. Further studies should look at this matter, and find out whether language teachers do indeed exert any influence in this regard or not.

Researchers should also examine anxiety among language teachers. It is likely that intrinsically anxious teachers negatively influence their students, and induce the same feelings in them. There is probably no evidence are present pointing in that direction, but it is an issue well worth looking at. If future research suggests that there might indeed be such a relationship, and that the teacher's trait or state anxiety might work as a stimulant to provoke similar feelings in students, teacher training and selection will naturally become an even more crucial factor. In conclusion, many more studies should be carried out to enable us to make balanced and accurate judgments on the differences and commonalities between anxious and relaxed readers.

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Title

General English University Students' Self-efficacy and their Achievement

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Abstract

This study is concerned with examining the differences in general English course achievement among university students of humanities, sciences, and engineering. It also explores the effect of self-efficacy in GE course achievement among these three groups of university students. The results of the study indicated that 1. There is a significantly positive relationship between the university students' self-efficacy and their achievement in GE course.2. There are significant differences in GE course achievement among the three groups of students, and 3. There are significant differences in self-efficacy among the three groups of university students. The results of teachers' interviews were also in agreement with those of the

questionnaires. The findings of this study can draw the attention of general English course teachers to the fact that encouraging their students to seek ways to improve their self-efficacy can be really helpful for them to achieve higher scores in general English course.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, General English, Humanities, Engineering, Sciences, achievement.

1. Introduction

Students' inabilities in learning English has been one the important concerns of both English teachers and university students. Although several researchers have proposed useful ways to improve students' language success (Stipek & Weisz, 1981; Weiner, 1979; Bandura, 1977), many Iranian university students are still not able to get higher scores in General English (GE) course. In the 1950s it was supposed that mental ability is the only factor in learning a second language. However, in the 1960s and early 1970s researchers understood that taking into account the mental ability as the unique factor in learning a second language is not reasonable and other factors like affective ones can also play significant roles in this regard. One of these affective factors is self-efficacy in learning a second language. As Bandura (1977) maintained that it predicts students' language behavior better than other affective factors. Bandura (1986) noted that most learners have problems in learning a second/foreign language not because of lack of skills or abilities but due to their doubt in their abilities. Chamot (1993) mentioned that language learners really need to strongly believe in their abilities to improve their language behavior. EFL learners with stable beliefs in their abilities expect to gain higher scores in exams while those who doubt in their abilities doesn't expect to achieve higher scores even before taking exams Chamot (1993).

2. Review of literature

In many countries of the world where English is learned as a foreign language, university students are obliged to pass certain number of English courses as academic requirements. General English is prerequisite for special English courses offered throughout academic years of study for university students. In Iran, GE is characterized by a commitment to pass three credits in a domain-specific fashion in which reading skill is the sole skill which is taught. In essence,

GE courses consist of semi-specific texts designed for students studying for achieving expertise in different academic fields from sciences to engineering and humanities. However, the extent to which these courses result in optimal learning output has been partially examined by several researchers (e.g., Ghonsooly and Pishghadam, 2008). Most of the studies done have criticized the textual and instructional goals of GE courses and have remained oblivious to learner characteristics as a relevant and indispensable factor in GE achievement. Self-efficacy is a recent psychological construct which has been treated as influential and important in achieving learning goals as instructional and textual factors.

Self-efficacy is defined as learners' beliefs in their capability to succeed in executing a task (Bandura, 1986; Bernhardts, 1997). Recently Pejares (2000) has added another characteristic to the above definition which relates to the way students judge their academic competence. As an affective variable, self-efficacy affects our decision, behaviors and attempts when facing challenges (Bandura, 1986). It also affects the degree of anxiety we experience while doing tasks. Accordingly, the way we choose our behavior is affected by self-efficacy. It is maintained that self efficacy is a more consistent predictor of success and achievement than other related variables in as much as students with higher degree of self-efficacy make greater efforts in executing the required task and are more persistent than students with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Pejares, 2000). Self-efficacy influences an individual's emotional reactions. Facing challenges, individuals with low-self efficacy may see the situation more difficult, and more demanding than they are. This may lead to higher degrees of anxiety and stress among individuals and may make them demotivated while facing the challenges. Bandura also refers to four sources of self-efficacy: 1. Mastery experience (our achievements raise our level of self-efficacy), 2.Vicarious experience (other individuals' achievements motivate us to believe that we have the same ability in gaining achievements), 3.Persuasions (what others say can influence our beliefs about our abilities), and 4. Psychological states (anxiety, stress, and fear can influence our behavior).

Bernhardt (1997) describes self-efficacious learners' characteristics as the following: they feel really confident because of the experiences they have gained in solving problems and the approaches they have developed based on those problem solving experiences. Learners with high self-efficacy attribute their achievements to their abilities and efforts, while learners with low self-efficacy underestimate their own abilities and select less challenging tasks. A slightly

different definition is Baron's (2004) who classifies three types of self-efficacy: social self-efficacy, self regulatory self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy. The first one refers to the ability to keep relationships, engage in social activities, and become assertive. The second one refers to the ability to be carious, think carefully, and avoid dangerous activities. Finally, the third one refers to the ability to participate in learning activities and engage in academic programs.

As of now, several researchers have conducted studies on the relationship between self-efficacy concept and language related skills. Wigfield (1994 cited in Pintrich and Schunk, 1996) examined the effect of self-efficacy on school students' achievement in math and English at the beginning and end of school year. The results of their study indicated that self-efficacy was a strong predictor of math and English achievement. Examining the relationship between self-efficacy and use of language learning strategies among ESL pre service teachers in Malaysia, Siew and Wong (2005) found that teachers with higher degrees of self-efficacy reported to use language learning strategies more frequently than those with lower levels of self-efficacy. Moreover, the relationship was examined and endorsed by Magogwe and Oliver (2007) who found that their high self-efficacious primary, secondary, and tertiary school students used more language learning strategies than their low self-efficacious students.

The relationship between self-efficacy and EFL listening achievement was examined by Chen et. al., (2007, cited in Rahimi and Abedini, 2009) and Rahimi and Abedini (2009) who found a significant positive relationship between the EFL learners' self-efficacy and their listening achievement. However, as Siegle (2000) asserts, we need to examine this relationship more specifically. It may be that this relationship is skill-specific in that higher degrees of self-efficacy in reading comprehension may not generate high self- efficacy in listening comprehension. In this regard the only available study which is in contrast to the related literature is that of Cubukcu (2008) who investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety among 100 junior EFL students in Turkey. He found no significant relationship between high and low self-efficacious learners and language learning anxiety.

In spit of the above-mentioned studies and to our best knowledge there are as yet areas of investigation for which either no or few researches have been conducted to examine this relationship. One such area relates to examining the relationship of self-efficacy in EFL learning and GE achievement of university students studying at different disciplines i.e., engineering,

sciences and humanities. This study aims at examining this relationship. Accordingly, the following questions are to be answered in this study:

1. Is there any relationship between self-efficacy and all the selected university students' GE achievement?

2. Are there any differences in GE achievement of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering?

3. Are there any differences in self-efficacy of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering?

Thus, the following research hypotheses are presented:

1. There is no relationship between all the selected university students' self-efficacy and GE achievement.

2. There are no differences in GE achievement of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering.

3. There are no differences in self-efficacy of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

150 university students at faculties of engineering, sciences, and Humanities at Ferdowsi University of Mashad participated in this study. 50 students who were attending their General English Course at each of these three faculties were selected through stratified random sampling. It should also be noted that their participation was quite voluntary. All the participants' age ranged between 19 and 24. They were both male and female.

3.2. Instruments

To measure the participants' self-efficacy, the researchers used the scale used by Rahemi (2007) in her study. Rahemi (2007) first designed 22 questions out of the following questionnaires: BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) and the Persian Adaptation of the General Self-efficacy Scale developed by Nezami et al., (1996). We then calculated the Cranbach's alpha coefficient of the scale revealed to be 82%. A principle component analysis with varimax rotation produced 3 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. The first factor accounted for 25.937of the total variance. It consisted of items related to learners' self-confidence to gain satisfactory results; thus, it was

labeled "Self-confidence". The second factor, which accounted for 23.012 of the total variance, related to learners' perceptions of their efforts and abilities in learning English and their beliefs to cope with possible problems, so it was labeled "Self-efficacy". The third factor, which accounted for 13.848 of the total variance, included items related to learners' encouraging themselves to make learning English easier by trying hard; therefore, it was labeled "Effort to reach goal".

Table.1. Results of factor analysis for Self-efficacy Scale in learning English.

Item	Questionnaire Item	F1	F2	F3
8	به طور کلی، در کلاسهای زبان انگلیسی از اعتماد به نفس بالایی برخوردار هستم.	.773		
5	شخصاً از میزان توانایی خود درزبان انگلیسی راضی هستم.	.747		
2	فکر می کنم که می‌توانم در امتحان پایان ترم زبان انگلیسی نمره دلخواه خود را بدست آورم	.722		
7	اگر در درس انگلیسی خود موفق نشوم ، می‌دانم که به اندازه کافی تلاش نکرده‌ام		.835	
6	کاملاً مطمئن هستم که با تلاش بیشتر می‌توانم توان زبان انگلیسی خود را افزایش بدهم		.731	
4	اطمینان دارم که می توانم مشکلاتی را که در فراگیری زبان انگلیسی با آنها روبرو می‌شوم حل کنم.		.642	
3	فکر می‌کنم که روزی بتوانم به خوبی انگلیسی صحبت کنم		.540	
1	من استعداد خاصی در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی دارم		.517	
10	سعی می‌کنم که به بالاترین توانایی در زبان انگلیسی برسم			.803
9	یادگیری زبان انگلیسی کارساده ای است			.611
	Eigenvalues	3.623	1.624	1.03
	Percentage of Variance	25.937	23.012	13.848
	Cumulative Percentage of Total Variance	25.937	48.949	62.797

Figure 1: Scree plot of factors derived from the principle component analysis of Self-efficacy Scale in learning English
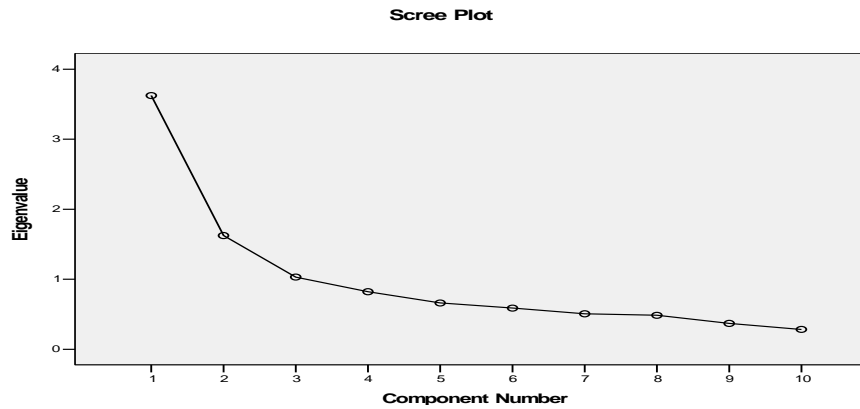
General Point Average (GPA) of the participants GE exams at the second semester of 2008 was used to measure their GE achievement.

3.3. Interview

In order to understand better the differences in GE achievement among the three groups of university students, the second researcher interviewed 7 GE teachers. All the interviews were conducted based on the protocol Rahemi (2007) used in her study. She noted that most of the protocol items were derived from BALLI questionnaire developed by Horwitz (1988) for evaluating teachers' beliefs. Her protocol was designed for students of Humanities; thus, for the purpose of this study the researcher eliminated or edited some items (see appendix C).

3.4. Data collection

Before distributing the questionnaires to the participants of the study, they were briefly informed about aims, importance, and possible implications the results of this study may have for both teachers and students. They first answered the demographic questions at the beginning of the questionnaire and then responded to the main questions concerning their self-efficacy in learning English in about 15 minute.

3.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were put into Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to be analyzed. The Pearson product moment formula was used to answer the first question. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent t-tests were used to answer the second and third questions.

4. Results

To answer the first question concerning the relationship of all selected university students' self-efficacy and their GE achievement, the Pearson product moment formula was used. Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.75 which is significant at $p<0.01$.

Table 1: The relationship between university students' self-efficacy and their GE achievement.

Correlations

		Self-efficacy	GE
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	88	150
GE	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	100

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

To answer the second question concerning the differences in GE achievement of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering, first the difference in GE achievement among the university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering was analyzed. Table 2 shows that mean scores of the three groups of university students in GE course is significant at $p<0.05$. The analysis of variance showed just the difference among the three groups, but in order to understand better the differences between each pair, independent t-tests were used. As table 3 shows, the mean score of Engineering students is 16.68 and that of Sciences students is 14.50. Table 4 demonstrates whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not. The table demonstrates that the difference in mean scores is significant at $P<0.05$ and students of Engineering have higher scores than students of Sciences in GE. Table 5 indicates that GE mean score of Engineering students is 16.68 and that of Humanities students is 12.36. Table 6 shows whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not. The table demonstrates that the difference in mean scores between students of the two groups is significant at $p< 0.05$. Table 7 shows that the Sciences students' mean score is 14.50 and that of Humanities students is 12.360. Table 8 shows whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not. Table 9 shows that the difference in mean scores between the two groups of university students is significant at $p<0.05$.

Table 2: Comparing GE mean scores of the three groups of students.

ANOVA

GE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	466.573	2	233.287	39.467	.000
Within Groups	868.900	147	5.911		
Total	1335.473	149			

Table 3: Comparing GE mean scores of university students of Engineering with that of students of Sciences

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GA	Engineering	50	16.6800	2.28964	.32380
	Sciences	50	14.5000	2.31455	.32733

Table 4: Determining the significance of GE mean score difference between students of Engineering and Sciences.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
GE	Equal variances assumed	.53	.468	4.735	98	.000	2.18000	.46043	1.26630	3.09370
	Equal variances not assumed			4.735	97.989	.000	2.18000	.46043	1.26630	3.09370

Table 5: Comparing GE mean score of Engineering students with that of humanities.

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GE	Engineering	50	16.6800	2.28964	.32380
	Humanities	50	12.3600	2.67078	.37771

Table 6: Determining the significance of GE mean score difference between students of Humanities and Engineering.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
						Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df				Lower	Upper
GE	Equal variances assumed	.545	.462	8.68 3	98	.000	4.32000	.49750	3.33272	5.30728
	Equal variances not assumed			8.68 3	95.765	.000	4.32000	.49750	3.33243	5.30757

Table 7: Comparing GE mean scores of Sciences students with that of Humanities students.

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GE	Sciences	50	14.5000	2.31455	.32733
	Humanities	50	12.3600	2.67078	.37771

Table 8: Determining the significance of GE mean score difference between students of Sciences and Engineering

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
GE	Equal variances assumed	.015	.904	8.683	98	.000	2.14000	.49980	1.14816	3.13184	
	Equal variances not assumed			8.683	96.058	.000	2.14000	.49980	1.14790	3.13210	

In order to answer the third research question, the mean score difference in self-efficacy among the three groups of students was analyzed through ANOVA. Table 9 demonstrates that difference in self-efficacy mean scores of the three groups of students is significant. Generally, engineering students have the highest mean score in self-efficacy and Humanities students have the lowest mean score. In order to understand better the differences between each pair, independent t-tests were used. The above table demonstrates that mean score of Engineering students is 32.82 and that Humanities students is 25.22. Table 11 shows whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not.

Table 9: Comparing self-efficacy mean scores of the three groups of students

ANOVA

Self-efficacy

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6519.853	2	3259.927	318.445	.000
Within Groups	1504.840	147	10.237		
Total	8024.693	149			

Table 10: Comparing self-efficacy mean score of Engineering students with that of Sciences students

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-efficacy	Engineering	50	32.8200	3.68499	.52114
	Sciences	50	25.2200	3.44810	.48763

Table 11: Determining the significance of Self-efficacy mean scores between the two groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
GE	Equal variances assumed	.131	.718	10.649	98	.000	7.60000	.71370	6.18368	9.01632
	Equal variances not assumed			10.649	97.570	.000	7.60000	.71370	6.18360	9.01640

As the above table shows, the difference in self-efficacy mean scores between the two groups is significant at p<0.05. Table 12 shows that Engineering students' mean score is 32.82 and that Humanities students is 16.68. Table 13 shows whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not. As table 13 shows, the difference in self-efficacy mean scores is significant at p<0.05. Engineering students have higher self-efficacy scores than Humanities students. Table 14 shows that Sciences students have a mean score of 25.22 in self-efficacy which is higher than that of Humanities students (16.68). Table 15 shows whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not. The table indicates that the mean score difference in self-efficacy between the two groups is significant at p<0.05. Students of Humanities have lower self-efficacy scores than Science students. A capsule description of the result of the study is presented in the following

Figure. Table 12

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-efficacy	Engineering	50	32.8200	3.68499	.52114
	Sciences	50	16.6800	2.28964	.32380

Comparing self-efficacy mean score Humanities students with that of Engineering

Table 13. Determining the significance of self-efficacy mean scores between the two groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
GE	Equal variances assumed	4.418	.031	26.306	98	.000	7.60000	.71370		14.92245	17.35755
	Equal variances not assumed			26.306	81.927	.000	7.60000	.71370		14.91946	17.35755

Table 14: Comparing self-efficacy mean score of Sciences with that of Humanities students.

Group Statistics

	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-efficacy	Sciences	50	25.2200	3.44810	.48763
	Humanities	50	16.6800	2.28964	.32380

Table 15: Determining the significance of self-efficacy mean scores between students of Sciences and Humanities

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
						Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df				Lower	Upper
GE	Equal variances assumed	3.406	.068	14.590	98	.000	8.54000	.58535	7.37839	9.70161
	Equal variances not assumed			14.590	85.178	.000	8.54000	.58535	7.37620	9.70380

High self-efficacy   Low self-efficacy
(higher GE achievement)   (lower GE achievement)

Engineering   Sciences   Humanities
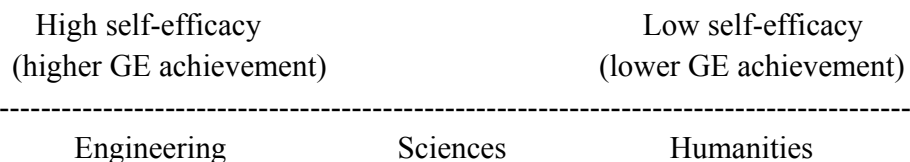
Figure 2: The schematic representation of self-efficacy in EFL learning and GE achievement among different disciplines.

4.1. The results of the interview

On the qualitative side, the findings of the interviews with GE teachers were in agreement with those of the questionnaires. Content analysis of the interviews showed that 80% of the teachers believed that university students of Humanities are less successful then the other students in GE course. 5 teachers noted that they use different teaching methods for different groups of university students based on their teaching experiences. One teacher said "General English teachers may use different methods of teaching because they have different attitudes towards the three groups of students' abilities". 4 teachers believed that GE teachers mostly have different attitudes towards the abilities of university students with different majors in GE. "This difference

in attitudes may root in high school because in high school students choose their major based on the scores they have gained in junior high school and also the first year of high school. So, most humanities students had to study this major due to their low scores." said one teacher. Five teachers mentioned that Humanities students do not spend much time and effort in doing homework and the GE tasks. One of the teachers said "compared with students of Engineering and Sciences, students of Humanities do not make much effort in studying English and this may affect GE teachers' attitudes towards these students' abilities. Another one said "when we directly talk to Humanities students about their weak performance, we found that they underestimate their abilities. They pointed out that both external factors like educational plans and affective factors such as self-efficacy can play important roles for university students to improve their GE courses. One teacher said "unfortunately because good chances for improving English were not provided at high school for university students, most of them especially students of Humanities did not believe in their abilities in learning English."

5. Discussion

The results of the first question indicating a positive relationship between self-efficacy and GE achievement corroborated those of Wigfield's (1994, cited in Pintrich and Schung,1996) study. As it was previously mentioned in the literature, Wigfield (1994) concluded that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of students' English achievement. Chen (2007cited in Rahimi and Abedini, 2009) found a significant positive relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and their listening proficiency. The results of this study and the previous studies can be explained in light of the strategies students with high and low levels of self-efficacy use while learning English. As Siew and Wing (2005) and Magogwe and Oliver (2007) indicated highly self-efficacious learners use more effective learning strategies than those with lower levels of self-efficacy. It is possible to infer from the results of this study that Engineering and Sciences students might have used more effective strategies in learning English than students of Humanities although this has not explicitly been shown in this study. The differences in self-efficacy among the three groups of students may have been due to the factors that influence self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). For example, the experiences the students of each group have had in learning English, the models they had chosen for their English improvement, or the influences they had received from their teachers all may have affected the students' self-efficacy and consequently their GE achievement.

This is generally endorsed by studies in learning and cognition which have confirmed that affective factors play important roles in EFL learning (Hilgard, 1963 *inter alia*). It is maintained in the literature that an individual' emotion, motivation and behaviors all depend on his/her self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy can differentiate good language learners from those with poor performance. The results of this study highlight the important role of self-efficacy in GE course of university students.

It is important to note that learning should not be viewed from a single dimension, i.e., attributing failures and success to the psychological factors only. As was mentioned in the interview section of the study, GE teachers see their humanities students differently. As they maintained in their interview, they look down on their English language abilities. Undoubtedly, this might exert influence on the students' outlook and vision of English learning. The findings of this study showed that university students of Humanities have the lowest level of self-efficacy. The fact that high self-efficacy can lead to high achievement in GE course can influence teachers' efforts in improving Humanity students' self-efficacy. GE teachers can take significant steps to stabilize Humanities students' beliefs in their abilities in learning English. Moskowitz (1981) pointed out the activities which reinforce the affective side of individuals play important role in stabilizing their beliefs about their abilities. Bernhardt (1997) also asserted that repeating sentences like "I can" can influence the individuals' efforts while doing demanding activities.

This study to the best knowledge of the present researchers is one of the first exploratory investigations addressing self-efficacy in EFL learning among three distinct disciplines of EFL learners studying within Iranian education system. The result of factor analysis producing three distinct factors namely, 'self-efficacy', 'self-confidence' and 'effort to reach goal' emphasizes the importance of individual attempts on the part of language learners to achieve learning goals which were shown to be of different importance among the three disciplines of the target population of this study. We made it clear that individual achievement is closely related to self-confidence and being determined to reach learning goals. This last point is strongly supported by recent advances in the psychology of expert performance mainly advocated by Ericsson's theory of deliberate practice (2006). The theory lays down several important premises the most important of which are strong desire to reach learning goals and a strong commitment represented in monotonous repetition of task to reach optimal performance. In a recent empirical study, Gardner, et al. (1997) referred to motivation as the individual's attitudes, desires and **effort** (our

emphasis) to learn the L2 that is measured by three scales: (a) attitudes toward learning the language, (b) desire to learn the language, and (c) motivational intensity.
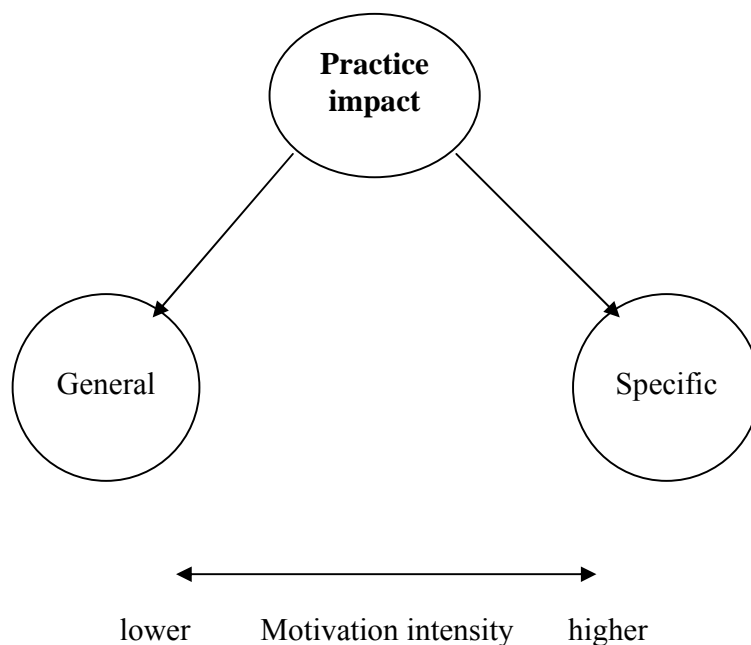
Figure 3. The hypothetical relationship between practice impact and motivation intensity as hypothesized by the present researchers.

No doubt, acquisition of a foreign language appears to depend among other things on two fundamental pillars: practice and motivation. Studies that show the impact of practice on the attainment of second language skills (Ellis, 1994; Taguchi, 1997; Ioup, 1995) can be generally categorized into two sets: those that exert general impact and those producing specific impact. Whether the impact is general or specific relates to the degree of motivation intensity (see figure 3). Getting insight from what was mentioned above, one important strategy to improve self-efficacy of weak learners is to motivate them to learn and give them proper feedback to improve their learning through appropriate practice, an important notion which is fully explored in the theory of deliberate practice by Ericsson and Lehmann (1996).

6. Conclusion

This study began with the idea of examining the relationship between self-efficacy and General English achievement of three different groups of students learning English at different

disciplines. All the null hypotheses of the study were rejected and significant differences were detected between levels of self-efficacy of the students in the study. It was also shown that self-efficacy is a determining factor in differentiating General English achievement of the subjects of the study. This study has generated several implications. We need to examine the relationship of self-efficacy and EFL learners' gender, language learning strategies, motivation, and anxiety. Future studies need to use a more triangulated methodology specifically verbal report data to shed more light on the kind of strategies self-efficacious learners use in contrast to those of non self-efficacious ones. This has to be conducted across different disciplines.

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Appendix A

Self-efficacy Scale

Dear student:
Below are beliefs and feelings that some people have about learning foreign languages. Read the Statement and then decide if you:
(5) Strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree.
There are no right or wrong answers. Mark your ideas in the answer sheet.

1. I have got a special ability for learning English.
1   2   3   4   5
2. I believe I have the power to get my desired grade in English final exam.
1   2   3   4   5
3. I think that someday I will speak English very well.
1   2   3   4   5
4. I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English because I've got the power to do it.
1   2   3   4   5
5. Personally, I'm satisfied with my current level of English proficiency.
1   2   3   4   5
6. I'm definitely sure that I can improve my English by trying more.
1   2   3   4   5
7. If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort.
1   2   3   4   5
8. Generally speaking, my self –confidence in English classes is high.
1   2   3   4   5
9. Learning English is a very easy task.
1   2   3   4   5
10. I try to study English to reach the highest level of ability in it.
1   2   3   4   5

Appendix B

The Persian Translation of the Self-efficacy Scale

جنسیت :   سطح آموزشی :   سن:

سابقه یادگیری زبان:

1- من استعداد خاصی در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی دارم.

2- فکر می کنم که می‌توانم در امتحان پایان ترم زبان انگلیسی نمره دلخواه خود را بدست آورم.

<div dir="rtl">

3- فکر می‌کنم که روزی بتوانم به خوبی انگلیسی صحبت کنم.

4- اطمینان دارم که می توانم مشکلاتی را که در فراگیری زبان انگلیسی با آنها روبرو می‌شوم حل کنم.

5- شخصاً از میزان توانایی خود درزبان انگلیسی راضی هستم.

6- کاملاً مطمئن هستم که با تلاش بیشتر می‌توانم توان زبان انگلیسی خود را افزایش بدهم.

7- اگر در درس انگلیسی خود موفق نشوم ، می‌دانم که به اندازه کافی تلاش نکرده‌ام.

8- به طور کلی، در کلاسهای زبان انگلیسی از اعتماد به نفس بالایی برخوردار هستم.

9- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی کارساده ای است.

10- سعی می‌کنم که به بالاترین توانایی در زبان انگلیسی برسم.

</div>

Appendix C
Interview Protocol For Teachers

Date:……………..
Background Information
Name: ……………
Years of experience: …………..
Contact phone: ………….
Teacher views
1. Is your teaching methodology the same for the students of the three majors? (explain)
2. Are you satisfied with the results of your work with the three majors?
3. How different is your feeling while teaching to the three majors?
4. What was your own major when you were a high school student? Could you please tell me about your own experiences as a student?
5. How do you evaluate the attitudes of most English teachers towards teaching English to the students of the three fields of study?
6. Having a choice, which major would you prefer to teach to?
7. Based on your teaching experiences, what do you think the reasons for the low achievement of humanities learners in English are? What do you suggest for improving their English achievement?

Title

The Effect of Morphological Awareness on Vocabulary Knowledge of Iranian High School Students

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Abstract

One potential vocabulary learning strategy is the use of morphological awareness which refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate the morphemic structure of words. An awareness of morphology begins in early childhood through adolescence. Two key aspects of morphological awareness are: analytic and synthetic word formation. Morphologically complex words are produced by attaching inflectional or derivational forms to base forms. This study investigated how morphological awareness influences the vocabulary knowledge of Iranian high school students. To conduct the study, the researcher assigned 60 intermediate female students to two homogeneous groups according to their morphological knowledge. Then, the instruction about prefixes, suffixes, and roots of the words were given to the experimental group. They were taught how to segment complex words into their components and made new words from those segments. The ANCOVA test results indicated that the students' performance on post-test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test had significant difference with the performance of the students in the control

group. Based on the results of the present study, it is suggested to implement morphological awareness as a vocabulary learning strategy in language classrooms.

1. Introduction

If syntax or grammar is the overall structure of the building, then vocabulary is the bricks that are to be fitted into that structure. No linguist today would seriously contest the fact that, quantitatively, vocabulary dominates in the language field and that vocabulary acquisition is the main obstacle to language acquisition (Ma, 2009).Vocabulary is not an optional or unimportant part of a foreign language (Milton, 2009). According to Nation (2001) vocabulary is a key part of any language-teaching program and vocabulary learning is one sub-goal of a range of goals that are important in the language classroom.

Despite the abundance of research on vocabulary acquisition that has been conducted by linguists, psychologists, and theorists of L2 acquisition, there is still no generally accepted theory of vocabulary acquisition. The fact may be partially attributed to the lack of cooperation or agreement among experts (Takac, 2008). One way in which vocabulary learning can be fostered is through the use of learning strategies. These strategies are consciously or unconsciously learned techniques for processing information in order to enhance learning, comprehension, and retention (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

One potential vocabulary learning strategy is the use of morphological awareness to learn novel vocabulary. Morphological awareness is defined as the ability to use the knowledge of word formation rules and the pairings between sounds and meanings (Kuo & Anderson, 2006). Morphological awareness is also defined as the "awareness of and access to the meaning and structure of morphemes in relation to word" (Chang, Wagner, Muse, & Chow, 2005, p., 417). The pervasiveness of morphological structure in the lexicon of many languages suggests that language communities, which are "responsible" for creating a lexicon, find it more helpful to have morphemes as the constituents of words than not to have them.

The topic of morphological awareness in L2 learning has not been widely studied in the international literature. Whereas the domain of morphology has been very popular in research on first language acquisition and the native mental lexicon, it has been largely neglected in the

context of learning a second language (Sandra, 1997). Graves (2004) believes in order to develop the needed vocabulary knowledge, learners should be exposed to various extensive readings, be taught individual words explicitly, and taught strategies to unlock word meaning, and have their word consciousness raised. The concern of the present study is the third component: vocabulary-learning strategies, particularly those related to morphological awareness and the resulting morphological analysis (the realization of morphological awareness).

2. Review of the Related Literature

All languages have a vocabulary, a set of words that is the basis for making and understanding sentences (Miller, 1991 cited in Anglin, 1993). Without some knowledge of that vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible (Anglin, 1993). Words are not isolated units of language, but fit into many interlocking systems and levels. Because of this there are many things to know about any particular word and there are many degrees of knowing (Nation, 2001).

Learning a language is an enormous task. To perform like a native speaker one needs to learn thousands of words, to discover which words can be combined and which cannot, and master many rules of language. It can take years of effort to achieve even basic levels of command and understanding (Milton, 2009). Mastery of the complete lexicon of English (and probably any other language) is beyond not only second language learners but also native speakers. Vocabulary continues to be learned throughout one's lifetime. The grammar of a language is made up of a limited set of rules, but a person is unlikely to ever run out of words to learn (Schmitt, 2000).

Anglin (1993), referring to some previous studies, proposed three approaches in the research literature to the development of vocabulary knowledge:

1) Direct instruction of vocabulary in school

2) Learning words and their meanings from context, especially during reading activities

3) Applying morphological knowledge to infer the meanings of words

According to Templeton and Pikulski (1999) there are four types of knowledge and strategies that enable students to become independent word learners:

1) morphological knowledge

2) effective use of contextual clues

3) the application of morphological and contextual knowledge in a word-learning strategy

4) the role of dictionaries and other word reference books.

The key instructional elements of morphemic analysis are roots, and affixes. The root is "the basic part of a word that usually carries the main component of meaning and that cannot be further analyzed without loss of identity" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, cited in Edwards, Font, Baumann & Boland, 2004, p. 163). Roots can stand alone as words, which are referred to as free morphemes or simply root words (car, run, blue). Roots can also be meaningful parts of words that cannot stand alone. They are referred to as bound morphemes and often take the form of Latin or Greek roots (scribe as in transcribe, and inscribe). An affix is a bound morpheme that changes the meaning or function of a root or stem to which it is attached.

The study of morphology has been approached by two complementary approaches: analytic and synthetic. These approaches reflect two dimensions of learners' morphological knowledge of word formation. The analytic approach is concerned with morpheme identification or breaking words down into its meaningful components. For example, *notebooks* can be recognized as *note-book-s*. Learners can segment different meaningful chunks that constitute a word. The synthetic approach, on the other hand, is concerned with productivity of morphological structure or bringing the smallest pieces (morphemes) together to form words. It is assumed that learners know what the pieces are in order to be able to construct new meaning into words (Mc-Bride-Chang, Wagner, Muse, Chow, & Shu, 2005).

Morphological awareness as a vocabulary learning strategy refers to the awareness of and access to the meaning and structure of morphemes that are part of or related to the word. It includes knowledge of derivational morphology such as prefixes (e.g., the *un-* in *undisciplined* to indicate the antonym of the original, *disciplined*), suffixes (e.g., the *–ion* in *graduation* changes the part of speech of the base word *–graduate* is a verb whereas *graduation* is a noun), and compounding (e.g., *cowboy* to create new word combining the two root morphemes: *cow* and *boy*). On the other hand, knowledge of inflectional morphology focuses primarily on indicating grammatical changes in words (e.g., the *s* in *dogs* to indicate the plural form of the base or the *-ed* in *acted* to refer to the action in the past time).

Fewer studies have dealt with vocabulary learning and morphology or morphological awareness, but the small corpus of existing research suggests a strong link between morphological awareness and vocabulary learning. Cunningham and Stanovich's (1997, cited in

Mountain, 2005) longitudinal study reveals that rapid acquisition of vocabulary of first graders predicted their reading comprehension 10 years later. A recent research done by (Wysocki & Jenkins, 1987, cited in Edwards et al., 2004) suggests that students can be taught various morphemic elements as means to derive the meanings of novel words. Dale and O'Rourke (1986, cited in Edwards et al., 2004) argue that students need to make use of context clues in relation to other methods of vocabulary study that include the process of word formation by means of roots, prefixes, suffixes, and compounds (p., 72).

There are number of methods for the instruction of morphological analysis. For example, disassembling and reassembling words is one of the MC methods in which learners are trained on how to chunk meaningful parts of complex words and use those parts to create new words (Edwards et al., 2004). Another method is direct instruction with posters (Graves, 2004). This method is more suitable for children learners where stems and highlighted affixes are presented on posters along with pictures. The method of affixes removal and replacement can used to introduce morphological analysis to adult learners. Disassembling and reassembling words is concerned with dissecting complex words into small meaningful units, finding the meaning of stem and affixes, and finally reassembling the meaningful parts to come up with new complex words. In this sense, morphemic analysis instruction can make the learners to independently learn new vocabulary and to take the charge of their own vocabulary development—autonomy.

Why teach morphemic and contextual analysis? Morphemic analysis, which is also referred to as structural analysis, involves deriving the meanings of a word by examining its meaningful parts (morphemes), such as word roots, prefixes, and suffixes, and inflected endings. To promote instructional efficiency, they recommend that teachers begin instruction with the most common prefixes, they also recommend that teachers spend time teaching derivational suffixes because, like prefixes, they are fairly regular in meaning and can lead to useful word building and vocabulary expansion. Because inflectional suffixes do not alter a word's root meaning (e.g., the meaning of root words jump, jumping, jumped, and jumps is basically the same), they are not as helpful in deriving word meanings, so we recommend less instructional emphasis on them. After exploring a number of affixes, students may be ready to delve into the meanings of Greek , and Latin roots. Instruction in these roots should be sequenced according to the abstractness of their meaning, from concrete to more abstract (Edwards et al., 2004).

The role of learner knowledge of both inflectional and derivational morphology in the development of L2 vocabulary is the focus of the present study. The study examines the effect of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of the EFL Iranian learners, with a focus on possible implications this effect might have for incorporating morphological awareness as a part of vocabulary instruction in the L2 classroom.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 60 intermediate female students of an English institute (Pardis) in Tabriz. The participants were high school students and their age range was between 15 to 17. All of the students were required to pass the English course as one of their main courses in school. In addition to English, students also studied Arabic as a foreign language, the latter reflected the Islamic curriculum in the school.

The participants' first language was Persian, or Turkish. They studied English for about 4 hours per week in school. Teachers in schools taught vocabularies by translating words, and students attended English classes in out of school institutes 3 days a week (6 hours per week). Morphological Awareness Test was used to see if participants were homogeneous. The learners were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups each containing 30 students. The learners in the experimental group received instruction about morphological structure of words for 6 sessions, but the students in the control group did not.

3.2 Research Instruments

Two tests were used in the present study: Morphological Awareness Test with its subtests (analysis and synthesis) and Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test. These two tests are further explained below:

3.2.1 Morphological Awareness Test

The Morphological Awareness Test was adapted from McBride- Change et al. (2005), and was used to test students' ability to reflect and manipulate morphemic units in English. McBride-Change et al. (2005) presented the test orally to the students because the researchers wanted to know if the learners were able to distinguish different meanings across homophones. This test was selected in the present study because it encompasses both the analytical and synthetic aspects of word formation rules. The test is divided into two sections: Morpheme Identification

(See Appendix I) and Morphological Structure (See Appendix II). The former was used to measure students' ability to analyze and break down complex words into smaller meanings. The latter was used to measures students' morphological productivity, which is the ability to synthesize morphemes to create new meanings.

3.2.1.1 Morphemes Identification Test (Analytic Aspects)

The Morpheme Identification Test measures students' ability to analyze and break down complex words into smaller meanings. It is compromised of 13 test items. These items diverge from the items used in original Morpheme Identification Test to better suit the students' age and level. In the original morpheme identification test as devised by McBride- Chang and her colleagues, each item includes two orally labeled pictures that are presented simultaneously. The testees are then given a word or phrase containing the target morpheme, and are asked to select the most appropriate picture that matches the word/ phrase.

In this study, the participants were given a set of complex words out of context, and were asked to segment them into as many smaller meanings as they could identify in each word. The words were decontextualized to control for the possible effect of context in guessing the meanings of words. The morphemes were neutral in the sense that they neither caused phonological and orthographical change nor stressed assignment changes in the stem. As Kuo and Anderson (2006) proposed, empirical studies should include neutral suffixation (i.e. suffixes that do not alter phonological or orthographical properties of the stem when being applied). Poor readers are also slower in acquiring non-neutral suffixation. Neutral suffixation are only used to rule out the possibility that the students cannot recognize the bases owing to this factor.

The total score of Morpheme Identification Test was 33, representing the maximum number of possible morphemes in the test item. It is worth noting that the instructions were followed directly with an example to illustrate to the participants what they should do with each item. Below are the test instruction and an answered example of a test item in English.

Please segment the following words into meaningful chunks.

e.g. **Child hoods**: *child*: little human being,   - *hood*: the state of being,   -s: to indicate plural

Test instruction was translated into Persian and explained ahead during the test orientation. Students were asked to write the meanings of the *chunks* either in Persian or English or both according to their preference.

3.2.1.2 Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect)

The Morphological Structure Test measures students' morphological productivity, which is the ability to synthesize morphemes to create new meanings (Chang et al., 2005). The test consists of 20 items. All of items are embedded in a sentence frame so as to examine whether the participants can derive different forms of the base word accurately when being primed with that base form in the sentence. That is to say, this test examines the students' knowledge of lexical structure and the relations among words and within words and their constituents. Again, all of the items contain neutral morphemes.

The participants were presented with a frame sentence that contained the usage of the target morpheme, and then asked to complete another sentence. It was expected that the participants used the frame sentence to complete the next sentence. The total points of the morphological structure test are 20 points. Below are the instruction (presented both in Persian and English) and one sample item.

Using only one word, come up with names for the objects or actions that are described below. See the example.

> Ahmed lived longer than Ali. Ahmed outlived Ali.
> James performed better than Juliet in the reading test. James……………Juliet.

3.2.2 Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) - Version A

There is much more to vocabulary testing than simply testing if a learner can choose an appropriate meaning for a given word form. For the purpose of helping a teacher decide what kind of vocabulary work learners need to do, the Level's Test is reliable, valid and very practical. The quickest and most direct way to determine where learners are in their vocabulary development is to directly test their vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001). In this study Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test were used because as mentioned in Nation (2001) these are seen as words that all learners need to know to read basic texts and that should be concentrated on in class.

In addition to the Morphological Awareness Test, the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) is adapted from Nation (2001). It is widely used to measure vocabulary size based on word frequency. The VLT test is designed to measure learners' receptive vocabulary size that can be considered as an indicator of the coverage of vocabulary in a text. The test consists of three sections (the 2,000, 3,000, 5,000). Each level includes ten items; each item compromises 6 words

on the left side with 3 meanings on the right. The 2,000- word level provides 80% to 95% coverage of the text; the 3,000- word level provides 4.3% coverage. The frequency and the coverage of the words drop down as levels go up.

The students were asked to match the three meanings in each item with the words. The first level contains the most frequent words; the second level contains the second most frequent words, and so forth (See Appendix III). Here are the test instruction (provided both in Persian and English) and examples of test items.

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

```
1. business
2. clock _____ part of a house .
3. horse _____ animal with four legs
4. pencil _____ something used for writing
5. shoe
6. wall


You answer it in the following way.
1. business
2. clock        _6 part of a house
3. horse        _3 animal with four legs
4. pencil       _4 something used for writing
5. shoe
6. wall
```

3.3 Design

The design of the study was quasi-experimental in which control group, experimental group, pre-test, and post-test were used. In order to find out the effect of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL high school students, we needed to identify variables according to their roles. The independent variable was morphological awareness. The dependant variable was the learners' vocabulary knowledge.

3.4 Procedure

Morphological Awareness Test was administered to two groups to see if they were homogenous. Then two groups were named control group and experimental group randomly. Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test was administered as the pre-test to before starting the treatment. The treatment was started in the beginning of the semester to the experimental group. At the end of

the semester the same Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test was administered to two groups as the post-test to see if there were any changes.

Principles and strategies used in this research were mostly taken from Yopp, Yopp, and Bishop (2009). Because the parts of a word often provide clues to the word's meaning, an important component of vocabulary instruction is the examination of meaningful word parts. So the students were taught about single words (do, eat, call,…), and compound words (cowboy, sunlight,…). The researcher made a list of common prefixes and suffixes of English language as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Common Prefixes and Suffixes of English Language

suffixes	prefixes
•-able, -ible •-ate •-er, -or •-ful •-hood •-ion •-ly •-ness •-dom •-ation •-ious •-ment •-ing •-en	•de- •re- •im- •un- •semi- •mis- •pre- •sub- •anti- •dis- •extra

Given this word: prediction

Pre- : prefix (bound morpheme) meaning "before"

Dict : root word from Latin meaning "tell"

-tion : derivational suffix (bound morpheme) indicating "the act of"

Prediction is the act of telling beforehand.

What was taught in this study to the students in the experimental group was segmenting words into its meaningful components and making new meaningful words from these components. Students were also made aware of derivations and inflections. Derivational morphology includes knowledge of prefixes (e.g., the *un* in *undisciplined* or the *pre* in *preoperational*), suffixes (e.g., the *ation* in *graduation* or *simulation*), and compounding (e.g.,

cowboy and *sunlight* are both compound words). Inflectional morphology focuses primarily on indicating grammatical changes in words (e.g., the *s* in *dogs* or the *ed* in *acted* are both grammatical inflections).

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

In the present study, the following statistical analyses and procedures were utilized in order to analyze the collected data.

- ❖ Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare the means of two groups obtained in Morphological Awareness Test. The purpose was to examine the homogeneity of the groups at the beginning of the study.
- ❖ Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare the difference between the means of the groups at the pre-test of Nations' Vocabulary Levels Test.
- ❖ Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was run to compare the significance of the difference between the mean of two groups at the post-test of Nations' Vocabulary Levels Test. To examine the significance of the differences between the means the level of significance was set to be 0.05. It means that if the p-value observed is smaller than 0.05 the null hypothesis would be rejected.

4.1 Analysis of Data Obtained from Morphological Awareness Test

Morphological Awareness Test, which is divided into two sections of Morpheme Identification Test and Morphological Structure Test, was conducted to see if the groups were homogeneous. To analyze the results of Morphological Awareness Test the researcher conducted Independent Samples t-test. The results are presented in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Obtained from Morpheme Identification Test

Group Statistics

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1.00 control	30	13.1333	4.09990	.74854
2.00 experimental	30	13.6333	5.20930	.95108

Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test for Morpheme Identification Test

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	2.496	.120	-.413	58	.681
Equal variances not assumed			-.413	54.964	.681

According to the data on table 2, mean of control group is 13.13, and standard deviation is 4.09, and mean of experimental group is 13.63, and standard deviation is 5.20. According to table 3, t=0.413 and p=0.68>0.05. The results show that the difference between two means is not significant because the p-value is 0.68 and it is more than the level of significance (0.05) selected to examine the differences in this study. Thus two groups are homogeneous in Morpheme Identification Test.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation for Morphological Structure Test

Group Statistics

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1.00 group 1l	30	8.2000	4.11390	.75109
2.00 group 2	30	8.7000	3.34406	.61054

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test for Morphological Structure Test

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	1.469	.230	-.517	58	.607
Equal variances not assumed			-.517	55.677	.608

According to the data on table 4, mean of control group is 8.20, and standard deviation is 4.11, and mean of experimental group is 8.7, and standard deviation is 3.34. According to table 5, t= 0.517 and p=0.607>0.05. The results show that the difference between two means is not significant because the p-value is 0.607 and it is more than the level of significance (0.05) selected to examine the differences in this study. Thus two groups are homogeneous in Morphological Structure Test

4.2 Analysis of Data Obtained from Pre-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

The research question in this study addressed the effects of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian high school students. Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test consists of three levels: 2000, 3000, and 5000 word levels and was used as pre-test and post-test to examine the effects of treatment on the experimental group. After checking initial group homogeneity in Morphological Awareness Test, the researcher analyzed the pre-test (Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test) indices to estimate descriptive statistics of the groups and to compare the groups' means via Independent Samples t-test, the results of which are presented in tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviation Obtained from Pre-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Group Statistics

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1.00 control	30	43.0667	19.37637	3.53762
2.00 experimental	30	44.3333	17.57807	.3.20930

Table 7. Independent Samples T-Test for Pre-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.712	.402	-.265	58	.792
Equal variances not assumed			-.265	57.458	.792

According to the data on table 6, mean of control group is 43.06, and standard deviation is 19.37, and mean of experimental group is 44.33, and standard deviation is 17.57. According to table 7, t= 0.265 and p=0.792>0.05. The results show that the difference between two means is not significant because the p-value is 0.792 and it is more than the level of significance (0.05) selected to examine the differences in this study. Thus it can be concluded that the groups are not different in pre-test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test.

4.3 Analysis of Data Obtained from Post-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test was used again as post-test to examine the effect of treatment about morphological awareness on the experimental group. The data are summarized in tables 8 and 9.

Table 8. Mean and Standard Deviation Obtained from Post-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: POST1 post-analysis

GROUP	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00 control	44.1333	19.23132	30
2.00 experimental	51.4667	20.44629	30
Total	47.8000	20.02355	60

Table 9. ANCOVA Test Results Obtained from Post-Test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: POST1 post-analysis

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	23354.26ᵃ	2	11677.13	2208.859	.000
Intercept	13.260	1	13.260	2.508	.119
PRE1	22547.603	1	22547.603	4265.128	.000
GROUP	536.346	1	536.346	101.456	.000
Error	301.331	57	.5.287		
Total	160746.000	60			
Corrected Total	23655.600	59			

a. R Squared = .987 (Adjusted R Squared = .987)

The post-test of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test indices were submitted to an ANCOVA Test. Table 8 and Table 9 illustrate the descriptive statistics and the results of the ANCOVA analysis. According to Table 8, mean of control group is 44.13 and the standard deviation is 19.23, and mean of experimental group is 51.46 and the standard deviation is 20.44. By looking at the mean scores of two groups in table 4.7, it can be noticed that the mean and standard deviation of control group are smaller than the mean and standard deviation of experimental group, consequently, the results of this study reveals better performance of students in experimental group.

The results of the ANCOVA analysis in Table 9 revealed the positive effect of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of the participants in experimental group F(GROUP)=101.456, P=.000. The results show that the difference between the two means is significant because the p-value is .000 and it is less than the level of significance which is 0.05 selected to examine the differences in this study. The participants in experimental group with the mean of 51.46 outperformed the participants in control group with the mean of 44.13. Thus the null hypothesis which stated that morphological awareness has no effect on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian high school students can be rejected.

4.4 Discussion

The present research study was designed to investigate the effect of morphological awareness on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian high school students. The statistical results indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups performances on post-test
of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test. The results of the ANCOVA analysis revealed the positive effect of treatment about morphological awareness on experimental group.

This does provide support for the claim of Anglin (1993) who found that learners can sometimes figure out the meaning of a word they have never heard before, a process he calls morphological problem-solving. This they do by recognizing the morphemic constituents of a word and using that knowledge to infer the meaning of whole word (e.g., inferring the meaning of knotless from knot and –less), and with the findings of Mc- Bride Change et al. (2005) who found that "morphological awareness were good predictors of vocabulary Knowledge" (p. 428). The findings are also consistent with the findings of Nunes and Bryant (2004) who claimed that an awareness of morphology benefit the development of children's vocabulary.

According to Lesaux (2009), Morphology literally means the study of shape. An awareness of morphology begins in early childhood through adolescence. While younger children learn to add an "s" in order to make a word plural, older children may decipher the meaning of words by identifying their common roots with other words. Lesaux (2009) found that those students who take unfamiliar words and break them down into smaller parts, or morphemes, have increased success in deciphering unfamiliar vocabulary.

Direct classroom instruction in word definitions, though effective in promoting vocabulary acquisition overall, is relatively ineffective in narrowing the gap between those with good versus poor vocabulary levels (e.g., Anderson & Nagy, 1991; Baker, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1998,

cited in Mc- Bride Change et al. 2005, p. 416). According to Mc- Bride Change et al. (2005), morphological awareness is a cognitive construct separable from phonological processing and reading skills and important for vocabulary acquisition. Both morpheme identification and morphological structure awareness are potentially unique features of vocabulary development. There are different aspects of morphological awareness and that each of these might be important in fostering vocabulary acquisition. (p. 428). Results of the present study are clear in demonstrating that morphological awareness can be used as a vocabulary learning strategy in language classrooms to promote students' vocabulary knowledge.

5. Conclusion

Vocabulary knowledge and the skills to acquire new vocabulary are essential components of the education we provide to our students. Vocabulary enhances comprehension, and comprehension- with appropriate instruction- leads to critical thinking. Critical thinking results in the making of informed decisions, the kind of decisions that provide students with

the desire and ability to contribute to society in positive and productive ways (Yopp, Yopp & Bishop, 2009). This research focused on morphological awareness as one of the vocabulary learning strategies to help language learners to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

5.1 Pedagogical Implications

The most important contribution of this study is that it broadens the language learners and teachers' understanding of how morphological awareness affect vocabulary knowledge of the students. Probable pedagogical implications that might be taken from this study include the following:

- Language learners can use morphological awareness as a vocabulary learning strategy to gain control over what they learn.
- Teachers can explicitly teach about roots, suffixes and prefixes and help students to use morphological awareness as a vocabulary learning strategy.
- The teacher trainers can also instruct the teachers how to teach about the roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words in order to segment the complex words into their components and make new words with those components.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

1) The study could be conducted with learners from different proficiency levels to investigate the probable interrelationship between proficiency level and the effect of morphological awareness.

2) The study could be replicated with longer period of treatment.

3) Gender and age might be added to the variable to investigate whether male and female learners at different age levels respond to the program equally or not.

4) This study can be replicated to investigate the effect of morphological awareness on spelling skill of the students.

5) This study can be done to investigate the effect of morphological awareness on reading skills of the students.

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Appendix I.

Morphological Awareness Test
A. Analysis (Morpheme Identification)
Please segment the following words into meaningful chunks, and state the meanings
of those chunks.
کلمات زیر را به اجزای تشکیل دهنده ان کلمات تجزیه کرده و معنی هر جز را بنویسید.
For example, **Childhoods:** child: little human being, - hood: the state of being, -s: to
indicate plural
1. washing machine:
2. freedom:
3. likelihood:
4. harden:
5. demotivation:
6. spaciousness:

7. oxen:
8. partially:
9. productive:
10. babysitting:
11. nationwide:
12. unpredictability:
13. education:
14. eyebrow

Appendix II.

Part 2: Synthesis (Morphological Structure Test)

There are some objects which can be seen in our daily life, and there are also some which we have not seen before but might be possible. I want you to try to come up with names for those objects based on the names of daily objects given.

تعدادی از سوالات زیر در مورد چیزهایی می باشد که قابل رویت در زندگی روزمره هستند و تعدادی را هرگز ندیده اید. با توجه به توضیحات هر سوال به سوالات زیر پاسخ دهید.

For example, there is a ballpoint pen that is blue in color. We call that **blue ballpoint pen**.

There is a ballpoint pen that is red in color; we call that **red ballpoint pen**.

There is a sun that is big and red in color. We call that **big red sun**.

Notes:

Correct=1 Incorrect=0

Please go through all the test items.

Example:

A. There's a paper that is **white** in color, we call that **white paper**.

There's a paper that is **red** in color, what do we call it? ——————— (red paper)

B. There's a pair of socks that is **red** in color, we call them **red socks**. There are socks that are **blue** in color, what do we call them?——————— (blue socks)

Test items

1. There's a flower that is **big and red**, we call that a **big red flower**.
Now there's a flower that is **big and purple**, what do we call it?

2. We call a cat that is **white and big** a **big white cat**.
What do we call a cat that is **black and big**?

3. There's an animal that lives in the **sea** and **looks like a star**. It's called a **seastar**.
There's an animal which lives in the **sea** and **looks like a horse**. What do we call it?

4. A cup that is used to hold **coffee** is called a **coffee cup**.
What do we call a cup that is used to hold **tea**?

5. A glass that is used to hold **wine** is called a **wine glass**.
What do we call a glass that is used to hold **milk**?

6. A tree that grows **apples** is called an **apple tree**.
What do we call a tree that grows **donuts**?

7. Some people wear rings on their **ears**, they are called **earrings**.
Some people wear rings on their **nose**, what should we call that?

8. Many people wear laces on their **neck** called a **necklace**. Some people wear laces on their **foot**, what should we call that?

9. The metal shoes that are put on **horses** are called **horseshoes**.
If we put metal shoes on **pigs**, what do we call them?

10. Early in the morning, we can see the **sun rising**. This is called a **sunrise**.

At night, we might also see the **moon rising**. What could we call this?

11. Some buildings are built very **high**, and we call them **high-rise buildings**.
Some buildings are built very **low**, what do we call that?

12. There is a kind of train that runs **under the ground**. We call that an **underground train**. There is another kind of train that **runs over the ground**. What do we call that?

13. **Basketball** is a game where you throw a **ball through a basket.** Tim made up a new game where he throws a **ball into a bucket.** What should he call the game?

14. A **box** used to store mail is called a **mailbox**. Some people use a **tray** to store mail. What should we call that?

Items 15–20 ask you to give new word forms.

15. Look at John. John is **stotting**. Yesterday he did this. What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday, he _____

16. This animal is called a **wug**. There are four of them. There are four
_____

17. This is a musical instrument called a **hux**. Now we have three of them. We have three
_____

18. Joe knows how to **fleamp**. He is **fleamping** something. He did the same thing yesterday. What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____

19. This is a **krest**; it's used on letters. This letter has been **krested**. The postman is
_____ the letters.

20. Sometimes the **raindrops** fall from the sky and we call that **raining**. Very rarely, **frogs** fall from the sky, we call that _____

Appendix III.

Nation's Levels Tests (2001)

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

1. business
2. clock _____ part of a house .
3. horse _____ animal with four legs
4. pencil _____ something used for writing
5. shoe
6. wall

You answer it in the following way.

1. business
2. clock   6 part of a house
3. horse   3 animal with four legs
4. pencil   4 something used for writing
5. shoe

6. wall

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. In the example above, these words are business, clock, and shoe. If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, do not guess. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

Version 1: The 2,000-word level

1. birth
2. dust _____ game
3. operation _____ winning
4. row _____ being born
5. sport
6. victory

1. choice
2. crop _____ heat
3. flesh _____ meat
4. salary _____ money paid regularly for doing a job
5. secret
6. temperature

1. cap
2. education _____ teaching and learning
3. journey _____ numbers to measure with
4. parent _____ going to afar place
5. scale
6. trick

1. attack
2. charm _____ gold and silver
3. lack _____ pleasing quality
4. pen _____ not having something
5. shadow
6. treasure

1. cream
2. factory _____ part of milk
3. nail _____ a lot of money
4. pupil _____ person who is studying
5. sacrifice
6. wealth

1. adopt
2. climb _____ go up
3. examine _____ look at closely
4. pour _____ be on every side
5. satisfy
6. surround

1. bake
2. connect _____ join together
3. inquire _____ walk without purpose
4. limit _____ keep within a certain size
5. recognize

6. wander

1. burst
2. concern _____ break open
3. deliver _____ make better
4. fold _____ take something to someone
5. improve
6. urge

1. original
2. private _____ first
3. royal _____ not public
4. slow _____ all added together
5 sorry
6. total

1. brave
2. electric _____ commonly done
3. firm _____ wanting food
4. hungry _____ having no fear
5. local
6. usual

Version 1: The 3,000-word level

1. belt
2. climate _____ idea
3. executive _____ inner surface of your hand
4. notion _____ strip of leather worn around the waist
5. palm
6. victim

1. acid
2. bishop _____ cold feeling
3. chill _____ farm animal
4. ox _____ organization or framework
5. ridge
6. structure

1. bench
2. charity _____ long seat
3. jar _____ help to the poor
4. mate _____ part of a country
5. mirror
6. province

1. boot
2. device _____ army officer
3. lieutenant _____ a kind of stone
4. marble _____ tube through which blood flows
5. phrase
6. vein

1. apartment
2. candle _____ a place to live
3. draft _____ chance of something happening

4. horror _____ first rough form of something written
5. prospect
6. timber

1. betray
2. dispose _____ frighten
3. embrace _____ say publicly
4. injure _____ hurt seriously
5. proclaim
6. scare

1. encounter
2. illustrate _____ meet
3. inspire _____ beg for help
4. plead _____ close completely
5. seal
6. shift

1. assist
2. bother _____ help
3. condemn _____ cut neatly
4. erect _____ spin around quickly
5. trim
6. whirl

1. annual
2. concealed _____ wild
3. definite _____ clear and certain
4. mental _____ happening once a year
5. previous
6. savage

1. dim
2. junior _____ strange
3. magnificent _____ wonderful
4. maternal _____ not clearly lit
5. Odd
6. weary

Version 1: The 5,000-word level

1. balloon
2. federation _____ bucket
3. novelty _____ unusual interesting thing
4. pail rubber _____ bag that is filled with air
5. veteran
6. ward

1. alcohol
2. apron _____ stage of development
3. hip _____ state of untidiness or dirtiness
4. lure _____ cloth worn in front to protect your clothes
5. mess
6. phase

1. apparatus

2. compliment _____ expression of admiration
3. ledge _____ set of instruments or machinery
4. revenue _____ money received by the government
5. scrap
6. tile

1. bulb
2. document _____ female horse
3. legion _____ large group of soldiers or people
4. mare _____ a paper that provides information
5. pulse
6. tub

1. concrete
2. era _____ circular shape
3. fiber _____ top of a mountain
4. loop _____ a long period of time
5. plank
6. summit

1. blend
2. devise _____ mix together
3. hug _____ plan or invent
4. lease _____ hold tightly in your arms
5. plague
6. reject

1. abolish
2. drip _____ bring to an end by law
3 insert _____ guess about the future
4. predict _____ calm or comfort someone
5. Soothe
6. thrive

1. bleed
2. collapse _____ come before
3. precede _____ fall down suddenly
4. reject _____ move with quick steps and jumps
5. skip
6. tease

1. casual
2. desolate _____ sweet-smelling
3. fragrant _____ only one of its kind
4. radical _____ good for your health
5. unique
6. wholesome

1. gloomy
2. gross _____ empty
3. infinite _____ dark or sad
4. limp _____ without end
5. slim
6. vacant

Title

The Impact of Form-Based and Text-Specific Content-Based Feedback on Writing Accuracy and General Writing Performance of English Students in Shahroud

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Abstract

Debate over the efficacy of providing form-based feedback on writing accuracy continues and researchers have not yet come up with a clear-cut result. Whereas many researchers insist on its potential role in improving accuracy, many others have not found any beneficial effects in offering it and argue that teachers should not waste their time giving grammatical feedback to students' compositions. On the other hand, although many researchers maintain that offering content-based feedback to compositions can help student writers write better organized passages, little research has been carried out in this area and, in particular, on the effects of text-specific content feedback. This research draws upon control and experimental group data to detect if form-based feedback (FBF) and text-specific content-based feedback (CBF) offered by the teacher improve student writing accuracy and general writing performance. Findings indicate that providing FBF fails to improve writing accuracy and general writing performance while implementing CBF considerably improves general writing performance, albeit not accuracy. **Keywords**: Form-Based Feedback (FBF), Text-Specific Content-Based Feedback (CBF), Accuracy, Composition, General Writing Performance.

1. Introduction

The issue of corrective feedback on students' written performance has drawn more attention following John Truscott's (1996) claim that error correction is both ineffective and harmful (Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005). In native-native or even native-nonnative interaction, little judgment is passed on the interlocutor's linguistic behavior. Yet it appears that in L2 classrooms teachers are to respond to and repair students' writing performance. Feedback often reflects teachers' feeling and mood at the time of providing it as well as their attitude towards language learning. It can be viewed a way of maintaining communication in a speaking task, and although primarily a silent mode of teacher-student communication in a writing task, it gives the student writer good grounds for sparking off favorable or nervous reactions to how the teacher probably deems the created task.

Concerning the volume of the feedback provided, it might be a simple tick, a vague or perplexing score or a short ambiguous remark at the bottom of the written page. Further, it can be the grammatically corrected version of what the student has already produced or clues and codes for the student writer to detect and correct the mistake by himself. Corrections may also encompass and modify spelling, diction, collocation as well as wrong use of punctuation, indentation, spacing and so forth. Nevertheless, it appears that assessing such critical factors as organization, content and relevance in students' compositions should not be ignored (Chiang, 2004; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Zamel, 1985). Such disregard may have to do with the lack of enthusiasm or concentration of the teacher or with the longer period of time it requires to accomplish this task.

However, the type of feedback provided by the teacher may prompt the students to trigger a variety of overt or covert mental or emotional reactions. A considerable number of L2 students may look forward to perusing the corrections and comments whereas quite a few might get discouraged by considering the corrections as negative reinforcements offered by the teacher. Seeing the overwhelming bulk of correction, they might feel embarrassed at the abundance of their mistakes and gradually neglect the feedback. The provision of syntactic modifications in a composition seems to be inadequate and can limit L2 students' linguistic standpoint to no higher than sentence level since the teacher draws the students' attention to grammatical mistakes. However, feedback should entail teacher's reaction to the message, content and organization as

well. In fact, if teachers take the content of students' composition into account, the learners will tend to take account of how they should organize their composition accordingly.

The present study compares the effects of two major types of feedback, i.e., form-based feedback (hereafter FBF) and content-based feedback (hereafter CBF) on accuracy and general writing performance of students. In fact, it is intended to find out if error correction—correcting grammatical errors in writing—which is a very common practice in writing classes would produce any positive results in students' writing accuracy and general writing performance. On the other hand, the study aims to evaluate the effect of offering text-specific content feedback on student compositions. Accordingly, in this study, it was attempted to explore the following questions:

1. Does the provision of FBF to compositions improve writing accuracy in intermediate student writers?

2. Does the provision of FBF to compositions improve general writing performance in intermediate student writers?

3. Does the provision of CBF to compositions improve writing accuracy in intermediate student writers?

4. Does the provision of CBF to compositions improve general writing performance in intermediate student writers?

2. Literature Review

In second language learning, feedback can be defined as a linguistic response to how and what students write. However, providing feedback is a controversial issue and the function it serves in L2 education, in particular in writing, has hardly been agreed upon so far. Bitchener (2005) holds that only a limited number of researchers have taken the issue of written corrective feedback into account. According to Sommers (1982), "more than any other enterprise in the teaching of writing, responding to and commenting on student writing consumes the largest proportion of our time" (p. 148). Thus, she finds it critical to discover the nature of correction.

A considerable number of researchers claim that providing corrective feedback on student writing can improve student accuracy (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima 2008; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Sheen, 2007).

Ferris (2004) states that recent SLA research on focus on form in both written and spoken language "suggests that adult L2 learners need their errors made salient and explicit to them so that they can avoid fossilization and continue developing linguistic competence" (p. 54). She contends that L2 learners tend to attend to and appreciate error correction which can trigger them to self-correct, and that if such feedback does not exist, students may feel anxious or disgusted which can reduce motivation and confidence in their teachers. Myles (2002), too, asserts that L2 writing is not without errors, and that teachers should help students be able to self-correct their compositions.

In a recent study, Ellis, et al., (2008), provided 2 different types of feedback, namely focused (only article correction) and unfocused (all error correction) along with a control group which received no feedback in a Japanese university. They found that implementing written corrective feedback improved correct use of articles in their students' new writings. In another study, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) examined the efficacy of targeting two functional uses of English articles in 5 writing tasks (one pre-test and four post-tests) of 52 low-intermediate ESL students in New Zealand and found that the subjects who received written corrective feedback outperformed those who did not. However, they asserted that they could not conclude about the effectiveness of providing corrective feedback.

Chandler (2003) made two studies to find out if error correction improves accuracy in student writing and to compare the effects of different types of error correction. In her first study, she required her 15 students in the experimental group to correct their grammatical and lexical errors underlined by her, whereas she did not ask her 16 students in the control group to correct the errors underlined. The results of her study revealed that the first group improved significantly in their accuracy in comparison with the second. Her findings were in contrast with Truscott's (1996) claim that error correction is useless. She also found out that both groups showed a significant increase in their fluency at the end of the semester. In her second study, all her students, again, had to correct their papers prior to moving on to the next assignment, and again she witnessed that her student writing improved significantly over the semester in terms of both accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, she wanted to compare the influence of 4 types of error correction, namely, direct correction, underlining with description, description only, and underlining only on their revised writing. She found the first type—direct correction—most effective in reducing the number of students' errors in their revisions. By implementing the

second type of correction, students managed to correct over two-thirds of their errors, and revisions of student writing by adopting the third and fourth methods helped students correct only around half of their errors in their second drafts. However, she found no significant change in holistic ratings of overall writing quality over the 10 weeks of the study.

On the other hand, in the 1980s and early 1990s, researchers questioned the idea that teacher feedback can enhance student writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In fact, researchers in several studies did not find significant improvement in student writing after students received corrective feedback (e.g., Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Chiang, 2004; Kepner, 1991; Polio, Fleck & Leder, 1998; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 2004).

Chiang (2004) seeks the problem in student insight of feedback and believes that teacher feedback to student writing may be ineffectual because the manner of implementing feedback might be wrong. He argues that the students do not carefully study the feedback provided by their teacher because "linguistic feedback has failed to help students to internalize their linguistic knowledge effectively" (p. 106). Moreover, he believes that students are disappointed by their teachers' corrective comments and codes since they are not able to employ them to avoid making similar mistakes in their subsequent compositions even though they are familiar with their mistakes. He explains that teachers complain about their students' recurring mistakes and this is probably because students, in particular the senior ones, are familiar with their mistakes but are incapable of generalizing linguistic rules and avoiding them in their subsequent compositions. He also assumes that students value teacher feedback yet the feedback is too complex for them to decode. Likewise, Ellis (2009) believes that corrective feedback can be effective only if students pay attention to it.

After reviewing commenting styles of 35 teachers and interviewing some of the teachers and their students, Sommers (1982) and her colleagues found that "teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting" (p. 149).

In another study, Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) compared the effects of 3 types of corrective feedback (direct written feedback and a 5-minute conference; direct written feedback only; no corrective feedback) on 4 ESL student writing tasks in New Zealand. They focused on 3 most recurrent errors in the first writing tasks, namely prepositions, simple past and definite

articles, which, they believed, altogether made up just over 50% of students errors. Their results revealed that the 3 feedback types had no significant effects on accuracy when the three targeted error categories were considered a single group. This finding, as Bitchener, et al. (2005) maintain, appears to be in keeping with what Truscott (1996) claimed: providing corrective feedback on L2 writing is not effective. Nonetheless, when they investigated the impact of different types of feedback individually, they discovered a significantly greater accuracy in the group that received explicit written along with conference feedback, with the use of past tense and the definite article, but not with the prepositions. They found their findings in line with Ferris's (1999) distinction of errors as more or less "treatable". They argued that "the past tense and the definite article were amendable to the combination of written and oral (conference) feedback" (p. 201).

In his controversial work, Truscott (1996) seriously questioned the efficacy of grammar correction and maintained that it is not only ineffective but also harmful, and consequently should be abandoned. He excluded the plausibility of any positive effect of grammar correction in writing by dismissing any factor that may play a part in the development of accuracy in writing. He did his best to defend his standpoint by summarizing prominent studies carried out by Semke (1984), Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986), Kepner (1991), Sheppard (1992) who all found that grammar correction in writing did not improve student accuracy.

Even though Truscott (1996) frowns upon any benefits of grammar correction and mentions a great deal of evidence against its efficacy and no evidence for it, he anticipates that the consideration of learner variables may lead to some findings favoring correction. In addition, he does not reject the potential value of feedback on content. Also, Truscott (2004; 2007) still emphasizes that error correction is ineffective or even detrimental. Yet in the latter stressing that correction has a small negative effect on learners' ability to write accurately, he asserts that we can be 95% confident that if it actually has any benefits, it is very small.

Fathman and Whalley (1990) hold that "[m]uch of the conflict over teacher response to written work has been whether teacher feedback should focus on form (e.g., grammar, mechanics) or on content (e.g., organization, amount of detail)" (p. 178). Notwithstanding, it appears that far less attention is paid to the provision of feedback on content and the results of research on content feedback has been far from conclusive as well. Truscott (1996) mentioned that he would have "very little to say about responses to the content, organization or clarity of a

composition" (p.329) although he did not regard them inappropriate, whereas Myles (2002) stresses that students expect and need feedback on both form and content. Zamel (1985), too, finds feedback on both form and content essential, but discourages teachers from offering comments on both together on the first draft.

Ashwell (2000) measures the effectiveness of process writing approach to second language writing pedagogy. The advocates of this approach, he claims, argue that teachers should consider content feedback in the first and form feedback in the second draft (p. 227). In particular, Ashwell assessed the validity of Zamel's (1985) suggested pattern of responding to student writing. Considering the type of feedback, Ashwell divided his 50 students into 4 groups receiving 4 types of feedback: (1) content-then-form group; (2) form-then-content group; (3) form-and-content group; and (4) zero-feedback group, and made his students write 3 drafts on a topic. His findings showed that the recommended pattern of content feedback followed by form feedback was not superior to the reverse or mixed patterns, a finding that contradicted that of Zamel's (1985). He also concluded that all his feedback groups outperformed the zero-feedback group in formal accuracy but not in content quality, and so content can be improved merely by rewriting.

However, in a recent study, Morra and Asís (2009) investigated the effects of on-tape and written feedback on both macro errors (content and organization) and micro errors (vocabulary, grammar and mechanics) in 89 students who had written 3 compositions and found out that both types of response significantly improved students' papers, in particular, in terms of micro errors in 5 out of 6 groups.

In his attempt to find out student reaction to and perception of teacher feedback in their writing, Chiang (2004) interviewed two groups of students and realized that many of them paid more attention to grammatical comments than feedback on content. However, the students considered teacher feedback on content and organization when they gave it second thoughts in the interviews.

Some researchers believe that general comments attached to students' compositions can be vague and that text-specific feedback proves more rewarding (e.g., Chiang, 2004; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Zamel, 1985). Chiang (2004), for instance, asserts that teacher feedback on content and organization can prove useless, and that students may not pursue their composition replete with such comments if they are not specific enough.

An important study on the influence of form-focused and content-focused feedback on improving student writing was conducted by Fathman and Whalley (1990). They divided 72 intermediate ESL college students in composition classes into 4 groups: Group 1 received no feedback; Group 2 received only grammar feedback (students' all grammar errors were merely underlined); and Group 3 received only content feedback consisting of general comments such as "good description", or "interesting narration", or general suggestions for improvement, such as "add details", or "improve transitions". The comments and suggestions were not text-specific and were written at the top of the paper. The results showed that grammar and content feedback, whether given alone or simultaneously, positively affected rewriting. Additionally, those who received indirect (underlining) grammar feedback were able to correct their grammar errors. However, they found that grammar feedback had more effect on correcting grammar errors than content feedback did on improving content. Fathman and Whalley (1990) attributed this to the fact that the former identified specific grammar errors but the latter was general and not text-specific. Moreover, in their study, students in all groups improved the content of their compositions when they rewrote them. They concluded that rewriting is an effective technique to enhance writing skills.

It appears that there is no clear consensus among researchers on how they should correct students' errors in writing (Ellis *et al*., 2008). The discrepancy is partially rooted in the contradictory outcome of providing form-based feedback. What some researchers have claimed on the benefits of error correction in writing based on their empirical research has been emphatically disproved by some others demonstrating different or mixed outcome. On the other hand, a crucial aspect of feedback, namely individual reaction to composition content or text-specific content feedback has extensively been ignored.

Although Truscott (1999) reiterates his opinion against grammar correction, he agrees with Ferris (1999) that many questions regarding this controversial issue remain open and adds that it would be wrong to claim that correction can never be beneficial under any circumstances (p.121). Truscott (1999) motivates researchers to seek out if specific cases can be found in which grammar correction might not be a totally misguided practice. He assumes that if and when such cases are identified, correction might become an appropriate tool.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The study was conducted in an English language institute in Shahroud, Iran. The participants were 17- to 25-year-old female students from several intermediate classes (Junior 8 to 11) invited to take part in the study during their first summer term. The term *intermediate* used here corresponds to the definition of *intermediate-high* offered by "The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing (Revised 2001)". According to this classification, writers at this level can write comprehensibly on topics of current and general interest despite making numerous and perhaps significant errors in tense, agreement, aspect, cohesive devices, paraphrasing, time markers and style. The participants were taking part in conversation classes where the focus of attention was on listening and speaking skills; little attention was paid to the reading skill, and the writing skill was completely ignored. They volunteered from 7 classes who were being taught by the institute teachers. After the project was introduced to the classes, initially, 52 students started to take part. Yet only 39 participants (22 in FBF and 17 in CBF group) managed to write all the 14 compositions, and 13 were excluded due to their incomplete participation, absence or long delay. The classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups.

3.2. Procedure

At the beginning of the term, the researcher attended the classes and explained the procedure. A brief explanation on how to write a composition was orally given to all participants. They were told to start each composition with an introduction, support their position by discussing at least two reasons and finally make a short conclusion. They were given a list of 14 composition topics selected from easier TOEFL writing topics along with their delivery dates and were supposed to write 180- to 250-word compositions at certain dates. After this face-to-face meeting, all other comments were written or attached to the participants' papers. The participants were obliged to write 14 topics in the given order. The first composition was taken as the pre-test. After receiving the compositions, FBF was offered to the control and CBF to the experimental group.

In addition to attending their classes, the participants had to write 14 compositions every 2 or 3 days in the order given, take them to the institute and submit them to the secretary. She, then, put the received compositions in the related files and returned the previous papers already corrected or commented to the participants. This cycle continued throughout the term, the short break after it and the first week of the second term, a period of about 36 days. It was emphasized in participants' papers that only after they thoroughly studied their compositions along with the

feedback offered to their writing could they write their next composition at home in order to increase the likelihood of avoiding similar mistakes and striving for an error-free essay. However, they were not told to rewrite their compositions. All 14 topics followed one model, which I called *expressing preference* (Table 1) as opposed to models seeking student agreement or disagreement with an opinion. Based on my experience, *preference* model is a more straightforward (but not a better) question and it is probably easier for the teacher to recommend a model and for student writers to defend their position.

Table 1. The model of the 14 composition topics (expressing preference)

Some people prefer A while others prefer B. What do you prefer? Why? State two or more reasons to support your opinion.

The FBF group was provided with merely grammatical correction and with no content-related comments. The most frequent form-related mistakes in Iranians' writings encompass tense, subject-verb agreement, plural/singular nouns, articles and prepositions (Table 2).

Table 2. Examples of error types

Tense	Now that he is back, he reported everything.
Subject-verb agreement	Both of them has different virtues.
Voice	Lots of work is doing by computer.
Plural/singular	Checking e-mails takes only 15 minute.//These equipments should be suitable.
Article	I need computer to do my school work.
Preposition	I could enter to a university.//They follow from celebrities.
Relative pronoun	We know everything about a country that we've lived for 20 years.
Relative clause	My brother has a friend that he can fix cell phones.
Second/third verb	I prefer to immigrate to Canada for continuing my education.
Vague	We have a different culture and hostess country.
Awkward	You can buy many books with that much of money that you can buy just one computer.//Students can learn computer.
Fragment	For example, vacuuming, doing the laundry and shopping.
Word order	My chemistry teacher could explain very well the subjects.
Redundant/Repetition	Both of them are essential and necessary.
Wrong word	It is better that stay in our country.//Its really exciting.//I want to be such as my friends.//They are doing a terrible mistake.
Adverb	We can use them easier and faster.

Misspelling (meaning change)	I cannot obey their low. [Trivial ones, like *develope* and *resturant*, not considered.]
Part of speech	We cannot be relax.//I advice them to change their mind.//I can be success.
Pronouns	We can do my project.//We do not need to do it ourself.
Run-on	We feel that we have learned better, it's important to gain experience.
Omission	I can concentrate better in own room.

On the other hand, in the CBF group, comments on how to divide the composition into 4 or more paragraphs (introduction, 2 or more logical reasons and conclusion) were passed to the participants' first composition. In fact, some comments on how to produce an effective introduction, discuss at least two logical and relevant reasons, and develop the reasons by providing adequate details and appropriate explanation and examples were offered to all CBF members. However, this recommendation did not mean to refute other forms of organizing an effective composition, but was suggested as one of the best, most common and probably easiest forms of organization. In addition, how to write a clear topic sentence and sufficient supporting sentences was explained and the information was attached to their papers. Some CBF comments were considered general and attached to all CBF first and compositions (Table 3). However, the majority of CBF comments, particularly on the third to the last papers, were text-specific (Table 4).Yet grammatical mistakes were completely ignored. The commented versions were then individually returned to the group.

Table 3. A sample of general CBF

Start your composition by an introduction in which you generally mention each position.
State your preference in the introduction. Here you can put forward your reasons generally but don't discuss them in detail.
In the second paragraph, state your first reason why you prefer A or B. Support it logically by expressing details and examples.
Start your second paragraph (first reason) by transition words, such as "First", "First of all", "In the first place", etc.
In the third paragraph, state your second reason supporting the same position logically. Support it by expressing details and examples.
Start your third paragraph (second reason) by transition words, such as "Second", "Moreover", "In addition",

"In the second place", etc.
Write a short conclusion which can begin with "In sum", "In conclusion", "To sum up", etc.
Ask any question you may have about your composition or my comments. You can find your response in your next composition.

Table 4. A sample of text-specific CBF

Your second paragraph is lengthy and doesn't have a topic sentence. In fact, you wrote everything about the topic (and not about the first reason) in this paragraph. You can divide it into two or even three paragraphs and, in each one, focus on one reason about why you like to immigrate. For instance, it can be a good idea to explain what you mean by "facilities for an ordinary life" as you did in the next paragraph by bringing this clear example.
In your introduction, you could have written briefly about the advantages of eating home-made meals *and* eating at a restaurant and finally stated that you preferred eating at home.
Instead of numbering your second and third paragraphs, use "Firstly" and "Secondly".
Well-done. Your composition is organized very well. In particular, your logical discussion in your second and third paragraphs is appreciated.
Your conclusion contradicts what you've supported in the body of your composition. You have two reasons supporting the use of automobiles, but you've concluded that cars have caused many accidents and killed many people. This is really confusing. Your concluding paragraph can be a summary of your position. For instance, in your conclusion you may write, "Despite problems such as pollution and accidents caused by cars, we cannot ignore the convenience of travelling and …. Such a statement is closer to your opinion in the introduction and body.
Your introduction is too long for your 200-word composition. You can omit the first sentence in this paragraph because it's too general.
I think you are overusing your Persian-to-English dictionary. I believe you shouldn't use it at all because as a student of Junior 10, you know enough words for this topic. Instead, read the topic several times and think of two clear reasons, like your first one, and use simpler words so that you can express yourself more clearly. You can see this phrase is confusing. [I underlined *egotistical relationship* in her composition.]
Because you've explained in detail why you prefer your mother's meals in your introduction, you didn't have much to write in your second paragraph. Moreover, your paragraphs do not seem to be separate. It's a good idea to indent your paragraphs or to leave more space between your paragraphs.
Your introduction is not related to the topic. You need to focus on the two positions most people hold about

living in Iran and abroad and then state where you would prefer to live. [The composition topic is, "Some people prefer to live in a foreign country for the rest of their lives. Others, however, believe that they should live in their own country. What do you think? Write two or three reasons to support what you think." Her introduction is exactly as follows. "Nowadays, by spreading medias, our information are increasing about other countries. Radio, television and satellite play an important part to convey an information. but some of our information about other countries, are according to some other persons statement. for example some people that lived in another countries and now came back or some one who heard their saying and tell us, but we can't realize How correct is their speaches."]

The final composition of all participants was taken as the post-test and compared with the first one.

3.3. Scoring

Two different scores—related to accuracy and general writing performance—were assigned to each FBF and CBF paper. Taking accuracy into account, the researcher aimed to find out if the two types of feedback had any impact on their improvement in accuracy. In particular, it was aimed to find out if FBF participants made significantly fewer errors than participants whose grammatical errors in all 14 compositions were entirely overlooked and received merely content feedback. To calculate this measure, grammatical errors (Table 2) of each composition were counted and their ratio over 100 words was assessed. In order to ensure a high inter-rater agreement, a colleague—a university EFL teacher—marked all errors in pre- and post-test papers. The agreement on what was regarded as error was 82%. This was measured, as Chandler (2003) did, "by dividing the number of errors marked by only one rater (and not both) by the total number of errors (an average of each rater's count)" (p. 275-276).

Given that composition topics were selected from TOEFL sources, scoring general writing performance was also in keeping with *independent writing scoring rubric* from "ETS: The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT" (2006). As stressed in this rubric (Table 5), addressing the topic and task, organizing and developing paragraphs, explaining, exemplifying and expressing details appropriately, displaying unity and coherence, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate diction and idiomaticity and writing grammatically correctly are amongst the major factors that need to be taken into account in an ideal composition (p. 261-262). Other elements, such as spelling (trivial misspelling), punctuation and capitalization were not taken into account for scoring although comments related to them were given to control group participants.

Table 5. TOEFL independent writing scoring rubric (from "ETS: The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT" (2006).

An essay at [the highest] level largely accomplishes all of the following:

► Effectively addresses the topic and task

► Is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate explanations, exemplifications, and/or details

► Displays unity, progression, and coherence

► Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors

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However, it is really tricky to attain a high inter-rater reliability in scoring composition while considering both content and accuracy (general writing performance), as is practiced by IELTS and TOEFL writing raters, especially when the scores range from 0 to 30. Here, the rater drew upon his experience in correcting and commenting on over 2,500 papers of about 65 English learners striving to prepare for TOEFL or IELTS writing tests during the 4 or 5 years prior to this experiment. In line with scoring system in iBT, the participants' pre-test and post-test scores ranged between 0 and 30, and considerable care and patience were exercised by the rater to assign scores as fairly as possible. However, another rater—the same colleague—first assessed all pre- and post-test compositions by himself. Then, the two raters assessed all papers for a second time (this time together in 4 long sessions), and considering the *independent writing scoring rubric* in ETS as well as the second rater's marks and justifications, the first rater made slight modifications to the originally assigned scores.

4. Results

4.1. Accuracy

T-test was employed to find out initial and final differences between FBF and CBF groups in accuracy. Table 6 shows the results for accuracy, i.e., the number of errors per 100 words in each composition. The mean number of errors per 100 words was 11.8 for the FBF and 13.3 for the CBF group at the outset of the study. No significant difference was detected between the two groups on the first assignment ($t = .7594$, $P = .4524$).

Table 6. Accuracy: pre-test means and standard deviations on errors per 100 words for the two groups

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
FBF	11.8	22	6.07	1.29
CBF	13.3	17	6.15	1.49

Table 7. Accuracy: t-test for error rate per 100 words comparing the two groups

	t	df	*P*	standard error of difference
Pre-test comparison	0.7594	37	0.4524	1.971

The mean number of errors per 100 words in the pre-test and the post-test for the FBF group was 11.8 and 12.5, respectively. Surprisingly, the average number of errors increased slightly. However, statistically, no significant difference was found between the FBF group's error rates at the two times ($t = .7776$, $P = .4455$).

Table 8. Accuracy: pre- and post-test means and standard deviations on errors per 100 words for the control group

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
Pre-test	11.8	22	6.07	1.29
Post-test	12.5	22	6.26	1.34

Table 9. Accuracy: t-test for error rate per 100 words for the control group at two testing times

	t	df	*P*	standard error of difference
FBF Pre- and post-test comparison	0.7776	21	0.4455	0.929

On the other hand, the mean number of errors per 100 words in the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group was 13.3 and 14, respectively. Again, the number of grammatical errors slightly increased. No significant difference, however, was found between the experimental group's error rates at the two times ($t = .6263$, $P = .5399$).

Table 10. Accuracy: pre- and post-test means and standard deviations on errors per 100 words for the experimental group

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
Pre-test	13.3	17	6.15	1.49
Post-test	14.0	17	7.24	1.76

Table 11. Accuracy: t-test for error rate per 100 words for the experimental group at two testing times

	t	df	P	standard error of difference
CBF Pre- and post-test comparison	0.6263	16	0.5399	1.165

Although the time it took the participants to write their compositions was not taken in this study, most reported that they spent between 30 to 60 minutes to do the task. However, FBF participants wrote an average number of 216 words in their pre-test and 197 words in their post-test. This average went from 197 to 205 words for the CBF group.

4.2. General writing performance

On the other hand, considering all factors indicating an appropriate composition (both structure and content), scores were carefully assigned by the two raters to the first and the fourteenth compositions as the pre-test and the post-test.

In order to ensure homogeneity between the two groups at the beginning of the study, an independent t-test was conducted between them on the pre-test.

Table 14. General writing performance: pre-test means and standard deviations for the two groups

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
FBF	20.65	22	3.21	0.67
CBF	20.53	17	3.30	0.80

Table 15. General writing performance: t-test for comparing the two groups

	t	df	P	standard error of difference
Pre-test comparison	0.1181	37	0.9066	1.040

As the table illustrates, there is no significant difference between the scores of the FBF and the CBF groups, $t = 0.1181$, $P = 0.9066$, proving that the FBF and CBF groups including different classes taking part in the study were homogeneous.

In order to determine if providing FBF had any significant differences on the participants' general writing proficiency, the group's pre-test and post-test scores were compared by t-test.

Table 16. General writing performance: pre- and post-test means and standard deviations for the control group

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
Pre-test	20.65	22	3.21	0.67
Post-test	21.35	22	3.47	0.72

Table 17. General writing performance: t-test for the control group at two testing times

	t	df	*P*	standard error of difference
FBF Pre- and post-test comparison	1.5738	21	0.1298	0.442

As it is shown, the feedback employed in the FBF group did not produce any significant impact in the participants' general writing performance, $t = 1.5738$, $P = 0.1298$.

In order to determine if providing CBF had any significant differences on the participants' general writing proficiency, the group's scores of the first and last compositions were subjected to t-test.

Table 18. General writing performance: pre- and post-test means and standard deviations for the experimental group

	Mean	N	Std. deviation	SEM
Pre-test	20.53	17	3.30	0.80
Post-test	22.76	17	2.91	0.70

Table 19. General writing performance: t-test for the experimental group at two testing times

	t	df	*P*	standard error of difference
Pre-test comparison	5.1592	16	0.0001	0.433

As it is shown, providing CBF produced a significant difference, $t = 5.1592$, $P = 0.0001$

5. Discussion

There is a plethora of materials both theoretically and experimentally about the concept of feedback provision and its impact on linguistic proficiency, in general, and on improving writing skill, in particular. However, how teachers should provide corrective feedback in L2 compositions effectively has not been taken into account appropriately. Truscott's (1996) contentious article "Grammar Correction Does Not Work" stimulated a host of researchers to

focus on the issue of corrective feedback on composition, which probably is the best outcome of his standpoint.

The results of this study are in line with Truscott's (1996) argument that teachers should not waste time on grammar correction, time that should be devoted to "other aspects of writing, such as organization and logical development of arguments" (p. 355-56). It appears that scrupulous attention to grammatical correction in L2 student writing, which has long been considered a crucial key to writing proficiency by L2 teachers, does not result in significant improvement in student writing. Moreover, providing such feedback is time-consuming and troublesome. That is, the teacher has to spend excessive time correcting abundant grammatical mistakes of students. Since the task is obviously time-consuming, it may deter teachers from paying assiduous attention to writing skill in general, or make them limit teaching writing skill to certain periods in the process of learning a second language. This is also obvious in all research projects carried out in the past 30 years in which either the number of participants or the number of their compositions is unusually small. Worse, the problem can be clearly seen when after providing grammatical feedback in a long period, teachers often find subtle effects on student writing ability. Small wonder that such disappointing results will make most teachers fatigued and frustrated.

On the other hand, it should be noted that writing proficiency is a major skill in learning a foreign language. The significant role of this skill has become more conspicuous by the advent of the Internet and the availability of communication through writing. This role has not been overlooked by policy makers and designers of such international examinations as IELTS and TOEFL which both assign two writing tasks to their examinees.

Since the majority of teachers sense that correcting a composition denotes grammar rectification, this type of feedback can be referred to as traditional feedback on compositions. This way, by crossing through the incorrect forms and writing the correct structural and lexical forms on top of the mistakes, teachers usually feel they have fulfilled their task. In fact, it seems that the provision of grammatical corrections legitimizes teacher's position as a composition instructor as long as the composition is replete with colorful comments and rectifications adding, suggesting, excluding and replacing words and phrases, and censuring students' manuscripts, a performance directly depicting teacher's endeavor usually made at home where he is supposed to relax.

Nonetheless, it seems that an appropriate composition should state its main idea clearly, and answer a given question—the topic—by offering logical and adequate reasons, and of course, should not have blatant grammatical mistakes which hinder comprehension, and has minimal number of trivial grammar mistakes. Chiang (2004) argues that teachers who provide sentence-level feedback frequently may give their students a false message that feedback on local errors is more important than feedback on global ones.

The results of this survey reveal that teacher's endeavors to reduce the volume of grammatical mistakes are futile and L2 writers continue to write using a considerable number of flawed structures even after reviewing their rectified compositions. However, upon receiving textual information about the way they should put together their essays, they are better capable of making use of the comments and implementing them in their subsequent essays, and as a result, the teacher may feel more contented with his contribution in the development of L2 writing performance and less frustrated following spending a lengthy period of time examining papers. If we imagine that grammar correction, in an absolute traditional sense, does not virtually make any difference from ignoring grammatical mistakes, the component of general writing performance that can enhance following receiving the relevant feedback is the content quality. L2 writers seem to grasp the idea of employing an appropriate composition model comprising clearly distinguished paragraphs which address a particular unit of meaning developed by pertinent explanations and applicable examples and embed proper connectors and transition words more efficiently than that of trying to avoid making analogous grammatical mistakes in their succeeding essays.

Accordingly, it can be deduced from the results of this study that providing content feedback by the teacher helps the student writer know how to aptly organize the composition so that a clear response is communicated to the reader. In fact, offering such feedback proves really effective, especially for Iranian English writers, who receive little feedback on their composition content even in their first language. It appears that offering content feedback to intermediate students can help them employ their increasing repertoire of vocabulary, basic grammar and sentence structures to express their opinions more clearly and efficiently.

On the other hand, most researches on the type of content feedback reveal that general content feedback is often ambiguous and confusing and does not help student writers utilize teacher's recommendations in their subsequent compositions. Sommers (1982), for instance,

asserts that many teachers' comments on student writings, such as 'Be specific', 'Be precise', 'Avoid this word', 'It's wordy, elaborate, etc.' are vague themselves and may be used in any given writing, whereas we want our students to express themselves clearly. She concludes that teacher's commentary on student writing is not often thoughtful enough to help students "engage with the issues they are writing about or … think about their purposes and goals in writing a specific text" (p.154). Surprisingly, even though most researchers agree that content feedback ought to be text-specific, the literature is scarce on this issue, and little incentive and enthusiasm exist to measure the efficacy of providing text-specific content feedback on improving general writing performance.

6. Conclusion

A significant conclusion obtained in this research is that student writers' knowledge of composition organization and content can help them express their ideas more obviously. Offering general content feedback might be helpful in giving student writers an overall picture of the passage. Nevertheless, it seems that students need individual straightforward feedback from their teacher on the degree to which they have managed to communicate their intended message to the reader, and how logically they have introduced, defended, developed, exemplified and concluded a specific point of view.

This task may mistakenly seem daunting, but taking two issues into consideration may convince many writing teachers to try it. First, content feedback can often be jotted down in the margins or between paragraphs following perusing a paragraph, say introduction. Language is viewed holistically in which communication of the idea far outweighs syntactic and lexical accuracy. Second, providing CBF appears to have a more profound effect than correcting compositions merely grammatically. Besides, it often takes less time to offer CBF than FBF. Moreover, it has occurred at least to me that I was distracted by correcting tens of grammatical mistakes of some compositions in that I lost my attention to what the student writer intended to communicate, and I did not reread it owing to either the shortage of time correcting other papers or tedium. The situation is exacerbated when the teacher frequently corrects the same mistake or type of mistake and witnesses it again in subsequent papers. Students, too, sometimes feel irritated when they see abundant notes and codes in different colors all over their original paper and ask when they will come to an end. (I use a green pen lest the red one exert adverse effects!)

On the other hand, it seems that when the teacher finds signs of improvement in students' writing proficiency through implementing viable feedback, he is well motivated to take account of writing skill.

Nevertheless, it appears illogical to ask teachers to take no action concerning their students' grammatical deviance. It goes without saying that attempts should be made to reduce the number of such mistakes, particularly those which impede communication of meaning. Traditionally as well as currently, the majority of writing teachers prefer to correct compositions and probably oblige students to rewrite them, whether they have found it fruitful, useless or detrimental. The solution to the abundance and persistence of grammatical mistakes in student writing might also be sought in reinforcing other language skills, such as reading intensively or listening practice or even in direct grammar instruction. Further research might offer a solution to this problem as well.

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Title

Deixis its Definition and Kinds in English and Persian languages

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Abstract

Deixis are available in all of the world's languages and are always in three forms of place, time and person. In this research this phenomenon is studied in both English and Persian languages, and then some researcher's findings are investigated. At last Persian deixis was studied and showed that there is a very good richness of deixis in Persian languages.

Keywords: Deixis, Distal and proximal expressions, Time, Person, Place Deixis, Discourse and social Deixis.

1. Introduction

In every language there are some expressions which their referents are out of the language and context and always are hard to find. These expressions are divided in three groups of time, place and person. Deixis are expressions which their referents are out of languages and without setting

possibilities and facilities it is always hard to identify them. For example someone uses the word NOW, the addressee without understanding the time and place of the speech cannot identify the message .in grammar without any exceptions all of the demonstratives are deixis.

In all of the world languages there is a very important distinction. Distal expressions for pointing to far and proximal expressions for pointing to near are used. Expression of time contains the duration and distance of the time in which an action takes place. And in place expressions the location of happening of an action is investigated.

Deixis are egocentric. This means that if we assume that deixis are referring to specific point of speech, that specific point should be one of the followings;

1. Central person is speaker.
2. Central time is a time in which speaker performs speech.
3. Central place is where in which speaker performs speech.
4. Speech center is a point speaker produces speech.
5. Social center of speech is speaker's social position.

2. Background

Hurford and Heasely (2007) have defined the deictic words as follows; a word that obtains some of its meaning elements from the position (speaker, addressee, time and place) in which the speech is used. They mention that the words like yesterday, today, now, here and also the verbs like come and bring contain deictic concepts which refers to speaker. They also say linguistic instruments for expressing past, present and future tenses also deictic .because we define them according to their time of speech. They also ask a question; is it possible to have a language without deictic words? And show with many examples that the authenticity of language sentences and their quality would lessen in case of not being deixis .and language users would face with big problems.

According to Framklin and Rodman (2011) there are many expressions in language which their referents are out of languages and return to non-language settings. In fact without setting, their meaning cannot be comprehended. They name this aspect of pragmatics as deixis and say that all of the pronouns are of this kind, like I, YOU , MINE, etc. They also say that nouns accompanying them are also deictic because listener should make a referential connection with them to find out their meaning . The authors also believe that deixis have the variety of

usages in language. They are the marker between pragmatics and semantics boundaries. The pronoun (I) have an independent meaning from the context, its semantic meaning is the speaker. But in context it is compulsory that the speaker should be known, what the word (I) refers to.

David Crystal (1992) defines this grammatical phenomenon as follows; a grammatical phenomenon which directly refers to the position in which speech takes place. Its meaning is related to a position in which it is used. then he brings an example; the interpretation of the pronouns (I) and (YOU) are different and depends to the person who makes speech and the person who is listener or addressee .time and place setting of speaker is dominant to interpretation of some adverbs like tomorrow , here , now and etc .

3. Kinds of deixis

3.1. Person deixis

In this kind of deixis the basic distinction is among the first, second and third person. In an analysis we assume the first person as speaker having the feature of (+S), second person with the feature of (+A) as addressee and the third person with none of the features. These elements are; I, YOU, HE, SHE, IT in both English and Persian languages.

3.2. Time deixis

Circulation of these deixis in all languages are year, season, month and day. It also contains all of the time adverbs in English and Persian; today, tomorrow, yesterday, recently, then, now and etc.

3.3. Place deixis

We refer to anything in two ways; we name them or we determine (locate) their action .these expressions for determination of place are; HERE, THERE, THESE, THOSE, THAT, THIS in both Persian and English languages.

3.4. Discourse deixis

Using expressions with some sayings for referring to that part of speech it relates to. There is difference between anaphora and this concept; anaphora is using a pronoun to refer to same referent used in context. <u>Alex</u> is a good man, <u>he</u> is handsome. When a pronoun refers to a linguistic deixis, it is said that the pronoun is linguistic demonstrative deixis and when a pronoun refers to a specific referent mentioned before, it is anaphora. Also it had to be said that there is a close relation between mention and discourse deixis. Look at these examples;

    1. that is a cat.   2. Spell it for me.

Here the pronoun <u>IT</u> is not referring to the animal itself, it refers to the word cat. So the cat (animal) is not intended, but the word referring to the cat is intended.

Lyon (1970) says that when a pronoun is used anaphoric ally, the order of noun and pronoun should be carefully regarded. For example;

Ali and Mary come home. He was laughing, she was crying.

Persian translation; Ali and Mary come home. <u>This</u> was laughing, <u>that</u> was crying.

But in English there are expressions representing the relation of speech with previous context: the words like ALL AND ALL, BESIDES, HOWEVER and etc. what these words express is the relation between the previous speech with next speech or expressing the facts previous to themselves.

3.5. Social deixis

These expressions represent facts about the social position in which speech happens.

All languages have one of these two forms of social deixis: absolute or relational. Relational variables are the most important ones, and the relations which are influenced from them are:

 A) Speaker and referent

b) Speaker and addressee

c) Speaker and bystanders

d) Speaker and setting.

4. Conclusion

Deixis are used to encoding the social information in a language corpus. In Korean and Japanese languages without these social deixis, it is impossible to analyze a sentence, but in Persian and English it is different. In the first two languages regarding to their traditional aspect, these expressions are very important. But in two latter ones this traditional aspect and old cultural affairs do not exist.

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Title

Integrating Language and Literature: the Impact of Direct Instruction of Narratives on Young Adults' EFL Writing Ability

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to determine the impact of direct instruction of narratives on Iranian Elementary EFL writing ability conducted in a "randomized pretest-posttest" design. The participants were 108 male and female young adult learners, aged 11 to 14. Having found no statistically significant difference among the learners regarding their writing abilities in the pretest; the participants were randomly assigned into two experimental and a control groups. The three groups were subjected to exactly the same procedures and the same curriculum except that the control group did not receive the treatment. The two experimental groups were given direct instruction of narratives through two narrative approaches;

Story Grammar Approach (SGA) and Reader Response Approach (RRA). After the treatment, all groups sat for the posttest. To analyze the data a series of one-way ANOVAs and a Tukey HSD test were used followed by a *t*-test. The findings pointed out that the participants in the SGA group outperformed those in the control and the RRA groups in terms of overall quality of their writings, grammatical accuracy, coherence, spelling, and word choice. This study may promise theoretical and pedagogical implications for teachers, learners and curriculum designers.

Keywords: Narratives/narration, RRA (Reader Response Approach), SGA (Story Grammar Approach), EFL, Writing Skill, Tukey HSD test, ANOVA, t-test.

1. Introduction

It is commonly agreed that writing has been one of most challenging skills for EFL learners (Brice and Silva, 2004; Ellis, Chandrasegaran, Poedjosoedarmo; 2005) and the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill but usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Scholars believe that writing skill must be practiced and learned through experience and it should play a prominent role in classroom-based studies of EFL and ESL (Long, 1971; Kelly, 1984; Myles, 2002; Harklau, 2002). One of the central debates in this domain deals with the effectiveness of literature toward teaching writing. Researchers believe that literature provides learners with authentic use of language in which learners are exposed to meaningful input print (Widdoson, 1984; McKay and Petitt, 1984; Brumfit and Carter, 2000; Belsky, 2006; McIntosh, 2006).

Literature provides learners with a medium through which learners might access the new language and enhance their critical thinking skills, intercultural awareness, and emotional intelligence (Collie and Slater, 1987; Ghosn, 2001). Recently literature has become a significant part of language program and using it in such a way that develops learners' basic area of knowledge turned to be important and helping learners to develop a sense of literature is believed to be one of the most effective ways to enhance children's writing and reading skills (Lehr, 1987; Amer, 2003).

As the scholars attach great importance to literature-based instruction, determining an appropriate approach to teaching literature to EFL/ESL learners has gained much attention in

recent years (Amer, 2003). Two narrative approaches, which have gained popularity in recent years, are "Story Grammar Approach" and "Reader Response Approach" (Amer, 1992; 2003). In the phrase "story grammar", "grammar" means "elements". As a result, "Story Grammar" refers to the elements of the story, which include the title, author, setting, main characters, conflict and resolution, events, and conclusion (Stein and Glenn, 1971; Rumelhart, 1975; Mandler and Johnson, 1977; Thorndyke, 1977; Beck and McKoewn, 1981; Mandler and Goodman, 1982 cited in Amer, 2003). The "Reader Response Approach" is grounded on the belief that the reading process is a transaction between the reader and the text during which a live interaction is created. Therefore, paying attention to personal responses in the classroom gives young learners more choice, control, and an opportunity to use their voices in response to literature (Goodman, 1986; Altwerger, Edelsky, Flores, 1987; Rosenblatt, 1984; Cox, 1997, cited in Amer, 2003). Making these observations, scholars such as Takagaki (2002), Amer (2003), Belsky (2006), McIntosh (2006), Suzer (2006) call for the necessity of instruction of stories and investigation of its effects on EFL learners in different institutional contexts.

To bridge the gap between the existing literature and the studies on Iranian EFL learners, the present study examined the use of two types of narrative approaches in the writings of Iranian EFL learners to find if there is a significant distinctive difference in writing tasks of RRA and SGA learners and to compare the findings with those of previous studies. Therefore, the following questions were raised:

RQ1: Does direct instruction of narratives have significant effects on Elementary-level foreign language writing ability of Iranian young adult learners?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference between RRA and SGA regarding their effects on learners' writing ability?

2. Background

There is a considerable body of literature dealing with the use of narratives in EFL classes. To begin with, in an early attempt Krashen (1984) attested the role of using narratives and children's narratives in EFL classes and reported the positive effects of short stories on learners' attitudes toward learning a foreign/second language and creating anxiety-free learning atmosphere. Similarly, Krashen and Lao (2000) demonstrate that among Hong-Kong university students, the group who read literary texts showed improvement in vocabulary and reading.

Yuling (2004) argues that storytelling is useful for enriching EFL high school classes in Taiwan and his investigation shows that learners improved their four skills after the treatment. He argues that students' interest and participation are considered essential for successful teaching and storytelling as text presentation can turn frustrating text lecturing into exciting and fruitful experiences in learning.

In her study, Swantz (2004) employed the action research method to find out whether storytelling increases students' understanding and interest in the South region of the United States. She conducted her research with two sections of fourth grade social studies classes (supposed as Elementary learners) divided into four groups and each group created a Southern Fairy Tale based on a well-known fairy tale frame. The groups added details to these tales based on their research of one area of the South. Both sections were taught social studies, while the other fourth grade was taught science. Her treatment included direct teaching, whole class discussion, small group work, and individual journaling and brainstorming. Using the story map, the class divided the action of the story into four sections and small groups of students were assigned a section to write. Using both the fairy tale story map and the research lists students created a new story map of their Southern Fairy Tales. Having compared pre-test to post-test results, she concluded that storytelling provides an emotional tie between images created in the mind and the spoken words and embeds new knowledge more deeply into the teller in a way that it becomes a part of the learner. To answer her research question she states that the results of this treatment show a positive trend in both students' attitude and understanding. Swantz (2004) offers that these improvements are the upshots of storytelling and its effect. The pre- and post-test data demonstrates the changes in students' achievement. They knew more about areas of the South at the end of the treatment than they did at the outset.

A highly relevant research that examined the use of narratives in an EFL context is Belsky (2006) who found that the use of children's literature in Texas EFL classrooms would enhance adolescent learners' English language development, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. She also analyzed adolescent language learners' attitudes toward reading in the foreign language and toward reading in general. Having done the research she found that narratives lead to learners' development in all four skills. She concluded that literature increases learners' intrinsic motivation and change their attitudes towards reading. It also provides them

with meaningful experience, rich and authentic material and leads to development in their language skills.

Fleta (2007) focused on the role of storybooks in teaching vocabularies to young EFL learners. She asserts that students will learn more vocabulary if the vocabulary presented through storybooks rather than textbooks. Learners who used storybooks outperformed the learners who were taught vocabulary through textbooks. She found that use of storybooks in EFL classes is considered an aim that many teachers would like to achieve. Therefore, instructors need training in how to use stories effectively in classes to help learners develop their language skills and also different language areas especially in primary EFL classrooms.

2.1. Previous Studies on SGA and RRA in EFL Classes

There is a group of empirical research which have been explored the role of "Reader Response Approach" and "Story Grammar Approach" on EFL learners' language development.

Amer (1992) investigated the effect of teaching EFL sixth grade students the elements of narrative on their reading comprehension of a story. The students were required to read the story silently and then they were asked some questions which brought out the elements of the story grammar. The results of his study indicated that the story grammar can be taught through guided-reading questions. Students' performance showed that this strategy help EFL learners comprehend the episodic sequence and the structure of the story, focus on main ideas and remove unnecessary details. Students in experimental group who were given instruction in story grammar outperformed those in the control group in terms of their reading comprehension.

In her study, Suzer (2006) offers RRA to teach poetry. He conducted his research in eight-year-primary and four-year-high-school education in Turkey. His study involves two important reading stages: efferent and aesthetic. During the efferent phase, learners were guided to have grounded reflections on the text and its context and on the aesthetic stage, the learners were provided to see the text through their own schema. They were allowed to incorporate their feelings, sense of appreciation, interpretation and experiences to their own personal responses. Instead of working around the efferent reading stage and limiting poetry reading to surface level understanding, learners had to discover their own taste and appreciation via aesthetic reading. At the end of the experiment, learners were able to improve poetry appreciation. The findings suggested that the participants prefer reader response to traditional poetry teaching classes. With

reader response, learners became active participants and developed positive attitude towards reading and analyzing poetry.

In another study McIntosh (2006) asserts that since literature is the focus in secondary English integrating literature reading and writing about encounters with text would be essential. Teachers can ask students to write responses as they read a novel or stories for class study to engage them in reading. She argued that according to transactional theory of reading, the meaning of the text resides in the person rather than the words on the page. This transaction varies among individuals and reflection is the key to comprehension. She declared that "reflective writing" or "writing while reading" is the key component of reader response approach, help learners comprehend what they read, trust in their reading, express their feelings and become active participants. She concludes that learners can develop their reading and writing skills through this approach.

As it was discussed above, using literature in EFL classrooms and especially for young learners and children has attracted many teachers and researchers' attention. It has been the focus of foreign language teaching in the last decade (Carter and Brumfit, 2000; Lao and Krashen, 2000). From all the cases of the use of literature in EFL contexts, it is clear that the question of "how to teach literature to EFL learners to help them improve their language abilities and linguistic skills" has not been featured yet. To address this gap this study explores the effects of two types of narrative instruction on EFL young adults' writing skills.

3. Methodology

3.1.Participants

The participants of the study were 108 elementary-level EFL learners, 58 males and 50 females who were enrolled at Iran Language Institute (ILI), a popular Iranian language institute, in the spring term of 2010. All the subjects had already passed a standard English proficiency test for placement purposes and were grouped in the elementary level. Age, nationality, and language background of the participants were controlled in this study; they were all Iranian with an age range of 11-14, who have been studying English for two years.

Although the subjects were not randomly selected, they were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups, therefore; this study was conducted under the true "randomized pretest posttest design". To this end, the explicit instruction of narratives was considered as the

independent variable that was supposed to affect the dependent variable, namely, EFL learners' writing ability.

3.2. Instrumentation and Procedures

Three types of instrumentation including reading materials (short narratives), pretest and posttest were utilized to address the research questions in this study. Thirteen narratives were taught to the students, the readability of which was measured using Flesch Reading Ease formula (R= 93.5 on a 100-point scale) and the researchers were quite sure that the learners would not encounter difficulty in reading and comprehending the materials. The pretest and posttest were both picture-description tasks. The pretest aimed at ascertaining that learners did not significantly differ from one another in their writing ability, and the posttest was administered to measure learners' development before and after the experiment.

All male and female participants were asked to write a narrative about a series of pictures on the pretest; then, learners' writing task were scored based on Brown's (2001) writing rubrics by two raters, and the results showed that there was a high correlation between two sets of scores on the pretest (pretest: r= 0.927, N= 108, $p<0.05$, two-tailed). Learners were randomly assigned into three groups; two experimental and a control groups. To ensure maximum comprehensibility, the researchers provided the experimental groups with detailed explanation in their first language before the onset of the study and then they were provided with the narrative instruction. A posttest was administered after eleven weeks of experiment to all three groups and their writing tasks were scored by two raters and a high positive correlation was found between two sets of scores on the posttest (Posttest: r= 0.955, N=108, $p<0.05$, two-tailed).

3.2.1. Procedures in the Experimental Groups

Students in the SGA group were taught to use a basic 'Story Grammar' to map out, identify and analyze significant components of narrative text. According to Tompkins (1997) cited in Kaufman (2005), the elements of a narrative are characters, setting, plot, theme, and point of view. Students' responses were limited to characters, setting, plot, theme, and conclusion. Only these five narrative elements were addressed in this study because "point of view" would be too complex for the learners to code.

Having introduced key Story Grammar elements to learners, they got ready to use the "grammar" to analyze a sample narrative passage. The researcher paused at pre-determined points to ask the learners key questions (e.g. "Who is the main character? What is she like?"). After discussion,

the teacher assigned students to write their answers on the Story Map Worksheet. The learners had to hand in their worksheets for the following session. Their responses were checked by the researcher in each session and the learners were provided with additional support and guidance to improve their writing.

The learners in the RRA group were taught to bring their values, emotions, and experience to the text and interpret the text by themselves. They learned that they have the opportunity to create and improve new meanings instead of discovering and comprehending the authors' intended meaning. Narratives were read aloud in classes by learners and were followed by relating the narratives to their own experience. Then learners were supposed to summarize the narrative and to have a group discussion about the narrative including asking questions about learners' opinion about the narrative. Afterward RRA worksheets were assigned and learners were required to respond to the questions posed in the worksheet. The learners' responses were checked and provided with appropriate feedbacks by the researcher.

3.2.2. Procedures in the Control Group

The narratives were read aloud either by the researcher or one of the students in the class and others followed along their pamphlets.

4. Results and Discussion

Statistical procedures in the study included the descriptive analysis and referential statistics of the scores obtained on the writing pretest and posttest. Analysis of the collected data was fulfilled through SPSS software. In the main procedure of data analysis, the descriptive statistics of the scores were calculated. Then a one-way ANOVA and a Tukey HSD test were run to compare the results obtained from three groups. The gain scores of each group- the difference between the mean scores in pretest and posttest- were obtained and were compared using a paired sample t-test.

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the participants. As the table indicates, there was a slight difference among means of these three groups on the pretest, which turned to be significant in the posttest.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the population

	Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD

Control	31.950	9.367	37.717	11.443
SGA	33.486	10.214	58.270	9.535
RRA	35.707	9.560	44.085	11.290

Considering the first research question of the study on investigating the effects of direct instruction of narratives on Elementary-level foreign language writing ability of Iranian young adult learners, the researchers had to compare the mean scores of the three groups on the writing pretest. The F-observed value was 1.341 (Table 2). It is found that the obtained p value was higher than 0.05 ($F (2, 105) = 1.341$, $p = 0.26$). As illustrated in table 2, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of three groups on the writing pretest. That is to say that, the three groups were homogeneous in terms of their writing proficiency prior to the present study.

Table 2 one-way ANOVA for learners' performance in pretest

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
pre	Between Groups	254.323	2	127.162	1.341	.266
	Within Groups	9955.906	105	94.818		
	Total	10210.229	107			

Then the researchers compared the obtained sample scores from the experimental groups with those of the control group on the posttest. This comparison was accomplished using a one-way ANOVA. As demonstrated in table 3, by administration of this test between the scores of means in the experimental and control groups it was shown that the obtained p value was lower than 0.05 ($F (2, 105) = 32.916$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that the dependent variable, i.e. learners' writing ability was influenced by the independent variable, namely the teaching of narratives.

Table 3 one-way ANOVA for learners' performance in posttest

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
post	Between Groups	7630.067	2	3815.034	32.916	.000
	Within Groups	12169.590	105	115.901		
	Total	19799.657	107			

In order to ensure where differences reported by ANOVA exactly occurred and to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the effects of the Reader Response Approach and the Story Grammar Approach on learners' writing ability, a Tukey HSD test was utilized.

Table 4 Multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD)

Dependent Variable	(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
post	RRA	SGA	-14.18490*	2.44117	.000	-20.6537	-7.7161
		CONTROL	6.36870	2.58654	.041	-.4854	13.2228
	SGA	RRA	14.18490*	2.44117	.000	7.7161	20.6537
		CONTROL	20.55360*	2.64496	.000	13.5447	27.5625
	CONTROL	RRA	-6.36870	2.58654	.041	-13.2228	.4854
		SGA	-20.55360*	2.64496	.000	-27.5625	-13.5447

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

As displayed in table 4, significant differences were found between the learners' performance taught through the "Reader Response Approach" and those taught through the "Story Grammar Approach" ($p < 0.05$), and between the learners' performance taught through the "Story Grammar Approach" and the control group ($p < 0.05$), between the learners' performance taught through the "Reader Response Approach" and the control group ($p = .041$). According to the obtained results, the SGA group outperformed the RRA and the control groups. Therefore, seeking an answer to the second question the researchers found a statistically significant difference between the effects of the Reader Response Approach and the Story Grammar Approach on learners' writing ability.

A paired sample *t*-test designed at 0.05 level of statistic significance was also run to compare the groups' means on the pretest and posttest for all three groups, where the difference was the posttest score minus the pretest score for each person. The differences between the pretest and posttest scores were calculated and then analyzed. Table 5 displays the obtained output.

Table 5 Paired Sample Test

Groups		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
RRA	pre – post	8.37805	9.47878	1.48034	11.36992	5.38618	5.660	40	.000
SGA	pre – post	24.78378	9.54924	1.56989	27.96766	21.59991	15.787	36	.000
CONTROL	pre – post	5.76667	10.16734	1.85629	9.56321	1.97012	3.107	29	.004

As displayed in table 5, the learners in the RRA group ($p < 0.05$), in the SGA group ($p < 0.05$), and in the control group ($p = 0.004$) performed significantly better on the posttest. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant improvement in the performance of the participants of the RRA, the SGA, and the control group in comparison to the pretest. Therefore, the researchers found that explicit teaching of narratives led to significant effects on improving the learners' writing ability. They also concluded that the "Story Grammar Approach" helps EFL learners comprehend the episodic sequence and the structures of the narratives, focus on the main ideas and remove unnecessary details. This strategy also helps learners to write in a well-organized sequence. In order to investigate the participants' achievements in English writing ability, the experimenter collected some samples of the participants' work. In these samples, she examined the amount of written discourse, the structures used by participants, learners' language usage when responding to writing prompts, and their comprehension of the texts. At the beginning of the study, participants in all three groups, experimental and control groups were not familiar with narrative writing activities. Throughout the experiment, learners in the SGA group were required to attend to the narrative structures and exploit them in their writings to present the events occurred in the narratives in a meaningful and systematic way and the learners in the RRA group were trained to feel free to express their own ideas without any restrictions. The comparison between learners' written samples in posttest showed that the learners' writings in the SGA group appear to be more elaborated than the writings of the control and the RRA participants.

The results of the present study confirmed the findings of research done by Carter and Brumfit (2000), Lao and Krashen (2000), Swantz (2004), Yuling (2004), Tickoo (2005), Belsky (2006), Fleta (2007) who emphasized the positive effects of using narratives and short stories in EFL contexts. They believe that literature is authentic material and motivating, it encourages interactions, expands language awareness, educates the whole person, and changes their attitudes towards learning a second/foreign language. In their idea, integrating language and literature results in improvement in four language skills.

The results also confirmed the findings of the research conducted by Krashen (1984), Takagaki (2002), Wang (2007), Kay (2007), Alisheedi (2008) who stated that extensive reading helps learners improve L2 proficiency by focusing on the overall meaning of the text rather than on linguistic aspects of the text. They are in favor of using narratives or storytelling accompanied by interactive writing activities. In the present study, reading stories as an extensive activity also led to improvement in learners' writing skill in the control group.

The findings are also in line with McIntosh (2006) and Suzer (2006) who assert that integrating literature reading followed by writing about encounters with text will be essential and according to the transactional theory of reading, writing responses to literature called "reflective writing" or "writing while reading" leads to progress in writing. They believe that writing responses to stories helps learners comprehend what they read and relate it to prior knowledge and experience. They also claim that with RRA, learners become active participants and develop positive attitudes towards reading and improve their critical thinking as well. The results also confirmed the other side of the coin, which was reported by Brumfit and Carter (2000). They claim that both native and non-native speaking readers encounter this problem that a literary response requires fluency in reading. Therefore, a person who has not the reading or comprehension fluency is not able to respond to literature. The findings of the present study suggest that some young adults encounter problems in responding to narratives and they were not able to express their feelings and opinions in terms of the answers to the questions posed in RRA worksheets.

The results obtained from the SGA group confirmed the remarks made by Mandler (1984), Lehr (1987), Amer (1992), Amer (2003), and Dean (2009) who claimed that story grammar can be taught through guided-reading questions and that learners perform better in writing tasks and reading comprehension tasks, if they get familiar with the components of the narratives.

Students' performance showed that this strategy helps EFL learners comprehend the episodic sequence and the structures of the narratives, focus on main ideas and remove unnecessary details. This strategy also helps learners to write in a well-organized sequence. They strongly assert that helping learners to develop a sense of stories is one of the most effective ways to promote children's reading and writing skills, which can be done by the use of "Story Grammar".

5. Conclusion

After homogenizing the participants in the study, 108 young adult learners were selected to conduct the study in the "randomized pretest-posttest" design. Having administered the pretest, learners were randomly assigned into two experimental groups and a control group. In two separate narrative approaches (SGA and RRA), the experimental groups received the treatment after the pretest. The posttest was administered in eleven weeks and the data were analyzed through SPSS software. According to the results obtained, significant differences were found between the learners' performance taught through the RRA and those taught through the SGA ($p < 0.05$), and between the learners' performance taught through the SGA and the control group ($p < 0.05$), between the learners' performance taught through the RRA and the control group ($p = .041$). On the whole, the treatment process affected the participants' writing ability positively in that students produced more organized writings in terms of having introduction and conclusion, and using more discourse markers which made their writings more coherent especially in the SGA group. Consequently, due to the advantages of the instructional treatment, the participants in the SGA group performed significantly better than those in the RRA group. Therefore, it can be claimed that the type of instructional treatment affected the participants' performance in two experimental groups. The results of the descriptive and inferential statistics showed that explicit instruction of stories through "Story Grammar Approach" was more effective than the "Reader Response Approach". Findings also offer that the writing skill is teachable in EFL contexts and the explicit instruction of narratives is conductive to L2 writing improvement of the learners.

The results of the study carry pedagogical implications. The major purpose for which the researchers conducted this study was providing a preliminary investigation to see whether narratives could be instructed in EFL courses with paying more attention to writing skill. This study was conducted with the deepest hope that English teachers and administrators accept the

data from this study as a new way of thinking, which leads to incorporating authentic materials including narratives, short stories, poems, and novels in EFL courses for teaching writing skill as well as those intended for reading and comprehension skills. As a result, EFL teachers should try to incorporate longer teaching hours on the use of narratives in EFL classes especially for children and young adult learners. The results will also help course designers to incorporate storytelling and story reading as main activities for improving EFL learners reading and writing skills. Finally, task designers might find the findings a beneficial source of material required in reading and writing courses.

More research is needed to support these claims. The present study focused on the quantitative analysis of the impact the direct instruction of narratives had on young adult learners' writing skill of Iranian young adult EFL learners. Future qualitative studies could be carried out on this issue. The participants in this research were young adult learners in EFL classes at the Elementary level of proficiency; researchers might be interested in working with other levels of proficiency, particularly those in upper-intermediate and advanced levels. Due to time limitations, the present study delivered a general overview of approaches adopted for teaching narratives to the learners. Giving a much more detailed attention to those approaches (SGA and RRA) and comparing them with other approaches used for teaching literature can also be a good prompt for further research. Since this study was carried out in ILI curriculum, the results of the study could be generalized to adolescent learners of English as a foreign language and could be used in the development of EFL curriculum among Iranian young adult learners. The researchers recommend that similar research be carried out in other institutional contexts with a larger sample size over a long period of time and in Solomon design to control the effect of pretest on learners' performance.

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Title

The Development of Students and Teachers Critical Thinking Ability: A Case of Explicit and E-Learning Instruction

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Abstract

It has been hypothesized for several years that critical thinking would make an important contribution to being an effective student and an effective teacher. However, in spite of the literature regarding the implications of critical thinking in the area of language education, little research has investigated the development of critical thinking skill on teachers through explicit instruction on the one hand and on students through explicit instruction on the one hand and on students through the usage of e-learning and use of technology in language education. In the first phase, 20 EFL teachers took the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (level X) before and after the explicit instruction on critical thinking. In the second phase, 120 EFL students were taught using the traditional and the e-learning language instruction in two groups and were tested by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) to explore the effectiveness of either language instruction approach in the enhancement of critical thinking skills. The findings demonstrated that explicit instruction of critical thinking strategies helps teachers, especially male ones, develop thinking critically. Moreover, it was found that the application of e-learning and use of technology in language instruction enhances students', and more specifically male students', critical thinking judgment skills.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Concept of critical thinking

Critical thinking is referred to the thinking movement which was introduced based on the idea that schools should focus their attention on producing and developing knowledge and equipping students with critical competence rather than requiring them to memorize course contents. Encouraging students to develop critical thinking skills has become crucially important in higher education (Grafstein, 2007). A person who thinks critically asks appropriate questions, collects relevant information, reasons logically from this information and comes to reliable conclusions (Ghaemi & Taherian, 2011).

According to Dewey (1938) the primary purpose of education is learning to think. He further pointed out the main purpose of education to address the teaching of thinking rather than the only teaching of subject matter. Therefore, educators emphasize the importance of developing of thinking skills and further believe that thinking ability should be a primary goal of education (Pitcher & Soden, 2000). The development of thinking skills empowers students to generate new ideas and helps them provide reasoning and explanation of everyday events (Halonen, 1995).

According to Ennis (1989) students' reflective and thinking ability can be developed through critical thinking schemata. Chaffee (1988) defines critical thinking as "our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding" (p. 29). Education, for long, has required students to memorize course contents to give correct answers, complete their assignments, do well on tests and get good grades; yet, they are unable to think critically. However, according to Pitchers and Soden (2000), the current educational system focuses on both the learning of content information and the development of critical thinking skills on students. Being a critical thinker helps students to develop awareness and pay more attention to context in which their actions and ideas are generated. Critical thinking, being defined by Brunner (1986) as "thinking about thinking", enables us to view our actions through the eyes of others.

Current trends in education focus more on students' critical thinking. Educators frequently emphasize the importance of developing thinking ability and thinking skills as the primary goal of education. Critical thinkers are actively engaged with life. They constantly question assumptions and appreciate creativity for being inventors (Young, 1980). Siegel (1988) states that "to be a critical thinker a person must have certain attitudes, dispositions, habits of mind, and character traits, which together may be labeled the *critical attitude* or *critical spirit*" (p. 39). Vygotsky (1978, cited in Feuerstein, 1999), in his study stressed the importance of a scientific outlook along with patterns of thought and logical reasoning for the development of students' understanding and perception skills. However, critical thinking is more than logical and rational-empirical thinking and argumentative skills. It requires the realization that there are specific subjective assumptions underlying belief systems, including religious, social, ethical, political and cultural aspects.

It is crucially vital for colleges and universities to develop critical thinking skills in the educational system. It has so far been assumed that students who attended university would develop critical thinking skills through attending classes, listening to lectures, taking part in class discussions and in general completing course assignments. However, in contrast to this assumption, Halpern (1998) indicated that the development of students' thinking and recognition requires the teaching of critical thinking skills more explicitly. Previous research indicated the necessity to teach critical thinking skills directly and to allow students to practice these skills with opportunities for feedback (Beyer, 1987).

1.2. Critical thinking and teacher education

Although the literature on critical thinking in teacher education is not very extensive (Williams, 2005), it is highly appreciated that critical thinking skills be promoted among teachers and teacher educators. Beineke (1985) believed that the use of critical thinking training programs within teacher education would result to teachers' better judgment of classroom and of course the world. In this respect, according to Bangert-Drowns and Bankert (1990), critical thinking skills instruction on teachers is best taught explicitly rather than implicitly. Teacher training on critical thinking enables teachers to prepare good scheme of lessons, select appropriate content, methodology, and instructional materials, organizing the class, respond to questions, teach critical thinking skills, etc. It promotes teachers effectiveness and efficacy in the educational

system (Nassor & Vitikounen, 2009). Schafersman (1991) believes that critical thinking for teachers can be taught explicitly during lectures in teacher training programs.

Since promoting critical thinking is of outmost importance in teacher education, Halpern (1998) points out to the possibility of the enhancement of teachers' critical thinking skills through the requirement of teachers to use e-learning instruction for their students. Radhakrishnan (2009) stated that a critical thinking teacher has the following attributes:

- He asks pertinent questions to see whether his students have learned or not.
- He assesses statements and arguments.
- He is able to admit a lack of understanding or information.
- He has a sense of curiosity.
- He is interested in finding new solutions for becoming teaching problems.
- He is able to clearly define a set of criteria for analyzing ideas.
- He is willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts.
- He listens carefully to others and is able to give feedback.
- He sees that critical thinking is a lifelong process of self-assessment.
- He suspends judgment until all facts have been gathered and considered.
- He looks for evidence to support assumption and beliefs.
- He is able to adjust opinions when new facts are found.
- He looks for proof.
- He examines problems closely.
- He is able to reject information that is incorrect or irrelevant.

1.3. Critical thinking and e-learning instruction

One of the ways which can promote metacognitive thinking reflection is the use of modern technology (Gordon, 1995). In recent years, due to the vast application of modern technology in language teaching and language learning, e-learning has been paid considerable amount of attention in numerous educational institutions (Foray, 2004). Higher educational institutes are highly interested in adopting e-learning and use of technology in order to compensate for the shortcomings of traditional approaches to language teaching including time and place. Modern technological society requires the enhancement of individuals gaining access to critical thinking skills through modern tools. According to Mylonas, Tzouveli, and Stefanos (2004), thanks to the

high flexibility and accessibility that e-learning has brought into the arena of language teaching, many language educations have considered it to be revolution in the process of teaching and learning. There are features of e-leaning that are particularly suitable for promoting critical thinking. For example, Garrison and Anderson (2003) claim that the "collaborative yet reflective process of e-Learning has great potential for facilitating critical thinking as a core goal of education" (p. 58).

The reasons for this increasing popularity of e-learning among language educators, according to Al-Fadhli and Khalfan (2009) could be outlined as: (1) e-learning decreases the high cost of conventional approaches to language teaching and learning to a considerable extent. (2) e-learning is more flexible in providing new opportunities for those learners who are interested in taking part-time language learning courses. (3) e-learning enables language institutes to provide more opportunities to respond the ever increasing demands of students for higher education. In addition to the promising pedagogical implications of e-learning on the development of language education, it has positive influences on the enhancement of critical thinking skills. According to Dinevski and Plenkovic (2003), the critical thinking ability of students can be fostered to a considerable extent through the use of e-learning instruction. Hosie, Schibeci, and Backhaus (2005) have identified e-learning as a suitable way for language pedagogy for the following reasons: (1) it makes learners actively engaged in the learning process, (2) it promotes context-based and work-based learning, (3) Being at the center of learning process encourages self and autonomous learning by learners, (4) it bridges the gap between what students know and what they need to know.

1.4. Critical thinking and gender

The effect of gender differences on critical thinking has been a topic of discussion for long. King and Kitchener (1994) conducted 17 studies investigating the influence of gender types on students' critical thinking ability. Of these 17 studies, 6 showed that males outperformed females regarding reflective thinking, whereas the rest demonstrated no difference between the two genders. Various findings of these studies could be attributed to different factors of these studies could be attributed to factors other than just gender such as aptitude and age. Baxter-Magolda (1992) in her study has found more similarities than differences in men's and women's way of thinking. It should be noted that gender differences in critical thinking is still a topic of debate among researchers.

1.5. Critical thinking assessment

Assessing students' critical thinking skills effectively is a major issue for higher education. According to Facione (1990), evaluating students' critical thinking skills enables educators to guide and motivate students to be better critical thinkers.

Assessment is a major concern in developing programs to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Ennis (1993) believes that the major goals of critical thinking assessment are diagnosing students' level of critical thinking, providing students with feedback about their critical thinking abilities, encouraging students to become better critical thinkers, informing teachers about their degree of success in teaching critical thinking, running research into the critical thinking instructional strategies and investigating whether the educational program is suitable enough to provide students with appropriate critical thinking skills. Researchers have come to this belief that critical thinking can be better taught and fostered through explicit instruction.

There are a number of approaches for the assessment of critical thinking ability. Three main approaches to assessing critical thinking are: (a) commercial general knowledge standardized tests, (b) researcher designed assessment tests directly related to the purpose of research project, (c) teaching students to assess their own critical thinking ability. Commercial general knowledge standardized tests (e.g. California Critical Thinking Skills Test, the Cornell Critical Thinking Tests, and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal) test major aspects of critical thinking, including interpretation, analysis, inference, assumptions, credibility and reasoning. None of these tests have claimed to test all aspects of critical thinking. According to Facione (1986) the popularity of these instruments is due to the fact that their reliability and validity have been carefully developed, thus they are widely used to measure students' critical thinking ability. Due to the careful development, standardized scoring and general use of such critical thinking tests, they are suitable candidates for use in educational research studies.

The criteria representing whether people think critically or not are different. According to Meyers (1986) emotions are central to the critical thinking process. For some people the process of critical thinking seems to be internal, whereas for some others it manifests itself in their external actions. Research on teacher reflection supports the hypothesis that being a critical thinker is a major factor of being an effective teacher.

Despite discussions about the implications of critical thinking in the area of language education (Norris, 1985), there is little research with regard to teachers' perceptions of the critical thinking process and its effectiveness on the development of teachers recognition skills. Moreover, few studies have investigated the influence of e-learning technology in enhancing students' perceptions of critical thinking. Students, however, face a lot of challenges understanding how e-learning technologies can improve critical thinking ability. In addition to the previous shortcomings, little research has explored the process of critical thinking development using a pre- and post-instructional design. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of explicit critical thinking instruction on teachers understanding of critical thinking skills on the one hand and to explore the impact of the application of e-learning technology in EFL instruction on improving students' critical thinking skills on the other hand. Moreover, the question of gender differences in critical thinking for both the students and teachers is still a topic of controversy among scholars and research findings haven't resolved this issue yet.

In order to investigate the potential impact of explicit training of critical thinking program on teachers and e-learning instruction on students regarding the above mentioned problems, the following research questions can be formulated.

1. What are teachers' perceptions regarding critical thinking before and after the instructional program?

2. Do students display higher degree of critical thinking development using the e-learning and technological method of language teaching delivery?

2. Methods

The first research question was investigated by means of quantitative-quasi pre-post experimental research design and for the second by means of ex-post-facto design using experimental and control groups.

2.1. Participants

The research, on both the teachers and students, was conducted at the Iran Language institute (ILI) during the spring and summer of 2011. As many as 20, 10 males and females, EFL teachers, and 120, 60 males and 60 females, EFL students studying at the same English language level participated in this study voluntarily. Two university professors majoring in TEFL and

having high qualifications in teaching critical thinking strategies participated in this study as trainers. The trainers held seminar including several lectures, presentations and workshops on critical thinking so that to enhance teachers critical thinking ability and instruct them how to think critically using appropriate strategies. It is important to note that an EFL instructor held the e-learning class in order to be a moderator to guide students understand insights of the e-learning instruction.

2.2. Instruments

Two types of tests were used in this study. In the first phase of the study, to investigate the first research question, the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Level X) (Ennis, Millman, Tokmo, 1985) was used. The Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Level X) is based on four major abilities which include: (1) inductive thinking (2) judging credibility of observation reports (3) deductive thinking and (4) assumption identification. Although critical thinking tests do not completely guarantee the true measurement of critical thinking ability, their validity as indicators of critical thinking dispositions and abilities are high. For the second phase of the study, to explore the second research question, the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) was used. This test is based on five abilities including: (1) analysis, (2) deduction, (3) evaluation, (4) induction, and (5) inference. The CCTST is a multiple-choice standardized assessment test designed to measure the critical thinking ability of students with regard to their attitudes, knowledge and skills. In the CCTST, the students are asked to critically evaluate and analyze reading passages that include problems, statements, arguments and interpretations.

Moreover, to better explore the second research question, which investigated the influence of e-learning on critical thinking development, modern language teaching technologies including CDs, cell-phone language teaching software, laptops, the internet, video-projectors, chat room discussions, audio/video conferencing and other multimedia devices were employed.

2.3. Procedure

The Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Level X) was administered to the 20 teachers before and after the critical thinking training program. Having administered the pre-test to the 20 teachers, a seminar on critical thinking was held. The seminar included several lectures, presentations and workshops on critical thinking. In these lectures, presentations and workshops, the ways and strategies to developing critical thinking was taught to the teachers, and it was stressed that thinking critically helps teachers to develop an awareness of actions and attitudes and guards

them against stereotyped solutions and statements, and broadens their response to alternative and corrections along with modeling appropriate and logical reasoning. The post-test that followed the training program measured the effectiveness of the training program of critical thinking on teachers.

In the second phase of the study, to investigate the second research question, 120 EFL students participated in two groups including 60 students in the experimental group and 60 students in the control group. In order to investigate the use of e-learning and technological methods of language teaching delivery in the development of critical thinking ability on students, the control group was instructed using the classical way of language teaching and the experimental group was instructed using modern language teaching technologies including CDs, cell-phone language teaching software, laptops, the internet, video-projectors, chat room discussions, audio/video conferencing and other multimedia devices. It is worth mentioning that prior to the instructional program; a pilot study was conducted to make sure that both groups are at the same level of language proficiency. Having finished the instructional program, the critical thinking ability of both groups was measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST).

3. Results and discussion

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions regarding critical thinking before and after the instructional program?

The means and standard deviations for the teachers both before and after the instructional program on critical thinking are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Critical thinking mean score and standard deviation of CCTT (Level X) before and after training

Critical thinking category	Before training		After training	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Introduction	11.26	4.1	13.39	2.87
Credibility	10.43	3.45	13.63	2.09
Deduction	10.12	3.86	12.72	2.16
Assumption	6.68	3.19	8.14	1.93
Total score	25.11	6.54	31.29	3.57

Figure 1 presents teachers' mean score on each category of the CCTT (Level X) before and after the critical thinking training program graphically.

	Introduction	Credibility	Deduction	Assumption	Total
■ Before Training	11.26	10.43	10.12	6.68	25.11
□ After Training	13.39	13.63	12.72	8.14	31.29
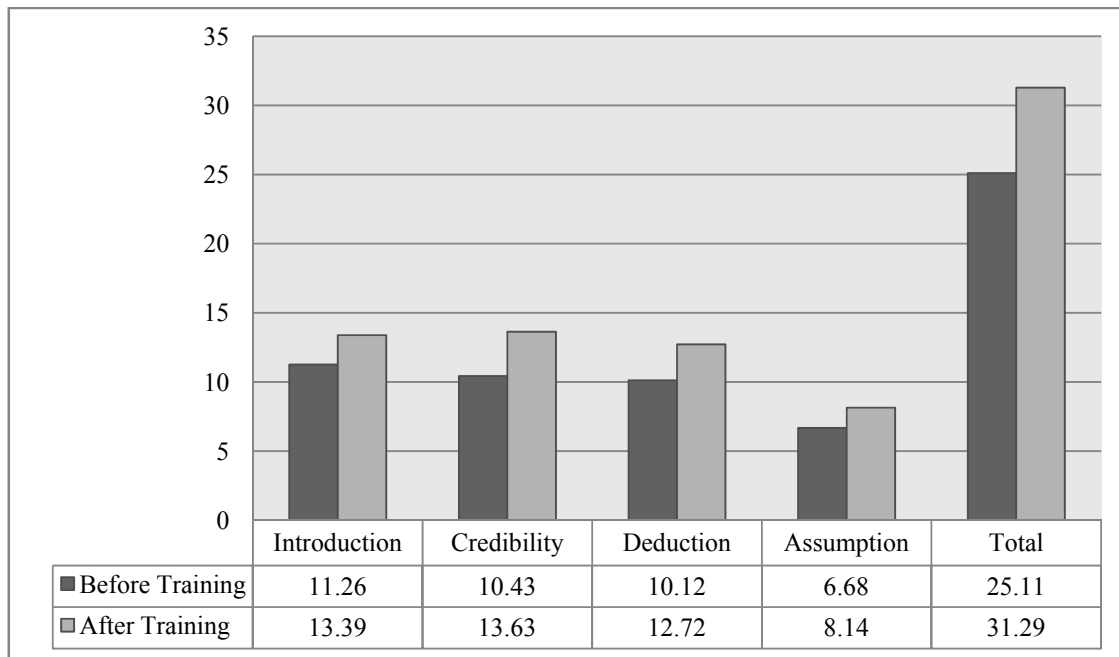
Figure 1. *Critical thinking mean score of CCTT (Level X) before and after training*

It is clear that for all the categories of critical thinking scores, including total test scores, there were explicitly substantial differences between the means and standard deviations at the post-training phase of the study compared to the pre-training phase. This finding suggests that the training program on critical thinking was effective enough to increase teachers' ability in thinking critically to a remarkable extent. To test whether the mean differences between the pre-training and the post-training phase of the study is significant or not, a paired t-test was run and the t-observed was; t=2.8, df=18, p<0.05

Moreover, the critical thinking mean scores of male and female teachers were measured to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program on gender types. Table 2 represents the mean score on the critical thinking test of the male and female teachers.

Table2

Critical thinking mean score of male and female teachers before and after training

Groups	Total mean score on pre-test	Total mean score on post-test
Female (N=10)	24.40	27.31
Male (N=10)	25.83	35.28

Based on the findings obtained from Table 2, it is clearly observable that the critical thinking training program was more effective for male teachers rather than the female ones. Although male teachers were a little better critical thinkers than female teachers prior to the training program, their critical thinking mean score increased much more noticeably than females' mean score at the post-training phase. This indicates that male teachers benefited more as a result of the critical thinking training program than female teachers.

RQ2: Do students display higher degree of critical thinking development using the e-learning and technological method of language teaching delivery?

The CCTST was conducted for both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught by the use of e-learning and modern technology in language teaching and the control group was taught by using traditional way. Table 3 displays the mean score and standard deviation for both groups of students in each particular critical thinking skill of the CCTST.

Table 3

Mean score and standard deviation of the CCTST

Critical thinking category	Experimental group (E-learning) N=60		Control group (Traditional) N=60	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Analysis	5.27	1.03	4.32	1.57
Deduction	6.87	1.17	5.48	2.38
Evaluation	6.61	1.52	5.07	1.78
Induction	8.22	1.77	6.59	2.14
Inference	6.13	1.19	4.42	0.93
Total score	18.69	1.68	15.53	2.12

Figure 2 displays students' mean score on each category of the CCTST for the experimental (e-learning) and control (traditional) groups graphically.

	Analysis	Deduction	Evaluation	Induction	Inference	Total
■ Traditional	4.32	5.48	5.07	6.59	4.42	15.53
▨ e-learning	5.27	6.87	6.61	8.22	6.13	18.69
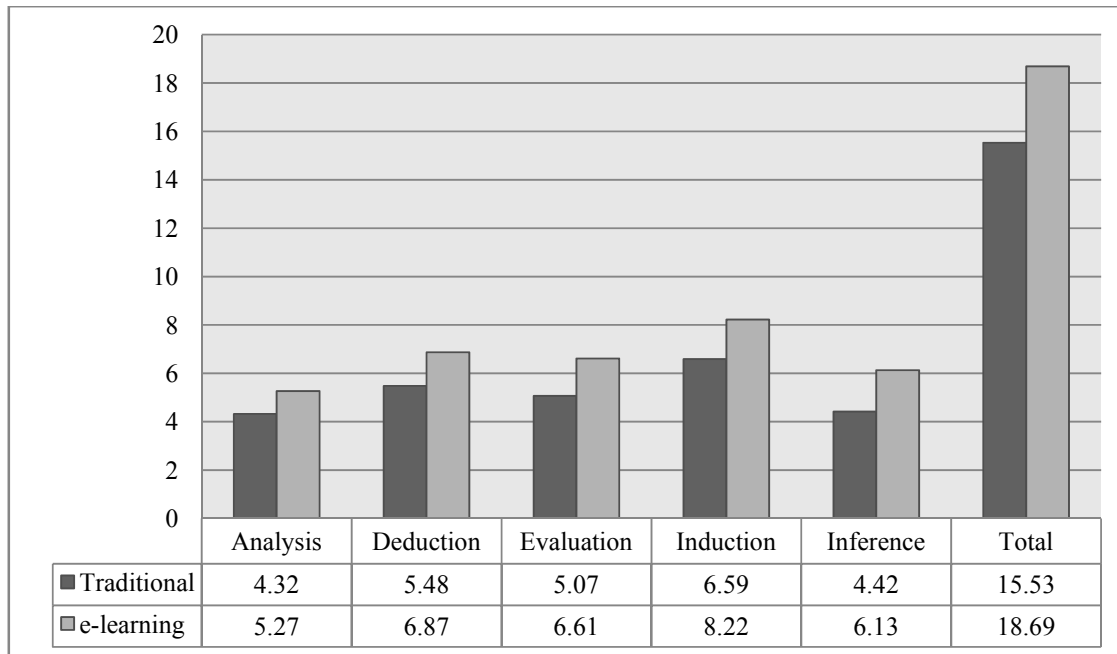
Figure 2. *Critical thinking mean score of CCTST for the e-learning and the traditional groups*

The obtained results vividly suggest that for all the categories of the CCTST the researcher observed a remarkable increase of the mean scores of the experimental group compared to those of the control group. The finding implies that the use of e-learning and modern technology in language teaching is effective in increasing the critical thinking ability of the students to a great extent.

To test whether the mean differences obtained from the experimental group and control group is significant or not, a paired t-test was run and t-observed was: $t=2.17$, $df=118$, $p<0.05$

In addition, the critical thinking mean scores of male and female students were measured separately to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of both the use of technology and e-learning in language teaching and the traditional method on students' gender types regarding the development of critical thinking skills. Table 4 represents the mean score on the CCTST of the male and female students.

Table 4

CCTST mean score of male and female students of both the experimental and control groups

Groups	Total mean score of the experimental group (E-learning)	Total mean score of the control group (Traditional)
Female (N=60)	18.30	15.82
Male (N=60)	19.08	15.24

With 19.08, the experimental male group has the highest mean; whereas, the male control group has the lowest mean with 15.24. It is noteworthy that male students outperformed female students in the e-learning and use of technology group, while female students were marginally better than male students in the traditional group. The difference between the mean score of the e-learning and use of technology male group and the traditional male group was 3.84; whereas, the difference between the mean score of the e-learning and use of technology female group and the traditional female group was 2.48. The findings show that although the e-learning and use of technology language teaching program was quite influential in boosting the critical thinking ability of both groups, male students benefited more as a result of it compared to female students.

In order for teachers to gain mastery in language teaching, they should be able to reason why they should act in certain ways. Therefore, being an effective teacher depends highly on the development of critical thinking ability. The findings of the investigation of critical thinking instruction on teachers demonstrated that explicit instruction of critical thinking strategies helps them develop thinking critically. While it is assumed that in order to be an effective teacher, teachers need to gain mastery over the use of and application of language teaching methods, this study, in contrast Siegel's (1991) findings, demonstrated that in order to increase efficacy in language teaching, teachers need to achieve higher level of competencies in critical thinking. In other words, this study showed that any mastery by teachers over the use and application of instructional methods plays a subsidiary role in the enhancement of teachers' effectiveness.

Moreover, it is strongly recommended that teachers should be enabled to reason how and why they should act in particular situations. To this point, teaching effectively depends on the development of teachers' competencies in critical thinking abilities. Male teachers, although they were better critical thinkers before the training program, could get better use of it compared to

female teachers which proves the better effectiveness of the critical thinking program on male teachers rather than female teachers.

In the second phase of the study, the comparison of the effectiveness of e-learning and use of modern technology in language teaching and the traditional approaches to language teaching resulted in the better development of students' critical thinking ability through the application of e-learning and modern technology in language teaching. This finding is in line with that of Bruner (1986) and Al-Fadhli and Khalfan (2009), who believe that using e-learning technology develops learners' intellectual ability. This study also demonstrated that e-discussions among students play a significant role in extending the critical thinking ability of the students to a remarkable extent; therefore, it can be introduced as a new approach to teaching critical thinking. The outcomes support the results obtained by Feuerstein (1999) clarifying the contribution of an e-learning instructional program in promoting cognitive skills of students. Students who received the e-learning instruction demonstrated greater achievement of critical thinking skills than those who didn't receive.

On the other hand, the findings demonstrated that although female students were identified be better critical thinkers in the traditional approach to language teaching; male students tended to display better development in their critical thinking skill compared to female students in the e-learning program. The results are also in line with the findings of Grafstein (2007) demonstrating that e-learning environment is an appropriate trend towards the development of critical thinking skills in language teaching.

4. Conclusion

Critical thinking, being central to one's professional development, should be included lifelong into teachers' developmental programs. The findings of this study, which is in line with the findings of Ennis (1989), showed that explicit critical thinking training programs are effective in helping teachers and teacher educators develop their critical thinking skills. The outcomes of this study further demonstrated that experience is not a determining factor in the enhancement of teachers' teaching performance (even teachers who were identified as novice achieved significant levels of critical thinking ability).

It could be implied from this study that it is fruitful for teachers and teacher educators to take courses and attend training program on thinking skills before commencing their professional

carrier as teachers. Therefore, it is suggested that educating teachers and teacher educators to be critical thinkers should be formative and throughout years of language teaching development. It is hoped that encouraging teachers to be critical thinkers will increase their responsibility thus equipping prospect teachers with effective, independents self-reliant and critical decision making tools. It was also implied from the findings of this study that the use of e-learning and technology in language teaching has positive effects on the enhancement of students' critical thinking ability. Education along with the use of e-learning technology enhances the thinking ability of students. E-learning and the use of technology in language teaching encourages students to think reflectively through empowering them with the skill of analysis and evaluation. The findings of this study, moreover, supports the assumption that through the usage of e-learning and technology in language teaching, students will demonstrate a higher improvement in critical thinking over students who were taught based on the traditional approaches to language teaching.

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for students, teachers and teacher educators. Teachers need to be educated through training programs to enhance their critical thinking skills to gain new thinking command to impact the course methodology. Critical thinking process should be included in teachers' in-service education so that to provide them with opportunities to deepen their understandings of strategies to promote critical thinking. Teachers require opportunities to think about philosophy of critical thinking and learn what their own philosophy of thinking is. All students, regardless of their level of education, should be provided with opportunities to think critically. Teacher training programs should incorporate critical thinking courses for both students and teachers at the beginning of the education course. From the view point of teacher educators, training students to think critically through e-learning instruction empowers them with the ability to analyze complex issues generate solutions and develop standards for decision making. The findings assume that the more students gain experience in e-learning, the more capable they will be with regard to critical thinking skills. The provision of teacher education programs on critical thinking will build better societies by preparing future teachers to promote critical thinking skills for students.

Teachers should avoid making differentiations about which gender of students are most likely to benefit from the critical thinking e-learning instructional program. The outcomes indicated that both male and female students could increase their critical thinking ability as a result of the e-learning instructional program. Although the outcomes of this study provided

evidence for the development of the students' critical thinking skills by the use of e-learning instruction, long-lasting effectiveness on students after being divorced from this instructional method requires further investigation.

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Title

The Washback Effect of University Entrance Examination (UEE) on Iranian High School EFL Pedagogy

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Abstract

The influence of University Entrance Exam (UEE), which is called 'washback' 'backwash' effect on teaching and learning, is a familiar phenomenon for the teachers and specialists in education. Moreover, growing bodies of researches indicated the continued commonness of such an impact on students' learning and teachers' teaching in secondary schools. However, there is not adequate study about washback effect of Foreign Language Examination (FLE), which is a part of the Nationwide University Entrance Examination (NUEE), on teaching and learning in Iran. Therefore, the present study was an attempt to investigate the washback effect of FLE on the different teaching methods, which teachers used in classes, and the effect of it on the lesson components like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Most specifically, it inspects washback effect in EFL classroom of Lahijan city in Iran. To this end, 20 EFL teachers, 15 males and 5 females, who have been teaching English in secondary schools served as random participants in this study. A triangulation of data collection techniques: questionnaires, interviews and classroom observation checklist-theme were used to provide the necessary data for the study. The findings indicated both EFL female and male teachers were under the pressure of UEE to change the way they teach in the classroom. For instance, they teach most of the textbooks

according to GTM; moreover, they believed that they paid more attention to those components of lessons like vocabulary and grammar, which were tested in University Entrance Exam not other connected parts. Additionally, the teachers under study taught to test and FLE commanded them what to teach, how to teach or what not be covered in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Every year many exams are held in Iran, and a great number of the Iranian pre-university students sit for such exams to admit in them. One of the exams is university entrance examination (UEE) which is held in June. This is a high-stake test in Iran and some other countries like China, Japan, Afghanistan, and South Korea, which is called Konkur in Iran. Although the goal of such an examination certainly is the selection of the students for future time, it can be used for the upgrade and update the development of the schools and universities. In spite of fact that there is no clear definition about Konkur, Kamyab (2008) defined Konkur as "stringent, centralized nationwide university entrance exam" (p.22) . It is a kind of public exam and as Chen (2002 a, p. 2) says, "public exams are commonly believed to have an impact on teaching and learning".

Considering the known critical role of Konkur for all graduated and pre-university students in the Iranian high schools and educational system, especially in a high-level educational process more than ever, a great numbers of testers are interested to study its impact ."University admission processes have been formed during a long time and the way they have turned out to be largely dependent on the whole educational system and especially on the structure of the secondary education" (Häkkinen, 2004, p.2).

Therefore, the effect of the test on teaching and learning is clear and different researchers have talked about this phenomenon. This trend "the influence of testing on teaching and learning called backwash effect" (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p. 115; Hughes, 2003, p.1; Shohamy & et al, 1996, p.298). Regard to these issues, I conducted this study to examine the effect of university entrance examination (UEE) on Iranian high school EFL pedagogy.

Also as the studies about the washback effect of the university entrance exam (Konkur) is not abound and the users, who are affected by washback, are divided into two groups, including

teachers and test takers (Bachman & palmer .1996), the researcher will inspect only its effect on teachers' teaching and give more details about it in this study.

1.1. Brief review of education and English education in Iran

The educational year starts on Mehr first and ends on Khordad the following year. The five-year primary school and three-year junior high school education are compulsory in Iran. English is taught as a foreign language and teachers play the central role in the classes. The average instruction time for the First Grade of junior high school is two hours but for the Second and Third Grad is four hours in a week. After completing the junior high school and compulsory education, the students enter a new stage that has great influence on their career and future life. This stage is the secondary education that lasts four years, and the final year is called Pre-university that will be excluded since 1390 as the Ministry of Education noticed the students on TV and radio. The students after graduating from high school should set for university entrance exam (UEE).The Ministry of Education (ME) publishes the textbooks and teaching materials for all the schools.

1.2. Research on University Entrance Exam (UEE)

The contest among the high-school graduates in Iran is very fierce and nearly every student spends one more year to accept in the nationwide university exam (Konkur). About 1.3 million high-school graduates participated in a tough 4.5 hours multiple-choice exam every year. Like Iran, the other countries face such a problem every year, too. For example, Scaramucci (2002) remarked that acceptation in most of the Brazilian universities recently became more difficult and very competitive because the number of the seats are not enough. In addition, he added that those students, who cannot enter the target university and fail after graduation from secondary school, should study another year to take the next year's entrance exam. Farhady, Jafarpur and Birjandi (1994) asserted the UEE in Iran is based on the multiple-choice items. They are knowledge tests and these knowledge tests should be used only to measure the students' knowledge in a definite subject matter.

2. Definitions of washback

By looking up the definition of washback in most of the dictionaries, books or papers around the world, as it is a new term, we can see there are very rare definitions about it. However, the most common used definitions of backwash are the one in applied linguistics and in general education.

According to New Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary, backwash is "the unwelcome repercussions of some social action" or according to Collins Cobuild Dictionary, it is "unpleasant after-effects of an event or situation". Regardless of the fact that in many studies the two terms washback and impact are used alternatively, Bachman and Palmer (1996) thought washback under the umbrella of impact. Furthermore, they believed that washback is a more complex phenomenon than simply the influence of the test on teaching and learning only. Hughes (2003,p.2) stated, " the term 'impact' as it is used in educational measurement, is not limited to the effect of assessment on learning and teaching but extends to the way in which assessment affects society as a whole" . Also in Cheng and Curtis (2004), Wall discriminated between impact and washback. As Wall stated, impact is an indication of any effect of examination on students, their practices, and policies in the classroom, school or in the system of education, but the washback (or backwash) address the effect of the exam on teaching and learning. McNamara (2000) declared that washback " relates to the influence that testing has on teaching" while an impact " involves a consideration of the effect of a test beyond the classroom, the ripples or waves it makes in the wider educational and social world" (p.72). Hamp-Lyons (1997) assumed that we cannot use washback in the general education or educational measurement literature, and impact usage is wider than washback that refer to the effect of high-stakes measurement.

3. Washback studies

The effect of university entrance examination is clear for those who are living in Iran as Ghorbani (2008) stated that Iranian high school teachers generally and pre-universe teachers specially thought that they should prepare the students for acceptation in the university entrance exam by having them to translate English to Persian texts. He added that the common method of teaching in schools is GTM (Grammar Translation Method), and they try to improve the skills such a reading at the sacrifice of listening, speaking, and writing. Many of the students in senior high schools believed that the only purpose of English teaching and learning is acceptation in UEE. Students said, "they [teachers] should prepare them [students] for the UEE". Teachers "often teach to the test and students focus only on those activities and skills that are likely to appear on the test" (Ghorbani, 2008, p.62). Similarly, Jahangard (2007) reported that the teachers give fewer minds to oral drills like listening and speaking abilities in the classrooms, and they

more emphasize reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The only concern is to make students pass tests and exams since productive skills are not tested in the exam.

Watanabe (1992), in his study talked about the positive effect of the university entrance exam and concluded that the students who were accepted in university entrance examination have used different and broader strategies than the students who entered via recommendation. "It might be that the exam students happened to have a higher proficiency and/or a higher motivation than the recommended students, thus resulting in the wider range of strategy use...some research results show that proficiency and motivation influence strategy use" (p. 187) . Wall and Alderson (1993), in their study in Sri Lanka, investigated the classroom effect of changes to the Sri Lanka O-level English exam. They reported that "there is evidence of washback on the content of teaching. Some of this is positive and some negative…... [But] There is no evidence of washback on methodology"(p.66).

Cheng (1997) stated that after the instruction of a new exam (revised exam) in Hong Kong, the content of texts books changed. For example, pronunciation replaced with role-play and discussion and the teachers did not teach reading a loud after that. She noted that no evidence of changing in the teaching methodology was observed and teaching method might be remained unchanged. Spratt (2005) considered that the kind and amount of washback effect on teaching methods from one teacher to another or one context to other would be changed. "Teacher ['s] attitude towards an exam would seem to play an important role in determining the choice of methods used to teach exam classes" (ibid, p.14).Glaser and silver (1994) in their study talked about the interaction between the formats of measurements and formats of instruction. They discovered that the test primarily determines what the teachers teach, how they teach, what be learned and how it is learned not the curriculum that the authorities say.

Ghorbani (2008) did a study about the washback effect of the university entrance exam on Iranian English teachers' curricular planning. In this study, he selected a group of pre-university English language teachers. Based on information he acquired from the questionnaires, he selected only eight teachers and divided them into two groups: males and females. According to regression analysis and analyzed data, he came to these results. The entire interviewed pre-university teachers perceived that the university entrance exam has negative effect on the teaching and learning. Furthermore, they expect the authority to reform it based on the new

technology and testing theories. He continued that the time arrangement was one of the most effective areas.

Karabulut (2007) tried to investigate whether the foreign language examination - university entrance test- influences the way teachers teach and students learn in senior three classrooms (the last grade of high school) in Turkey or not. The numbers of subjects under study were four groups, which consisted of senior three high school students, English teachers, college students, and professors. At the end, he found that the university entrance exam is one of the key factors in the process of teaching in senior high school. Most of the classroom materials were composed of test- item samples and mock examinations that showed the effect of the university entrance exam on language learning and teaching. In addition, he declared that high school students and teachers pay more attention on the immediate results of the test and study intensively to admit in the university entrance exam. The results of the study demonstrated that secondary school students study the skills such as grammars, reading, and vocabulary and paid no attention to other skills such as listening, speaking, and writing, which are not tested in UEE. As a final point the teachers expressed the format of the currently exam should be changed and make toward a communicative and integrative one.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

What is accessible in this study is a sample of 20 Iranian EFL instructors of high schools that were identified and contacted to serve as the participants of this study. They shared the following characteristics: (a) they are teaching English as foreign language in the high school of Lahijan district, which is located in Guilan province. (b) their university degree of English is BA or MA . (c) they aged between 27 and 48. Furthermore, they are selected randomly from 30 EFL teachers. The reason for selecting this small group is that the small groups allow others or each participant to share insights but the large groups pose different concepts (Chen 2002b).

4.2. Instrumentation

This study included three main instruments: questionnaires, interviews and observation. The researcher developed the questionnaires, which included three parts: teaching method, components of lesson, demographic questions. In order to insure the questionnaires' validity, they were developed according to pre-university teachers' viewpoints, revisions and an

adaptation questionnaires from Chen (2002b) and perceptions from (Ghorbani, 2008; Mohammadi, 2007). Moreover, the researcher reviewed related studies and scrutinized the questionnaires previously in the literatures of (Shih, 2009; Alderson & Wall, 1993). Also, he developed a framework for field notes for observing in the classroom based on Shih's (2009) views and suggestions. The researcher in this study used a convenient sampling method to determine to the extent to which the subjects-teachers' teaching and instruction are affected by university entrance examination. (See Appendix A, B, C and D).

5. Results

5.1. Quantitative results: The impact of UEE on teaching method

In order to achieve the research objectives, the researcher analyzed the answers given to the items of the questionnaire carefully. He came up with different results, which will be called.

Table1. The impact of UEE on teaching method

Questions	Scales									
	(1)Strongly Agree		(2)Agree		(3)Slightly Agree		(4)Disagree		(5)Strongly Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1- - I teach the contents of those parts of the books like vocabulary and grammar, which were tested or will be test in UEE.	5	25%	10	50%	1	5%	1	5%	1	5%
2- I allocate most parts of final exams or midterms to vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.	4	20%	11	55%	3	15%	2	10%	--	-----
3- My students' worksheets scores on the vocabulary and grammar sections are very important for me.	1	5%	3	15%	6	45%	5	25%	2	10%
4- If there is not enough time, I try to cover those parts of the books that were tested recently. And others parts are not important for me.	11	55%	6	30%	1	5%	2	10%	------	--------
5- I teach the lessons according to those methods which consider vocabulary and grammar in their approach.	------	-------	2	10%	9	45%	4	20%	5	25%
6-In addition to the usual vocabularies at end of each lesson, I offer the some extra vocabularies along the teaching.	1	5%	5	25%	10	50%	3	15%	1	5%
7- I believe all the sections of textbooks should be covered although they are not tested in university entrance exam.	1	5%	2	10%	5	30%	9	45%	2	10%
8- Do you think your quizzes, mid-terms and final exams similar to the university entrance exam?	3	15%	9	55%	5	25%	1	5%	---	----
9- I gave my students the past exam papers that review the expected content in UEE.	4	20%	9	45%	2	10%	3	15%	2	10%
10- I give little attention to UEE while I am teaching the content of books.	1	5%	1	5%	6	30%	10	50%	2	10%

5.2. Quantitative results: The impact of UEE on the components of lesson

In this table, the results that originated from the questionnaire are reported in terms of frequency and percentage.

Table2. The impact of UEE on the components of lesson

Questions	Scales									
	(1)Strongly Agree		(2)Agree		(3)Slightly Agree		(4)Disagree		(5)Strongly Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1- The university entrance exam (UEE) makes you change your teaching method to adapt students successful.	2	10%	13	65%	3	15%	2	10%	----	-------
2- I spend more time of the class based on grammar translation method because I think the UEE is more likely based on GTM.	14	70%	2	10%	1	5%	1	5%	2	10%
3- I tune my teaching method to help the students accept in UEE	5	25%	10	50%	4	20%	1	5%	----	----
4-UEE has very little effect on my teaching method.	1	5%	1	5%	2	10%	12	60%	4	20%
5- Some teaching methods that are not sufficient in preparing my students for the UEE, I pass over.	3	15%	8	40%	7	35%	1	5%	1	5%
6- I teach according to my method no matter whether it will be related to students' success in UEE or not.	1	5%	3	15%	4	20%	10	50%	2	10%

5.3. Qualitative results

In order to verify and validate quantitative results, the researcher has tried to make interviews with selected participants and observe the coded teachers' teaching in the classrooms. For that reason, he divided the qualitative data in two parts that the first part relates to interviews, and the second part refers to observations.

5.3.1. Interviews

In the interview section of the study, the investigator had three interviews individually with 3 participants, one female and two males, in order to see how much the acquired information from

survey questionnaires supported this section and the observation in the coming section. Therefore, seven semi-structures open-ended questions that rephrased and worded from previous questionnaires used in this interview. Moreover, the researcher for developing and outlining these questions had considered Shih's (2009) thought. (See Appendix D).

The result of fifty-five minutes to one-hour interview with each coded participants was described as follows.

I should remind that the words in […] are omitted because of not relevant to study or unable to be heard.

CODE (11)

Interviewer: ***Was your teaching method relevant to the university entrance exam (UEE) or it is based on the way students learn?***

Code 11:   *Oh. Hamm. Yes, most of the time the method, which I teach in the classroom, are connected to UEE, or I modify my method to adjust the test items, and sometimes I skip over my method and […]. The students' successes in UEE are more important than the method. You know that the […]*

Interviewer: ***Do you think your quizzes, mid-terms and final exams similar to the university entrance exam?***

Code 11:   *In most of the cases but not exactly. The final exam I think is similar to UEE. The midterm and quizzes are not so similar to university entrance exam exactly. Sometimes I tried to […]. Moreover, sometimes the students ask me to work more on the sample and mock questions. The quizzes not […].*

Interviewer: ***Do you encourage the students to use test-taking strategies or teach some test- taking strategies in the classroom?***

Code 11:   *Yea, Well, I believe such strategies should be thought in classrooms when the UEE attentions to some tricks in test items. […..].I think if someone wants to accept in UEE, such strategies are helpful. […….] but it isn't so much that……. .*

Interviewer: ***Do you review the content of the past exam papers in order to match your intended content?***

Code 11:	What? Exam papers! Why not? It is usual in more classes nowadays and sometimes the students bring with them such papers. I think the past exam papers make students familiar to future test.
Interviewer:	**Did you teach some vocabularies during your teaching that have been repeated in UEE or are difficult?**
Code 11:	Yes. However, it differs from lesson to lesson. In some lessons, the vocabularies are so difficult and they have been tested more times in UEE. Thus, I emphasize the importance of them.
Interviewer:	**It seems that you generally teach to test. I mean you teach according to UEE. Is it correct?**
Code 11:	Not exactly. Nevertheless, these are the students' parents and head of school demands, and they ask us to do. Moreover, if I teach something else or change my method. [....] . I think we should think of student's success and nothing else.

CODE (16)

The second teacher whom I selected randomly was male and coded 16.

Interviewer:	**At first, which parts of the book, is important for you, and you believed that were tested in UEE or would be tested?**
Code 16:	Oh. Hamm. As I experienced throughout the years I have thought in secondary schools, grammar and vocabularies, and sometimes pronunciation had the critical role in UEE. I do not know [...] if a student wants to pass UEE, he /she should practice these parts more.
Interviewer:	**How much your quizzes, mid-terms and final exams similar are similar to university entrance exam?**
Code 16:	In **Pre-University** classes, I think the teachers should try to develop exam papers like UEE or the items in the exam should be similar to UEE. Thus according to my words, I also try to develop mid-term or final exam like it.
Interviewer:	**Have you encouraged the students to use test-taking strategies or teach some test- taking strategies in the classroom?**
Code 16:	WELL! The students in **Pre University** try to practice the strategies, which are more practicable and useful for acceptation in UEE. Not always.

Maybe […]. I think if someone wants to accept in UEE, such as strategies are helpful.

Interviewer: **Have you selected your teaching method according to UEE and your students' success?**

Code 16: *Teaching Method! I don't have much information about different teaching methods [.......] but I try to teach in a way that I satisfy my students.*

Interviewer: **Did you teach all the parts of the book, or you teach selected parts or those parts, which have been tested more in UEE?**

Code 16: *I try to teach most parts of the books but those parts that have tested more, I teach gradually and in details. In many occasions, the students ask different questions from these parts so, I prefer {...}. Hum. Usually, I teach the essential elements if I have not an adequate amount of time.*

Interviewer: **Taken as a whole, do you pay attention to UEE while you are teaching?**

Code 16: *As you know, the effect of UEE is not avoidable; therefore, it has some effects on my pedagogy and teaching. I cannot say 'No'. Perhaps:' Yes'*

CODE (5)

To conclude, the last teacher who took part in the interview was a young participant who had been teaching only seven years in secondary schools.

Interviewer: **Do you prefer to teach, if there is not enough time, those parts of books that were tested recently or the entire book?**

Code 5: *In my opinion, I believe that students should learn those parts of the books that were tested or more important than others are. It is useless that the teachers teach all the parts, and students learn a little. In my classes […]. If I say openly, I teach the parts which were tested, or I think are more difficult for them.*

Interviewer: **What kind of method do you follow in your teaching? I mean GTM, Direct Method or Total Physical Response (TPR), etc.**

Code 5: *I teach in my classes a mixed of GTM and TPR. Because these methods emphasize those parts of the books that will be tested in UEE or were tested. For example, vocabulary, grammar, reading some text and dialogue. I think the other methods like Direct and CLT are unsuitable for*

teaching in Iranian schools while the UEE is based on grammar, vocabulary and [..].

Interviewer: **Thus according to your words, you match your teaching method with UEE.**

Code 5: *Yea. Maybe. What do you think!*

Interviewer: **How much your quizzes, mid-terms and final exams are similar to university entrance exam?**

Code 5: *Very much. Well, I try to develop exams, which are similar to UEE as the similarity can help students. In addition, I believe that [...]. Most of the time I give them some mock questions and practices which relate to UEE.*

Interviewer: **Taken as a whole, does the university entrance exam (UEE) make you change your teaching method?**

Code 5: *In general, I cannot ignore the UEE impact on my teaching. However, the most effect of UEE is on the component of the exam like vocabulary and grammar and the way that teachers teach in the classroom.*

5.3.2. Observation

To conduct classroom observations, three teachers were selected randomly from secondary school-teachers as participated in the former survey questionnaires. The duration for each class observation was 50 minutes per meeting in a week, and the researcher did not observe the teachers' teaching completely. In order to conducting the observation, a framework for field notes was developed according to Shih's (2009) by the researcher. In the framework, the investigator noted down five themes on the paper to check closely in the classroom. (See Appendix E and F).

The first class that was observed was School A, (Class A, Third Grade) in December (Azar) 2010.

School A, (Class A, Third Grade)

Code (4)

- The start for teaching vocabulary was by the teacher.
- He read the first sentence of the lesson and then asked the students: "who knows the meaning of this new word in the sentence" in Persian.
- All of the students were silent. Thus, he said its meaning in Farsi; moreover, he gave a synonym for this new word.

- He continued this procedure for all other sentences to end. During reading sentences, he emphasized the importance of vocabulary in UEE and insisted on memorizing new words every time.

- After reading the sentences and giving synonyms for each one and translating their meaning in Persian, he asked the students to open their workbooks, which they brought with them in the classroom.

- Students practiced the related exercises in the workbook, and the teacher pointed out those vocabularies of this lesson, which were tested in previous UEE.

- Some of the students, who were sharper than others, asked some mock questions from the teacher. They believed that those items related to matriculation exam.

- After two or three minutes, in Reading Section, he read all the passage once, while the students were silent. In the second time, he gave for every word one or two synonyms.

- The teachers at the end of the passage asked the students to open their notebooks and write the meaning of all sentences as he is translating them in Persian.

- The teacher allotted 5 minutes for a break.

- After the break, he started answering the comprehension questions.

- Throughout answering, he explained and gave some synonyms for difficult words like *'possible= probable = likely,*

- The teacher all time stressed the importance of vocabulary during the teaching.

- Teachers asked how many students liked to accept in UEE.

- Teacher pointed out some other workbooks, which related to UEE, or they have mock questions.

- At the end of this section of the lesson, he asked students: "if you have any questions, I am ready to answer."

School B, (Class D, Third Grade):
CODE (13)

The second participant whose class was observed was a teacher who has been teaching more than a decade in secondary schools.

This sentence was written on the board: *"Lesson 3. The Value of Education"*. It showed that the teachers should teach this section of the lesson.

- Within a short time, the teacher entered the classroom and welcomed students. He rolled call them and asked some questions about the previous lesson.

- In comparison to first teacher, second teacher did not read the passage himself and asked the students looked up the difficult words in the glossary at the end of the book and write the meaning and underline them.

- Then he turned on the tape- recorder and asked the students to listen to the voice that was reading the passage.

- Then he asked the students to read the passage again.

- He alerted them about pronunciation of every word.

- The teacher requested the students to open their notebooks and write the meaning of the passage.

- While he was reading, he explained the structure of sentences.

- The method used in this class, as the researcher understood, was GTM because the code 13 translated the passage and emphasized on vocabulary and pronunciation and reading.

- The teacher also gave a synonym and antonym for most of the difficult words; moreover; those words that students asked the teacher.

- After translating, he did not answer the comprehension questions and told the student to do it as homework for next session.

- He recommended students to open the workbooks, read the mock passage, and try to answer the comprehension questions.

School 3, (Class, B, Pre-University)
CODE (17)

And the third class that the researcher intended to observe was Natural Science and labeled B.

- The teacher reviewed the previous section of the book and started to teach a new lesson.

- He opened the book and read the vocabulary part. Then he requested student to choose correct one from alternatives.

- He translated the sentences and vocabularies in Persian; furthermore, gave synonyms for those vocabularies that were difficult and important.

- During answering the questions, he stressed the vocabulary learning and its role in UEE.

- He told the pupils which items or similar items have been tested before. And asked them to underline those items that were tested in the last matriculation exam.
- The teacher devoted five minutes for a break.
- After the break, he read the part of grammar that was titled as: *"focus on grammar"*.
- While the researcher waiting for the teacher to ask students to focus on sentences carefully, he asked them to open their notebooks and note the grammar.
- He wrote the structure of sentences on the whiteboard, and students began to write. Then he answered the questions, which connected to the grammar.
- In addition, the teacher wrote some mock questions that connected to previous UEE on the whiteboard; moreover, he asked students open the workbooks and do the multiple choices about grammar.
- The teacher translated grammar exercises of the workbook in Persian.
- At the end of this section, he recommended the students to do all exercises and study the related past exam papers, too.

5.4. Discussion and conclusions

The washback effects of the university entrance exam (UEE) are different. The researcher obtained varied quantitative results from survey questionnaires, which were answered by twenty secondary school teachers. According to answer to the first questionnaire item, 75% of participants believed that the pressure of UEE forced them to change the instruction in the classroom; while, only 10 % disagreed and answered that they do not believe it and UEE cannot put any pressure on them to change how to teach in the classroom. Moreover, the interview with code 11 showed that most of the time she had tried to change the teaching and instruction in the classroom and adapt her instruction according to UEE. She continued that more often she modified her teaching to those test items, which have been tested previously. This finding is according to Wall and Alderson's quote (1993) that if the teachers are worry about the results of the test and students' score, it might be a reason for teaching to the test.

In all the three classes that were observed by the researcher, the teachers tried to teach according to a definite method. This method was Grammar Translation. The participants' reason to teach in this way was that they discovered the UEE items are designed based on GTM and other methods such as Direct Method and CLT have not been appropriate, yet. The researcher

believed that if the teachers use such a method for teaching, the kind of questions that are tested in the admission exam, are according to GTM or associated to this method, mostly. The acquired findings from this study are in line with the Alderson and Wall's study (1993) in Sri Lanka and Kellaghan and Greaney (1992). In addition, this assertion exactly relates to Ghorbani's study (2008) that teachers "often teach to the test and students focus only on those activities and skills that are likely to appear on the test" (p.62). This study demonstrated that the teachers stressed the translation and memorizing so many vocabularies while teaching in the classroom. As well, according to item six in the second part of the questionnaires, 80% of teachers in addition to usual vocabulary at the end of each lesson, provided some new and difficult vocabularies and explanatory note in the margin of textbooks.

The next point is that the students' acceptations in Konkur are important for the teachers because they tailored their method in the classroom to help students accept in universities. According to the findings in the questionnaires and as the researcher observed in the classroom, the selected teachers did not follow a specific method and any lesson plan. While its critical role could not be overlooked in any teaching surroundings, simply. As survey results discovered, 20% of teachers believed that they teach on their own way, and they did not pay attention to UEE demands. Using different methods in a different situation in Iran and in the region under the study, as the study told us, are not usual. Therefore, it seems that most of the teachers are not familiar with these methods, or they have not the required facilities for implementing them. The information drew out from classroom observations and interviews with selected teachers were identical. For example, code 5 in the interview declared: "*I teach in my classes a mixed of GTM and Total Physical Response (TPR). Because these methods emphasize those parts of the books that will be tested in UEE or were tested*".

The washback effect of UEE was observed in other fields in the interview, too. Such as the code **5** proclaimed that, he had tried to develop some mock exams or questions, which related to admission tests. Furthermore, he mentioned that his test items in the mid-term, quiz or final exam were similar to those of UEE. The findings of the interview with this participant were observed in code 4's class practice, too. The teacher, as observed by the researcher during the teaching, emphasized using the workbook with full of sample test items from previous matriculation exams and mock questions. Also, one can come to this conclusion that many of the teachers generally and the participants under study specifically put emphasis on using the mock questions, workbooks and previous matriculation exams in their teaching practices. According to the

findings, these emphases refer to UEE format, which is similar to predicted testing items by teachers, probably.

The finding of this study is in complete accord with the results of another researcher like Shih (2009). He after investigation found that General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in foreign language departments in Taiwan had an effect on the courses that prepare students for the examination.

However, the results of this study are not concurred with Alderson and Wall's study (1993) that was argued the Sri Lankan O-level English examination has had practically no influence on the way teachers teach in the classroom. These researchers thought that the lack of this impact might have been caused not comprehending by teachers of what was the best way to prepare the students for the examination. However, my research result was confirmed their second claim as they believed that " it may even be that the exam itself - and this may indeed be true of all exams - does not and cannot *determine how* teachers teach, however much it might influence *what* they teach" (Alderson and Wall,1993,p. 127). Moreover, the participants' answers about teaching vocabulary and grammar, which were tested or will be tested in UEE, were that overall 85 % of them agreed to teach vocabulary and grammar in schools. With a meticulous look at these tables, it exposes that the teachers under study believed that vocabulary and grammar are the critical component in UEE; therefore, they emphasize them in the classroom. Furthermore, in the next question about assigning the final exam or midterm, 90% of the teachers used the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in their final exam. We could clearly see that the participants taught to test because they tried to coach vocabulary and grammar in the exam. The finding in this study is the same kind of Lam (1994) and Wall & Alderson (1993) reported that most of the educators give emphasis on those parts of the exams and textbooks that bear the higher marks. As well, 65% of participants, according to results, look over their students' worksheets to verify their marks on the part of the vocabulary. It showed the selected part is important for the teachers or for students' success in future UEE. Furthermore, in the interview with code 16 about parts of the textbook, which were tested or will be tested; he responded that, grammar and vocabulary and sometimes pronunciation had been tested more often in UEE and their critical role should not be overlooked.

The findings explained that the participants in this study allotted the large parts of the classroom teaching and activity to vocabulary, grammar, and sometimes pronunciation. Thus, the

other components of a lesson like conversation, language function and listening does not pay attention more or ignored occasionally. Therefore, the possible reason which teacher under study preferred to teach these components of a lesson related to washback effect of UEE or its stress on these components more oftentimes in the testing recently.

Another finding was that all the teachers nearly acknowledged, if there was not adequate time, they skip over the irrelevant parts of the books or those sections that were not tested before and try to cover the recently tested parts. In addition, 55% of teachers did not interested in teaching those parts of the books which were not tested in UEE. Thus, the UEE effect even commands what to teach in the classroom or what not be covered, this confirmed Spratt's report (2005) that washback effects on teachers' teaching, and these teachers have the vital role to convey washback effect into teaching and learning. In addition, the study validated Kellaghan & Greaney's (1992) claim that examinations tend to dictate not only what is taught but also how it is taught. According to the interviews with the selected teachers and observations of their teaching in the classrooms, the researcher's recorded notes proved that why most participants taught based on GTM and sometimes Total Physical Response because these methods put more stress on vocabulary and grammar. One of the teachers confirmed this assert in his interview that using other methods are not useful in such classes while UEE is based on GTM.

The study, also, indicated that the majority of the teachers in this area of the country intended to make similar their mid-terms, quizzes and final exams to university entrance exam (UEE). Therefore, we can see UEE affects a large number of teachers and this influence compelled them to design testing similar to entrance exam. The last important finding in this study was that vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation are most important parts of each lesson, which effected by UEE and teachers under study tried to pay more attention those components in their teaching. This detection of the paper is consistent with Pan (2010) as he declared that UEE has an effect on the content and format of assessment. However washback of testing on teaching content and methodology is different and varied (Pan, 2010; Alderson and Hamp -Lyons, 1996).

According to the findings, the researcher is interested in putting forward the following suggestions and questions for the future study, so that it will bring a useful impact on the EFL teaching, learning at the secondary schools in Iran generally, and the area under study, specifically.

1- Do the format and component of EFL examination of UEE should be changed or not?

2- Does UEE pay attention to skills such as listening, speaking and writing?

3- The authorities of the educational system should monitor the teaching and learning in the classroom of secondary schools.

4- The specialist in education should inspect the washback effect of UEE on students.

5- Are teachers aware of connections of the methods and materials they use in the classrooms to UEE or not.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire (Teaching Method)

Code:….

Directions:

Please carefully read the following questionnaire and write down the number of the best answer with regarding the level of agreement on the factors connect to your perceptions of washback effect of the UEE on content of your teaching.

In the subsequent questions, the term *"UEE"* refers to the **University Entrance Exam.** Please put your answer in the blank directly after the each item.

KEY				
Strongly agree=5	**Agree=4**	**Slightly agree= 3**	**Disagree=2**	**Strongly disagree=1**

For example:

I walk to school every day.   ...3...

If you place 3 on this statement, it means you **Slightly Agree** *that you walk to school every day*

Questions:

1- The university entrance exam (UEE) makes you change your teaching method to adapt students successful………….

2- I spend more time of the class based on grammar translation method because I think the UEE is more likely based on GTM………

3- I adjust my teaching method to help the students succeed in UEE. …………..

4-UEE has very little effect on my teaching method. ………..

5- Some teaching methods that are not sufficient in preparing my students for the UEE, I pass over. …….

6. I teach according to my method no matter whether it will be related to students' success in UEE or not. ....

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire (components of lesson)

Code:……..

Directions:

Please carefully read the following questionnaire and write down the number of the best answer with regarding the level of agreement on the factors connect to your perceptions of washback effect of the UEE on content of your teaching.

In the subsequent questions, the term **"UEE"** refers to the **University Entrance Exam.** Please put your answer in the blank directly after the each item.

KEY				
Strongly agree=5	**Agree=4**	**Slightly Agree= 3**	**Disagree=2**	**Strongly Disagree=1**

For example:

I walk to school every day.   ...3...

If you place 3 on this statement, it means you **Slightly Agree** *that you walk to school every day*
Questions:--

1- I teach the contents of those parts of the books like vocabulary and grammar, which were tested or will be test in UEE…….. .

2- I allocate most parts of final exams or midterms to vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation…….

3- My students' worksheets scores on the vocabulary section are very important for me. ………

4- If there is not enough time, I try to cover those parts of the books that were tested recently. And others parts are not important for me………..

5- I teach the lessons according to those methods which consider vocabulary in their approach………

6- In addition to the usual vocabularies at end of each lesson, I offer the some extra vocabularies along the teaching……..

7-I believe all the sections of textbooks should be covered although they are not tested in university entrance exam. …….

8-I don't cover pronunciation sections to some extent ……..

9- I gave my students the worksheets that review the expected content in UEE. ………

10- I give little attention to UEE while I am teaching the content of books………..

APPENDIX C
Demographic Characteristic of Surveyed Secondary School EFL Teachers

Please read and answer the following questions.

1. What is your gender?........................

Course information

2- How long have you taught in secondary schools?................
3. How old are you?............
4. What is your highest degree?.............

APPENDIX D

Interview questions about Teaching Method and Components of Lesson

1-Were your teaching materials relevant to the university entrance exam or it is based on the curriculum?

2- Do you think your quizzes, mid-terms and final exams similar to the university entrance exam?

3- Have you selected your teaching method according to UEE or not? Why?

4- Do you review the content of the past exam papers in order to match your intended content?

5- Have you adjusted your teaching method according to UEE already?

6- Do you encourage the students to use test-taking strategies or teach some test- taking strategies in the classroom?

7- Do you believe that your kind of teaching prepare your students for UEE, on the whole?

APPENDIX E
Framework of Field Notes for Classroom Observation

Teacher's code:	-----------------------	**Date of observation:**	-----------------
Name of the school:	----------------------	**Total time spent in observation:**	------------------
Number of students:	---------------------	**Topic of the lesson:**	----------------
Starts at:	---------------------	**Observer:**	------------------
Ends at:	---------------------		

UEE related themes in Teaching Method

Using related method to UEE	
Mock UEE quizzes and exams	
Using related materials like test book	
Students' question about UEE	
Other verbal themes	

APPENDIX F
Framework of Field Notes for Classroom Observation

Course information				
Teacher's code:	-----------------	**Date of observation:**	-----------------	
Name of the school:	-----------------	**Total time spent in observation:**	-----------------	
Number of students:	-----------------	**Topic of the lesson:**	-----------------	
Starts at:	-----------------	**Observer:**	-----------------	
Ends at:	----------------			

UEE related themes in the teaching of components

Giving synonym for difficult vocabulary	
UEE previous exam paper parts related to vocabulary ,grammar or pronunciation	
Using the related method to teaching content	
Making students to practice the related parts than other	
Other verbal themes	

Title

The Effect of Oral Conferencing and Peer Response on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Achievements

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Biodata

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Abstract

The present study investigated the effect of two different feedback types- oral conferencing (OC) and peer response (PR), on the writing achievements of 74 Iranian early intermediate EFL learners studying at Kish Institute of Science and Technology. The participants under investigation were randomly divided into two experimental groups: the OC Group and the PR Group, with each group comprising 37 eligible participants. Prior to the treatment, both groups were subjected to a proficiency test- namely, Preliminary English Test (PET), to ensure homogeneity among the participants. In the course of the study, the participants were required to write one-paragraph expository compositions on six topics. Depending on the group to which they belonged, the participants received feedback through either live teacher-student conferences or peer response. To compare the writing achievements of the groups, a pre-test prior to the treatment and a post-test after the treatment were administered, both in the form of in-class one-paragraph expository compositions of about 180 words within a time limit of 35 minutes. Data analyses indicated the effectiveness and superiority of oral conferencing in comparison with peer response regarding the participants' achievements in writing. .

1. Introduction

The provision of written corrective feedback on second/foreign language learners' writing has long been regarded as indispensable to any writing program. This is especially true now with the predominance of the process approach to writing that requires some kind of second party feedback, usually the instructor, on student drafts (Williams, 2002). In process-based, learner-centered classrooms, it is seen as an important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self-expression (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This aspect of language writing courses seems to be of utmost importance, since Kroll (2001) describes it as one of the two components most central to any writing course with the other being the assignments the students are given. A controversial question which remains to be answered regards the way teachers should provide feedback on students' writing assignments. Numerous studies have conducted research on the impacts of various modes of feedback on students' writing proficiency. Even though the research evidence on the effects of error correction on students' writing skills is far from conclusive (Ferris, 1995).

The availability of various feedback types on second/foreign language learners' writing in the literature, modification in writing pedagogy and insights gained from research studies have transformed feedback practices, with teacher written comments now often combined with feedback types in accordance with the principles of alternative assessment as opposed to the practices of conventional assessment methods; peer feedback, writing workshops, computer-delivered feedback, oral conferences, and portfolio assessment are but some of the alternative feedback types and/or modes which could be utilized in writing classes.

Research studies conducted in this area suggest that students like to receive written feedback in combination with other sources, including teacher-student conferences and peer feedback, and generally feel positive about receiving indirect feedback on errors, giving them clues rather than corrections since they recognize that it encourages them to be more active in their use of feedback (Hyland, 2001). Thus, students tend to value the effectiveness of receiving feedback through more alternative modes and/or types, such as oral conferencing and peer response, as well as conventional feedback types, such as written corrective feedback.

While both students and teachers consider feedback an integral aspect of L2 writing, there is an ongoing debate in current literature whether the alternative types of feedback have the potential to serve the intended purpose- enhancement of the achievements of learners in writing. Although both oral conferencing and peer response are advocated as effective styles of giving feedback, almost no research study compares the impact of live teacher-student conferences with that of peer response. Various studies have, however, compared the effectiveness of either of these with the effectiveness of more conventional types of feedback on the achievements of students in writing.

With respect to oral conferencing, which takes the form of face-to-face interaction between the teacher as a reader and the student as a writer, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) note the paucity of empirical research on student-teacher conferences but argue that data from student evaluations suggest general conditions. Zamel (1985) asserts that he has found this approach to providing feedback and leading learners towards a better understanding of their written work very rewarding and successful. While it is widely accepted that oral interaction has an important role to play in the planning, writing or revision stages of producing a text in L1 contexts (Bruffee 1984, cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006), the scope and extent of its contribution are still unclear, especially for L2 writers. For many learners oral feedback takes place in writing conferences where there is potential for meaning and interpretation to be constantly negotiated. Originating in L1 contexts, significant numbers of L2 students now participate in writing conferences.

Regarding the common practices of oral conferencing, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) suggest that students be provided with feedback through conferencing based on the following six key practices:

The student conferences should

(1) be limited to 5-10 minutes;

(2) focus on a single assignment in an early draft;

(3) balance criticism of student work with praise;

(4) incorporate student negotiation in the conference;

(5) conclude with students verbalizing what they will do next; and finally

(6) that teachers track student progress over the year, presumably through anecdotal comments and by maintaining a record of students' revisions and grades.

On the other hand, considering the stimulating nature of peer response- also known as peer feedback, peer review or peer evaluation, and its impact on second/foreign language writing, several reasons why this form of feedback should be adopted are identified in the related literature. Rollinson (1998) found that peer readers could provide useful information to their peer writers, with 80% of the comments of his college-level students being valid and only 7 percent potentially damaging. This view is echoed in the research conducted by Caulk(1994) who concludes that 60 percent of his students made comments on important issues he himself had not even noticed. Furthermore, research shows that peer writers can and do revise effectively on the basis of comments from peer readers. Mendoça and Johnson's(1994) study indicated that 53% of revisions made were incorporations of peer comments. Another reason why it is advisable to adopt peer feedback is provided by Caulk(1994) who argued that feedback given by peers tends to be of a different kind than that of teachers' in that peer review tends to focus more on specific aspects of the writing assignment, whereas feedback provided by teachers deals with more general issues. Finally, it may be that becoming a critical reader of others' writing may make students more critical readers and reviewers of their own writing.

While the previous research has done much to statistically demonstrate the usefulness of feedback provided through oral conferencing and peer response, almost no research study exclusively compares the effectiveness of conferencing and peer response on students' achievements in foreign language writing- past research mainly compares the effectiveness of either peer response or oral conferencing with some conventional way of giving feedback. Thus, it seemed of utmost importance to conduct a research study which particularly focused on the comparison of the effectiveness of live teacher-student conferences with that of feedback provided through peer response on the achievements of students in writing L2.

Therefore, the present study aimed at answering the following three questions:

Q1: Does the writing performance of the participants receiving teacher oral corrective feedback on their writing assignments through conferencing differ statistically significantly on the pre-test and the post-test?

Q2: Does the writing performance of the participants receiving corrective feedback on their writing assignments through peer response differ statistically significantly on the pre-test and the post-test?

Q3: Is there any statistically significant difference between the writing achievements of the participants receiving feedback through conferencing and those of the participants receiving feedback through peer response?

Accordingly, the following research hypotheses were stated:

H_0 (1): The writing achievements of the participants receiving teacher oral corrective feedback on their writing assignments through conferencing does not differ statistically significantly on the pre-test and post-test.

H_0 (2): The writing achievements of the participants receiving corrective feedback on their writing assignments through peer response does not differ statistically significantly on the pre-test and the post-test.

H_0 (3): There is no statistically significant difference between the writing achievements of the participants receiving feedback through conferencing and those of the participants receiving feedback through peer response.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study were selected from among early intermediate EFL learners studying at one of the branches of Kish Institute of Science and Technology. Since the unit of selection did not involve individuals, but a group of individuals being selected from larger groups, including all early intermediate EFL learners, studying in all branches of the institute, to smaller ones, the type of sampling employed in the study was cluster sampling. The resulting selected sample included 128 early intermediate EFL male learners. To make sure that the learners were at the required proficiency level ant that they made up a more homogeneous sample, the researcher administered a test of language proficiency as a means of further homogenizing the participants. Following the administration of the homogeneity test those learners whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean score were selected as the eligible participants of the study. As a result of this procedure, 74 students were included in the study.

2.2. Instrumentation

The instruments utilized in the present study included (1) a validated standardized test of language proficiency- namely, Preliminary English Test (PET), as a means of homogenizing the participants with respect to their level of language proficiency, and (2) two one-paragraph

expository compositions of about 180 words each, one serving as the pre-test and the other as the post-test.

Homogeneity Test: The Preliminary English Test is planned, prepared and validated by Cambridge ESOL Examinations center, thereby enjoying high degrees of reliability, validity, and practicality.

The test is composed of two papers, the first of which is entitled Reading & Writing and the second one Listening. The whole test consists of 75 items with the first paper containing 50 items, and the second paper being composed of 25 items, with a time allocation of 90 and 30 minutes for each paper, respectively.

Written English Test: In the course of the study, the participants were assigned to write one-paragraph expository compositions of about 180 words each, on topics which were selected from the list of topics introduced in The Oxford Essential Guide To Writing (1988), published by Oxford University Press, Inc.

In total, 8 topics were assigned, two of which served as the pre-test and the post-test topics which the participants were required to write on, in class and with a time limit of 35 minutes. In order for the results to be comparable, the testing environment and the test rubrics were made uniform for both groups. The remaining six were the out-of-class composition topics in response to which the participants wrote their expository paragraphs, under no time limit, and received the relevant feedback throughout the treatment stage of the study.

Scoring: Owing to lack of consensus on one single, most consistent marking method of writing, both analytic and holistic approaches to scoring were applied. As is reflected in the related literature, it is argued that a multiple-marking approach to scoring potentially improves the reliability of marking English compositions (Weir, 1990). Thus, each composition underwent more than one judgment by including the multiple scores of four independent markers, utilizing both impressionistic and analytic marking methods.

The raters were experienced EFL teachers who were well-informed regarding writing pedagogy. However, to ensure consistent grading among the raters, they were provided with precise instructions, as well as sample compositions to score in a briefing session. To further increase reliability in the scoring process, all indications regarding the specific groups- OC or PR, as well as the names of the participants were removed from the compositions; the only

means of identification on each composition was a corresponding code which also appeared on a separate list for keeping a record of the participants' scores.

Since the Jacobs et al.'s (1981) Composition Profile is recognized as a commonly used analytical scheme (Weigle, 2002), this marking scheme was utilized to score the writers' compositions analytically.

Final scores were arrived at by first adding the two sets- i.e., analytic and impressionistic, of the four raters' scores for each composition and then averaging them; the scores awarded ranged from a minimum of 52 to as high a score as 86 on a scale of 44 to 100.

To determine the inter-rater reliability for the scoring of the compositions through the two above-mentioned multi-rater procedures, the correlations among the four raters' awarded grades were averaged and the resulting reliability index computed for both analytic and impressionistic scoring methods was computed to be 0.83 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Correlation of the Four Raters' Scores on the Pre-test and Post-test

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Raters	Impressionistic	Analytic	Impressionistic	Analytic
R1R2	.84	.87	.85	.83
R1R3	.78	.76	.80	.79
R1R4	.86	.88	.87	.87
R2R3	.80	.81	.79	.76
R2R4	.85	.86	.86	.84
R3R4	.79	.81	.80	.82

2.3. Procedure

The type of sampling employed in this study was cluster sampling. The resulting sample was composed of a total of 128 early intermediate EFL learners studying in 9 classes. In the next step, a test of language proficiency- the Preliminary English Test (PET), was administered and those whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean score were chosen as the eligible participants of the study.

The design of the study was the pretest-posttest nonequivalent-groups design, one of the quasi-experimental designs. To determine the existence of no statistically significant difference

between the language proficiency level of the participants in the OC and the PR Groups, on the basis of their mean scores on the Preliminary English Test- the homogeneity test, an ANOVA F-test was run (see Table 2).

Table 2

OC and PR Groups' Homogeneity Test Means, Variance, etc.

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	N
OC	61.31	6.41	41.08	37
PR	62.01	6.25	39.06	37

The result of the F-test comparison is indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

F-test Result: OC and PR Groups' Means Comparisons

$F_{observed}$	Df	$F_{critical}$
1.41	1 & 72	3.98

As can be observed in Table 3, the F-observed value was 1.41, at 1 and 72 degrees of freedom, which was lower than the critical value of F- that is, 3.98, at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, this statistical test proved that there was no statistically significant difference between the proficiency levels of the OC and PR Groups at the beginning of the study.

The present study was conducted over 30 sessions; on the whole, 24 sessions were devoted to the treatment, since the first four sessions were taken for instructing the participants on how to write sample compositions; in addition to these four sessions, the first and last sessions were taken for the administration of the pre-test, and the post-test, respectively.

Prior to the pre-test administration, the participants in both the OC and PR Groups were provided with precise, identical, and uniform instruction and trial, by the researcher, on how to write well-organized one-paragraph compositions on expository topics. Following this four-session instructional phase, the participants in both groups were assigned to do the pre-test, i.e., an in-class one-paragraph expository composition of about 180 words on a specific topic within the test time limit of 35 minutes. The compositions were then scored first analytically and later, with a seven-day interval, impressionistically by the four raters.

Soon after the administration of the pre-test, the treatment procedures began to be conducted. Throughout this 24-session treatment interval between the pre-test and the post-test, the participants in both groups were provided with 6 topics on each of which they wrote a one-paragraph expository composition out of class, and under no time limit. The treatment of the OC and PR Groups differed only regarding the specific feedback type they received on their compositions.

The participants in the OC Group were provided with feedback through live teacher-student conferences. Emphasizing the effectiveness of this type of feedback, Keh (1990) found that group conferences were more successful than conferences conducted on a one-to-one basis. Thus, the participants were assigned to groups of four or five and participated in live conferences, averaging between 25 to 30 minutes, once every four sessions. The procedure required every participant to read their own writing, underline and annotate problems for teacher feedback, before the conference was held; this was in keeping with what Mi-mi (2009) recognized as the preliminary phase of such conferences. Having first detected the problems and shortcomings in their compositions themselves, the participants took part in group conferences which were conducted according to the stages advocated by Reid (1995).

The participants were firs set at ease through friendly openings. The conferences next continued with student-initiated comments mainly focusing on the problems and shortcomings they themselves had detected and marked in their compositions. This was followed by the researcher providing feedback on the overall meaning and organization as well as on more specific surface-level issues, e.g., vocabulary, language use, and the mechanics of writing, in response to the participants' annotations and comments. The participants were then required to read their paper to further the process. Finally, the researcher encouraged the participants to look over their paper and write a final draft which was supposed to be handed in before the assignment of a new topic.

In tandem with the treatment given to the OC Group, the participants in the PR Group were receiving feedback through peer response which involved peer readers giving feedback on their peer writers' compositions. To ensure a uniform, sound procedure, the technique was first modeled by the researcher during the first four instructional sessions. The modeling phase consisted of two steps which were taken according to the model proposed by Mangelsdorf (1992). In the first step, the researcher read a couple of sample drafts and asked the participants

to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each; this was done as a whole-class discussion. Secondly, the researcher taught the participants how to appropriately make suggestions on their peer writers' compositions for revision so as to sound supportive, collaborative, and effective. In other words, the participants were encouraged to act as "collaborators" rather than as strict "correctors"; this collaboration etiquette was then practiced, both in oral and written modes, as a whole-class activity.

Having undergone the modeling phase, the participants were put in dyads based on the commonalities with one another- those with similar age ranges, interests, or language proficiency levels were encouraged to pair up with each other. The treatment procedures were next conducted in accordance with the principles of peer response as proposed by Rollinson (2005). Upon the assignment of each topic and the handing in of the first drafts of compositions, the participants, i.e., peers, exchanged their compositions and were then required to make notes on them- as peer readers, out of class time. The following session, the peers paired up and engaged in 15- minute oral interactions providing each other with feedback referring to the notes they had previously made. Meanwhile, the researcher went round the class, observing and intervening where and when peers were having difficulty sorting through a particular issue. Finally, peer readers were required to give their peer writers a couple of suggestions for further revision.

To make sure that the participants paid full attention to the feedback provided on their compositions, the teacher required them to revise their first drafts, taking into account the feedback they had received, and hand in the final drafts of their compositions only after they had made the necessary modification. To further encourage them, the participants were told that their scores would be averaged and counted as their writing scores in their final grades at the end of the term; no score was recorded for the assignment until the modified, edited draft was submitted. The revising and handing in of the final drafts, for all the six out-of-class writing topics, preceded the assignment of a new topic.

At the end of the treatment interval- in the 30th session, when the participants in both the OC and PR Groups had submitted the final drafts of their compositions on the six topics assigned throughout the treatment phase, they took the post-test. As with the pre-test, the post-test required the participants to write another in-class one-paragraph expository composition of about 180 words on a specific topic within a time limit of 35 minutes. The 74 compositions were then

scored first analytically and later on impressionistically by the same four raters, scoring independently of one another.

3. Results and discussion

In order to test the null hypotheses stated and to investigate the possible differences between the mean scores of the OC and the PR Groups on the pre-test and the post-test marked both analytically and impressionistically, a multivariate analysis of variance- MANOVA, was run. Table 4 indicates the results.

Table 4

MANOVA: Pre-test, Post-test by Group

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	$F_{observed}$	P	$F_{critical}$
Test	2744.28	1	2744.28	63.32	.000	3.98
Group * Tests	1387.31	1	1387.31	32.01	.000	3.98
Within cells	3120.18	72	43.34	---	---	---

As Table 4 indicates, the F-observed value for the effect of the tests is 63.32 which, at 1 and 72 degrees of freedom, is much greater than the critical value of F at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, it is concluded that the difference between the pre-test mean score and the post-test mean score is statistically significant- the participants performed better on the post-test.

Further, the F-observed value for the effect of the group by tests factor- that is, the interaction between the two variables, is 32.01. This amount of F at 1 and 72 degrees of freedom is much greater than the critical value of F, at 0.05 significance level. Since the ANOVA F test demonstrates significance, there clearly exists a difference somewhere among the means, but it is not justifiable to say that any particular comparison is significant. To pinpoint all possible differences there may be among the individual treatment means, Kinnear and Gray (1994) emphasize that further analysis is necessary. A Scheffé 's test was therefore run to localize the exact sources of the differences. The results derived from the post-hoc Scheffé 's test showed that the participants in the OC Group outperformed those in the PR Group on the post-test (see Table 5).

Table 5

Post-hoc Scheffé 's test, the Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test by Group

No.	Comparisons	Mean	Observed Difference	Critical Difference	Significance
1	Post-OC Vs. Pre-OC	74.41 62.13	12.28	6.91	*
2	Post-OC Vs. Pre-PR	74.41 64.37	9.77	6.91	*
3	Post-OC Vs. Post-PR	74.41 66.89	7.52	6.91	*
4	Post-PR Vs. Pre-OC	66.89 62.13	4.76	6.91	No
5	Post-PR Vs. Pre-PR	66.89 64.37	2.52	6.91	No
6	Pre-PR Vs. Pre-OC	64.37 62.13	2.54	6.91	No

Note. * represents significant difference at 0.05 significance level.

Investigation of Null Hypothesis 1. Taking into consideration the mean scores of the OC Group on the pre-test and on the post-test, i.e., 74.41 and 62.13, respectively, it is evident that there is a statistically significant difference between the two sets of scores. This finding is not in conformity with the claim of Null Hypothesis 1. This hypothesis is, therefore, statistically rejected.

Investigation of Null Hypothesis 2. According to the fifth comparison of the post-hoc Scheffé 's test, it can be argued that Null Hypothesis 2 cannot be statistically rejected- there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the PR Group on the pre-test and the post-test.

Investigation of Null Hypothesis3. As the third comparison of the Scheffé 's test indicates, the difference between the post-test mean score of the participants in the OC Group- 74.41, and that of the participants in the PR Group- 66.89, proved to be statistically significant. It can, thus, be maintained that the OC Group that was provided with feedback through live teacher-student conferences performed better on the post-test than the PR Group that received feedback through peer response. This finding is against the claim of Null Hypothesis 3, hence the rejection of this hypothesis.

In light of the sixth comparison of the Scheffé 's test, it can be held that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups' preliminary writing performances on the pre-test. Therefore, the significant superiority of the performance of the OC Group on the post-test compared with that of the PR Group can be attributed to the type of feedback the OC Group was provided with in the course of the study. By the same token, it can be argued that the inferiority of the performance of the PR Group on the post-test is owing to the inefficacy of the type of feedback this group received on their compositions.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of feedback provided through either oral conferencing or peer response on the expository compositions of Iranian EFL learners. The results of the study support the claim that feedback given during live teacher-student conferences can have a very profound effect on the students' achievements in writing. These findings echo, to some extent, the earlier findings of Zhu (1995), and Bitchener et al. (2009) who propose that results of teacher and student evaluations support the notion that the focused and effective feedback students receive during conferences can lead to better achievements in writing. The results of this study are also in line with those of Anderson's (2000) who maintains that the fact of the teacher acting as a "live" audience, and thus being able to ask for clarification, check the comprehensibility of the comments made, and help the students sort through problems potentially results in a better ability to write.

On the other hand, the results of this study contradict the findings of Mendoça and Johnson (1994) in that they conclude that peer writers can and do revise effectively on the basis of comments from peer readers. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study lend support to the contention of Connor and Asenavage (1994) who claim that peer feedback makes a marginal

difference to student writing, finding that only 5 % of the revisions could be directly linked to peer comments in comparison with 35 % related to teacher comments.

In light of the results of the present study, the researcher came to the conclusion that writing should be considered as a recursive process involving certain stages which ultimately lead to a final draft. As such, revision should form an indispensable stage of the pedagogy of writing. The participants of this study, too, as a result of the treatment procedures built into the writing of each composition, seemed to feel convinced that editing, modification, and revision form an essential part of the writing process. Having provided the participants with feedback through oral conferencing, they were encouraged to write with a clear audience in mind, hence the production of reader-based texts. Furthermore, including oral conferencing in the instruction of writing proved to enhance the participants' attitudes towards corrective feedback and boost their motivation for revision as it was explicitly mentioned by the majority of the members of the OC Group. One more marked advantage of live teacher-student conferences may regard improvements in the learners' level of oral proficiency.

The provision of corrective feedback has long been regarded as an essential part of the pedagogy of writing. Formerly, this was mainly done through more conventional types of feedback and the related literature seems to abound with numerous studies attempting to elucidate the strengths and weaknesses of such ways of providing feedback. In recent years, there has been a dramatic shift in this area towards more alternative modes of providing feedback and this seems to be transforming, at least to some extent, the writing pedagogy in general, and specifically the principles of the process-approach to writing. The present study attempted at shedding light on the effectiveness of two of these alternative feedback types- oral conferencing, and peer response. The current, related literature concerning alternative feedback modes and/or types, however, seems to be scanty and far from conclusive. Interested readers could, therefore, further delve into the effectiveness of such alternative feedback types and/or modes as oral conferencing, peer response, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, computer-delivered feedback, and writing workshops on the achievements of EFL/ESL learners in writing.

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Title

Noticing the Receptive-productive Gap
A Step toward Improving Productive Lexical Knowledge

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Abstract

This study intends to focus on a somewhat neglected dimension of 'Noticing the Gap' hypothesis, i.e. noticing the gap between one's semantic/receptive processing and syntactic/productive processing ability. Semantic/receptive processing ability, enabling one to process the meaning aspect of input, is realized in passive knowledge and mainly used in comprehension activities. However, syntactic/productive processing ability is based on active language knowledge and drawn upon in production tasks which entail formal accuracy of output (Swain, 1998). This view of noticing, labeled *noticing the receptive-productive gap* was empirically examined through exploring its relationship with improvement in learners' productive lexical knowledge. Fifty Iranian female adult intermediate learners of English in two homogeneous groups were both given reading tasks

merely dealing with the meaning aspect of an assigned text. The experimental group was also assigned an activity making learners notice the receptive-productive gap in their knowledge of lexical language items. Two production posttests tapping into the participants' short-term and long-term memory were administered. Statistical analysis showed significant effects of noticing on the experimental groups' short term and long term learning. The effect of the task was shown, however, to decrease significantly after three weeks. The pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

1. Introduction

Due to dissatisfaction with inefficient unguided and incidental learning programs and methods (Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen, 2002; Robinson, 2003), guided focus on form has turned out to be a necessary or, at least, helpful pedagogic intervention (Robinson, 2003). Opposite to task-based instruction which encourages learners to focus on meaning, focus on form as one of the major ways to promote noticing (Long and Robinson, 1998) has been shown to directly impact on the process of interlanguage development (Ellis et al., 2002).

Noticing has been generally considered as **"**the intake of grammar as a result of learners paying attention to the input" (Batstone, 1996, p. 273; cited in Qi andLapkin, 2001) where intake refers to "that part of input that the learner notices" (Schmidt, 1990, p. 139). To make it fit the purpose of our study, rather than intake, here noticing is considered as the *process* of paying attention to language forms as a result of which input changes to intake.

Noticing has been given different degrees of importance and necessity. Some, considering noticing as a requisite for learning (Philp, 2003; Robinson, 1995), have taken an extreme position in this regard and argued for "no noticing, no acquisition" (Ellis, 1994, p. 89). Such a view was first proposed by Schmidt (1990) contending that noticing is both necessary and sufficient for converting input to intake and learning to occur. This strong version has been a source of controversy and criticisms on the grounds that no one can deny subliminal language learning (Truscott, 1998). The weaker form of this hypothesis is that noticing is by no means

sufficient and might not be necessary but, at the very least, is helpful to learning languages (Abu Radwan, 2005; Izumi, 2002; Takahashi, 2005).

Despite all these controversies over the significance of noticing, studies have almost never ceased to provide increasing empirical evidence for its contribution to language development. For instance, one of the distinctive features of noticing is enhanced learning conditions which foreground those aspects of language that prove problematic in furthering communication (Robinson, 2003). That is, attempts are made to increase the saliency of target forms so that learners' attention is drawn to them and learning occurs as a result.

1.1. Different conceptualizations of noticing

The increasing understanding and cumulating evidence of the contributions noticing can make to language learning have given rise to various conceptualizations of noticing. The first one, "Noticing language forms", is based on the assumption that the saliency and/or frequency of a language feature may make learners pay attention to and notice certain language forms and, as a result, convert input to intake (Gass, 1988).

Also, learners may come to notice that there are some differences and mismatches between their interlanguage level realized in their output and the target level manifested in the input they are exposed to. This process which is called "Noticing the Gap" (Schmidt andFrota, 1986; cited in Swain, 1998) results in destabilization and interlanguage restructuring (Ellis, 1991; cited in Philp, 2003) and, at times, consolidation of what language knowledge they already have. Consolidation of the existing linguistic knowledge has been similarly attributed to noticing another gap, "the gap between their output and what they know consciously" (Ellis, 2003, p.149) which learners become aware of "by comparing what they actually said with what they would have been capable of saying if they had used their most advanced interlanguage knowledge" (Ellis, 2003, p. 111). What this process has in common with the former noticing the gap is their attention to weaknesses of input produced by learners. However, while the former compares this input with output part of which may prove totally new to learners, in the latter this comparison is made between learner's output and their conscious knowledge.

The main advantage of this type lies in the fact that students realize their interlanguage cannot handle the demands of production, so its limits will be pushed and acquisition will most probably occur (Taroneand Liu, 1995; cited in Swain, 1998). Ellis (2003), emphasizing the importance of noticing this gap, proceeds to claim that noticing the gap in this sense "can only be

achieved when learners listen to themselves, thus making input out of their own output" (p. 112). Noticing the gap between output and conscious knowledge serves as the point of departure in our study, while we'll empirically contend that learners' output seems not to be the sole source of input for noticing the hole.

1.2. Noticing the receptive-productive gap

Our hypothesis is meant to give a clearer and more operational picture of noticing the gap between what learners can produce and what they consciously know which, to the best of our knowledge, has been neither theoretically nor empirically justified in studies on noticing. To start with, the following scenario will help practically understand how of this noticing, referred to as "Noticing the receptive-productive gap" in the rest of the paper.

Imagine that a learner of a target language has been assigned a comprehension task. He has no problem with understanding the complex messages involved in the passage. After reading the text, he is asked to convey the same messages using his own interlanguage system. He may succeed in expressing those ideas in one way or another, but he can't seem to use, for example, the collocations, idiomatic expressions, and even the structures he just faced in the input. Although he has no problem comprehending the text, the production of the same structures and forms proves difficult. More precisely, his interlanguage system can handle the comprehension task but not the production task.

We hypothesize that this is because comprehension of the passage demands semantic processing of the input while production of the same language goes beyond analysis of the semantic aspects and demands syntactic processing of the information as well (Qi andLapkin, 2001). Passive knowledge of language can help that learner understand input well, but, since he does not possess such knowledge in active form, he cannot produce output like the received input. Identifying such a mismatch between his passive knowledge which mainly aids him in semantic analysis of input and active knowledge based on which he can syntactically analyze linguistic information can help him recognize some linguistic problems he has (Swain, 1998). More precisely, he realizes that his knowledge of certain language items does not help him produce them correctly and he should develop active knowledge of them. Therefore, noticing the receptive-productive gap can be defined as "*the process of paying attention to the mismatch between one's ability to semantically/receptively process a language item in comprehension and their ability to syntactically/productively process that item in production and learning it.*"

1.3. Noticing the gap between receptive and productive lexical knowledge

"…perhaps different aspects of language are processed and stored differentially" (Van Patten, 1994, p. 31; cited in Gass et al., 2003) and, accordingly, "different aspects may require more or less of [attention]" (Schmidt, 1995, p. 14; cited in Gass et al., 2003). Therefore, it is not legitimate to generalize the findings of every particular study, including ours, to language skills and sub-skills other than those studied. Hence, we decided to narrow our study down to only one language aspect, i.e. lexical knowledge. Lexical knowledge was selected due to the primacy attached to this aspect of language in related literature; vocabulary size, for instance, has been considered as an important factor in one's general language ability and has significant correlations with skills like reading and writing (Coady, 1997; cited in Lee and Muncie, 2006). Furthermore, in the studies on productive knowledge of vocabulary, explicit explanation and concentration, which help attention and noticing, have been found to help language learners improve their productive knowledge of vocabulary (de la Fuente, 2006; Lee and Muncie, 2006).

In order to empirically examine effects of noticing the receptive-productive gap on gaining productive lexical knowledge, the present researchers tried to seek answer to the following research question:

- Does noticing the receptive-productive gap have any significant effect on the storage of the noticed language items in short and long term memories?

The empirical examination of the proposal is based on Laufer and Goldstein's (2004; cited in Lee and Muncie, 2006) hierarchy of vocabulary skills. The hardest skill in this hierarchy is active recall, i.e. the ability to supply the target word. The second one is passive recall which refers to one's ability to provide the meaning of a target word. Active recognition, the third skill, is one's ability to recognize the target word when its meaning is given. The easiest of all, passive recognition involves recognition of the meaning of a target word when some meaning options are given. The present study focuses on the gap between the first two skills since the first one demands active lexical knowledge and the second one passive lexical knowledge and, therefore, the gap between these two skills is the one proposed in this study.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The participants in this study are 50 adult intermediate Iranian female learners of English who ranged in age from 18 to 35. They were freshman B.A candidates majoring in 'English language literature' at one of the universities of Tehran. Twenty eight of them constituted the experimental group and 22 of them formed the comparison group.

2.2. Materials

The test used for checking homogeneity of the groups was the reading section of TOEFL (1996) which consisted of four reading passages with 25 multiple choice comprehension questions. Students' scores on TOEFL were further exploited in order to decide upon the difficulty level of the material worked on in the treatment session. After some deep reflection, a text named "It's not so bad to be middle-aged" was chosen from "Passages 1" (Richards and Sandy, 1998, p. 73) for this purpose. Finally, for the two-phase post-test, this reading text was mutilated and a written production cloze test was developed by the researchers. This test was meant to examine how much difference the technique we used made in keeping the targeted language forms in short term and long term memories of the participants in the experimental group compared to the comparison group.

2.3. Procedures

First, participants in the two classes took the reading section of TOEFL (1996); the aim, here, was to check homogeneity of the two groups in terms of their reading proficiency. The time allocated to the participants to respond to all questions was 40 minutes. The data collected were later entered into SPSS software for the analysis; to check whether the difference in the average reading proficiency of the two groups was significant, independent sample t-test was used and showed no significant difference (t= 1.45, P> 0.05).

Making sure of homogeneity of participants in two groups, researchers conducted the experimental part of the study. Here, both comparison and experimental groups were required to read the specified reading text in pairs in 15 minutes; the reading passage was followed by a number of reading comprehension questions. Reading the text, participants were given another 10 minutes to respond to the comprehension questions and to discuss the might be vague or ambiguous parts in the text.

In a later stage, however, only the experimental group received noticing treatment. The aim, here, was to check the amount of difference, if any, noticing could make in storage of linguistic items in short- and long-term memory of the individuals in the experimental group. In

the treatment section, that immediately followed the first reading of the passage and its follow up activities, experimental group members were first properly briefed on what they were required to do so as to complete the noticing task (that was to notice the gap between their semantic processing and syntactic processing of the written input). More precisely, they were fully trained on how to read the same text intensively and to underline, simultaneously, the lexical items they *could process semantically in comprehension but not syntactically in production*. To shed more light on how to do the noticing task, the researchers drew participants' attention to one language item they might have easily understood but might not have been able to produce in a similar context. In this phase, students' recitation of such items was relied on based on the assumption that "what is noticed is available for verbal report" (Swain, 1998, p. 66).

Making sure all participants had realized what they were supposed to do, researchers carried out the short but effective treatment. At this point, class members were allocated around 10 minutes to read the text and to single out and to notice the items easy for them to grasp but problematic to generate. Hereafter, the items recognized were read out by participants and recorded by researchers. While the experimental group was receiving the treatment, the comparison group was involved in discussing about the reading passage.

Immediately after the above-mentioned task was implemented, around 5 minutes later, participants in both groups were given a written production cloze test tapping into the active knowledge of linguistic items noticed by the experimental group during treatment. The aim, here, was to document any probable effect treatment might have exerted on retaining the identified items in students' short term memory. To develop an appropriate cloze test (in which the items for deletion were pre-selected), a number of stages were followed; first, researchers made some predictions prior to the noticing treatment about what items might be noticed by the experimental group members. Based on the predictions, the selected words, a total of 37, were removed from the reading passage. Reliability of the measure was further investigated; it was found that the measure enjoys a high reliability of around 0.80 and can safely be employed as a reliable measure of intermediate learners' ability in producing particular language items.

After the treatment, the researchers checked for the accuracy of their predictions, i.e. if any word other than those noticed by the experimental group had been removed or any word noticed had not been removed. It was observed that only one of the removed words had not been noticed by the participants. So, that word was written back in the cloze passage.

In order to check the differential effect of noticing technique on participants' long-term memory and to estimate the extent to which such an effect would decrease after a time interval, researchers asked participants in both groups to take the same production cloze test for a second time after three weeks. The time allocated to short- and long-term memory test were around 10 minutes. In the last stage, researchers scored all collected papers so that they can compare students' performances in different groups. Each participant received a score out of 36.

3. Results and Discussion

Recall that the researchers in the present study aimed to document any effect noticing of language items might exert on participants' short and long term memories. To this aim, 2 independent sample t-tests were employed; so as to check if the effect of noticing the receptive-productive gap remains strong enough in language learners' long-term memory, the researchers further ran a matched t-test. Table 1 presents a summary of results of the independent sample t-tests done on respondents' replies to short and long term memory tests.

Table 1

Independent Sample t-tests of Short and Long Term Memory Tests

Memory Tests	Experimental group mean	Comparison group mean	Mean difference	t	Sig. level
Short Term Memory Test	17.6	10.5	7	4.86	0.00
Long Term Memory Test	8	4	4	3.7	0.00

A glance at the table reveals that mean scores of the experimental group in the short and long term memory tests significantly exceeded those of the comparison group at the 0.05 level of significance: t (48) =4.86, P < 0.05 and t (48) =3.7, P < 0.05 for the scores on short and long term memories respectively. This finding strongly supports the claim that noticing the receptive-productive gap significantly improves storage of language items in students' short and long term memories. At the same time, it is consistent with many researchers' claims, including Robinson's (1995), that the effects of noticing are most probably realized in short term memory. This result is a further proof on the claim that noticing language items increases saliency of target forms so

that learners' attention is drawn to them and learning occurs as a result; accordingly, it is claimed that production of language items requires syntactic processing of the information.

Making sure of the significant effect of the noticing on participants' short and long term memories, the researchers, in a later stage, ran a matched t-test in order so as to investigate if the effect of the noticing remains strong enough after a three week time interval, i.e. to see if there is a significant difference between experimental group's performance on tests tapping into their short and long term memories. Table 2 reveals the results obtained.

Table 2

Paired-Samples t-test of Short and Long Term Memory Tests of the Experimental Group

Short Term Memory Test	Long Term Memory Test	**Mean difference**	*t*	**Sig. level**
17.6	8	9.4	7.6	0.00

As the table indicates (t (26) =7.6, P <0.05) a significant difference in the performance of the experimental group on their short- and long-term memory tests can be documented. A glance at the measures obtained reveals that the effect of noticing the receptive-productive gap items decreases significantly after three weeks. This result is likely to be attributed to the lack of rehearsal of the noticed items on part of the participants; proper rehearsal following detection has been documented to help fulfill task demands (Baddeley, 1986, p. 99, cited in Robinson, 1995). This view holds when the concept of noticing is defined as detection plus rehearsal of items in short-term memory prior to being encoded in long-term memory and is associated with a number of late selection theories of attentional allocation (Cowan, 1988, 1993; Norman, 1968; cited in Robinson, 1995). Based on this impression, the noticed items, i.e. the detected ones, need to be further activated; this further activation of information in short-term memory, itself the result of rehearsal, leads to a more permanent encoding in long-term memory (Robinson, 1995). Of course, there might be another possible interpretation- that noticing technique might need to be facilitated by other means. For instance, certain task types may help facilitate noticing of different aspects of the input (Fotosand Ellis, 1991; LoschkyandBleyVroman, 1993; cited in Robinson, 1995). Based on this and similar speculations, we think it advisable to exploit various task types in the treatment session so as to increase the effect noticing technique might exert on learners' grasping of language items.

4. Conclusion

The present study sheds more light on the production dimension of 'noticing the gap', that is noticing the gap between passive/receptive and active/productive knowledge. This was achieved specifically through demonstrating its role in enhancing productive lexical knowledge of English learners. This contribution was shown to be significant with regard to learners' performance on both short-term and long-term memory tests. Finally, it was observed that such effects were significantly reduced throughout the interval between short-term and long-term tests. This observation can be explained by lack of rehearsal of the noticed elements.

There are certain limitations in this study that need to be discussed and taken into consideration for further research on this proposal. First, the low number of participants limits the scope of generalization of results. Thus, effects of implementing this proposal can be better explored in studies on larger sample sizes. Second, we did not incorporate rehearsal of the noticed items in the treatment; this is while given considerable contribution of rehearsal to efficient transition of language items from short-term memory to long-term memory, incorporation of rehearsal in the treatment might have been able to yield considerable advantage. Also, this proposal needs to be reexamined in a longitudinal design since language learners naturally need to gain control over the way they should practice noticing the receptive-productive gap. Variation in modalities (Wong, 2001) and task types are further likely to result in different observations. Moreover, contributions of individual differences such as language proficiency, learner creativity, etc. (Gass et al., 2003; Qi andLapkin, 2001; Robinson, 2003; Tarone, 2002) to the quality of noticing are fresh areas to be probed in this regard. Finally, less controlled testing procedures like focused tasks which necessitate the use of targeted/noticed language elements (Ellis, 2003) may yield different and interesting results.

To help interested readers implement this proposal in their classes effectively, we'd like to briefly discuss some factors related to the efficacy of noticing the receptive-productive gap. Learners' developmental readiness to pay attention to certain language forms is one such factor (Skehan, 1998). More precisely, learners who are well able to analyze and process linguistic information semantically seem to be pretty ready to enhance their ability to process it syntactically and, as a result, push their interlanguage system forward. Differently put, if a learner already knows what a language form, e.g. a word or an expression, means, they can develop their active knowledge of it rather easily since they do not have to process the linguistic information both semantically and syntactically. In dual task performance, i.e. carrying out two

tasks at the same time, naturally more of learners' attention is taken than when they are in charge of one (Heuer, 1996; cited in Robinson, 2003). This leads to interference in allocating attentional resources to task demands. Noticing the receptive-productive gap assumes that learners are encouraged to identify and work on language elements which they should gain control of processing syntactically. Therefore, they are not simultaneously involved in semantic analysis of input, and interference is minimized. In other words, learners' prior knowledge of the semantic aspect of the detected input can help them go through syntactic analysis of it more efficiently (Robinson, 2003).

A frequently studied technique of improving noticing on the part of L2 learners is input enhancement (Doughty, 2003), i.e. making some target forms salient enough to be noticed by learners. Input enhancement is, by convention, done through, for example, teachers' highlighting, emboldening, and underlining the target forms worth noticing. However, as indicated by a review of several studies done on individual differences (DornyeiandSkehan, 2003), all learners cannot be treated in a similar fashion, and this is partly due to different interlanguage developmental stages they are at at a given time. Thus, the effectiveness of enhanced input may vary across individuals. The contribution noticing the receptive-productive gap can make in this regard is that learners who are repeatedly assigned tasks which help them notice the receptive-productive gap gain considerable command of these tasks and will be able to autonomously notice language forms they have problems producing. This can foster their autonomy in *enhancing* input. In other words, they themselves gain the ability to recognize which language forms they do not have adequate active knowledge of. Therefore, those forms automatically become salient, and learners do not face the problem of coming across some teacher-enhanced language elements which they already know or do not need to know and many unenhanced language forms which happen to be exactly what they need to gain active knowledge of.

Finally, the presence of some "communicative need for the form" (Barvodi-Harlig, 1995; cited in Williams, 2001, p. 326) influences noticing. In the conceptualization of noticing proposed in this paper and the way the treatment was conducted in the experimental group, learners' communicative needs for expressing some messages were considered the main impetus to noticing the receptive-productive gap. More precisely, they were encouraged to underline lexical items or phrases which they would be interested to use when speaking and/or writing. The

necessity, usefulness, and interestingness of a language element directly influence the degree to which noticing it results in learning it.

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APPEDNIX 1,The reading material taken from "Passages 1" (Richards andChuck, 1998, p. 73).

Instructions: When you are reading this passage, please underline the expressions, verb phrases, words, etc. that you can understand but cannot produce if you want to express the same meaning.

IT'S NOT SO BAD TO BE MIDDLE-AGED.

Once middle age was thought of as something to fear; many thought of middle age as simply the time between youth and old age. Now, though, researchers claim that middle age can be the most fruitful time of life, full of new growth and development. New studies show, for example, a sharp rise in people's altruism-their willingness to give to others-during middle age. Several studies show that as people approach their midlife, they tend to experience fewer stressful events, such as losing a job. When they go through such a major change, the studies found that middle-aged people see it as much less upsetting than do younger people. In fact, many of the middle-agers remember their youth as a particularly difficult time. Middle age for them is more peaceful. As a result, people shift their priorities and think about what is important to them. In middle age, many people no longer focus on themselves, but on people around them.

Not all researchers agree on what constitutes middle age; most of them think it is the years between 45 and 65, but others claim it covers the years between 35 and 70. A recent survey found that most people define middle age by life's landmarks, the things they have done and accomplished, rather than by age. The majority of those in the survey state that middle age is a time when people deepen their relationships and care more about other people. For example, 84 percent said that middle age is a time of becoming closer to family and friends, a time to be generous, a time to think more of others that one's self.

Why are older people more generous? One man puts it this way: "In my twenties I learned how to get along with my wife. In my thirties I learned to get a head in my job. In my forties I began to think about other people's needs." This is typical. Although people's careers may still be blossoming in middle age, they often have more insight and

perhaps time to devote to others. "When you're older," one woman says, "your career is settled and you have more time to give." So if you are reading this while you are still young, do not fear. Middle age can be an exciting and rewarding time. If you are already in middle age, take a deep breath, and then turn to those around you. And if you are past middle age, look back and count the good things you have done.

APPENDIX 2, The cloze test to check the effect of the technique on the participants' working memory.

Instructions: When you are reading this passage, try to use the underlined expressions, verb phrases, words, etc. in the blanks

<div align="center">IT'S NOT SO BAD TO BE MIDDLE-AGED.</div>

Once middle age was 1.……….. (considered) as something 2.…….. (frightening). Many thought of middle age as simply the time between youth and old age. Now, though, researchers claim that middle age can be the most 3.…….. (producing useful results) time of life, full of new growth and development. New studies show, for example, a 4.…… (sudden and rapid) rise in people's altruism-their willingness to give to others-during middle age. Several studies show that as people 5.……. (come near) their 6.…….. (the middle part of your life), they tend to experience fewer stressful events, such as 7.……..(fail to keep) a job. When they go 8.… such a(n) 9.…..(very important) change, the studies found that 10.……… (neither young nor old) people (consider) 11.… it as much less 12.……(making unhappy) than do younger people. In fact, many of the 13.…….. (middle-aged people) remember their youth as a 14.……… (more than usual) difficult time. Middle age for them is more peaceful. As a result, people 15.……. (change) their priorities and think about what is important to them. In middle age, many people 16.…….. (not any more) focus on themselves, but on people around them.

Not all researchers agree 17.….what constitutes middle age; most of them think it is the years between 45 and 65, but others claim it 18.…… (include) the years between 35 and 70. A recent survey found that most people define middle age by life's landmarks, the things they have done and 19.…… (achieved), 20.…..than by age. The majority of those in the survey state that middle age is a time when people 21.…….(make stronger) their relationships and care more 22..... other people. For example, 84 percent said that middle age is a time 23.…. becoming closer to family and friends, a time 24.…be generous, a time 25.… think more of others that one's self.

Why are older people more generous? One man 26.….. (express/say) it this way: "In my twenties I learned how to get 27.… with my wife. In my thirties I learned to get 28.….. in my job. In my forties I began to think about other people's needs." This is typical. Although people's careers may still be blossoming in middle age, they often have more insight and perhaps time to devote 29.… others. "When you're older," one woman says, "your career is 30.…… (not likely to change) and you have more time to give." So if you are reading this while you are still young, do not fear. Middle age can be an exciting and 31.…… (satisfying, making you happy) time. If you are 32 .…… (right now) in middle age, 33.….. a deep breath, then turn 34.… those around you. And if you are 35 .….. middle age? Look 36.… and count the good things you have done.

Title

To Be or Not to Be for 'CALL' in Iran

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Lakshmi Kala Prakash is an English Language Instructor at Pars Language School in Tehran, Iran. She has been teaching English in Iran since 2003. Her interests chiefly lie in the improvement and successful integration of Educational Technology in the curriculum; Teaching of English as a Foreign Language and provision of an authentic yet virtual climate for discussion and interaction among English Language Learners in Iran.

Abstract

A multitude of challenges can come upon any ESL teacher these days, so should they cave in to the ever demanding technical prowess or go for it like a matador to a bull in a bullring? Well as seen more often than not success lies in the hands and minds of those willing to dive deep into the realms of the unknown, experiment without fear, gain and implement what is learned, offer suggestions for change and last, but not least monitor all aspects and effects not only on the implementer, but also on those learners that these new concepts are being aimed at. This paper attempts to humbly portray the study into the success and failure of CALL in a single gender population varying in the age of 15 and above in Iran. While trying to establish the reasons for the lack of immediate acceptance, this research provides more evidence on the concept of Peer Review, and also attempts to offer an insight into, and scope for reasonable solutions toward the eventual success in the use of educational technology and its programs like 'CALL' in the near future; in all countries where similar hurdles are being encountered.

Keywords: Educational technology, Chat, Communicative competence, Peer review, Inaccessibility, Digital labs.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is 'CALL'?

Varied definitions have developed over the years since its inception in the 1980s. Simply put by Levy (1997) Computer-assisted language learning is "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning p.1". This definition gives us clear indication of the necessity for and the availability of computers and its applications in a community for 'CALL' to be successful.

TESOL saw the advantages that this concept could add to teaching English language on a world stage and set up its CALL Interest Section (CALL-IS) in 1983.

> Carol Chapelle (2001) 'The 1983 annual TESOL convention in North America included papers arguing methodological issues in CALL, and a suggestion was made to establish a professional organization (CALICO) devoted to the issues involved in language learning technology. By the following year, TESOL members were working to establish a CALL Interest Section (p.8).

However, the advantages can and are felt only in countries where access and the knowledge of computers, its applications and so forth are predominant. Although most developed nations work freely with computers and its applications, developing nations such as Iran are faced with numerous hurdles least of which are the problems of cost and broadband connectivity.

1.2 Iran and scope for CALL in EFL-Iran:

The Islamic Republic of Iran comprises a system deeply entwined in religious ideology and Persian cultural norms as of the ancient past. This diversity offers a rich source of information that can be used effectively in the enhancement of any language teaching among its citizens. In addition the overwhelming enthusiasm and recognition for the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language has exponentially increased among people of all age groups, genders, and walks of life. This growing necessity and eagerness to develop stronger skills offer a rich platform for the introduction of technologically favorable learning tools and the latest teaching methods developed, being tested or available in the current EFL system. However, this can only be achieved if the reasons for its possible failure are kept in mind even before the production phase. Successful implementation of any new concepts in education in a deeply conservative and with limited access to permissible resources the country, can only be done if those developing

this technology consider widespread training of the dedicated and capable teachers from these countries in their efficient use. Another equally important point to be kept in mind is that the provision for and hands on help should be made available to these educational providers until such time that they are capable of handling things on their own. Most often a factor quite easily forgotten by those from the West is the fact that the Iranian society places very little faith in companies outside of their own country when it comes to offering solutions to inevitable problems, therefore access to internal providers is a must for effective marketing.

2. The Venture

Marianne Celce – Murcia, Maggie Sokolik (3rd Edition p.481) 'Much of language learning is facilitated by repetition, whether it is the repetition of individual sounds, intonation patterns, conversational gambits, or other types of words and phrases. Computers are useful in delivering drills for practice, whether in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or listening, as they are tireless in their delivery. Unlike human interlocutors who may grow weary of repeating a word for a learner, a computer will repeat a word a hundred times if the user wishes' & 'Chat is real-time, or synchronous, communication. It has the informal feel of conversation, yet is mediated through writing. Chat can be used to facilitate class discussions, for immediate feedback between students and teachers outside of class time, or for communication between students outside of class (p.483).

The following venture was started a year ago with the aim to provide a subtle yet effective virtual environment for female students from the Institute of PARS Language School located in Tehranpars in Tehran, Iran. The group consisted of students and teachers in the age group of 15 and above and included young girls and women from all walks of life. Although the study started with a very simple view to providing an access to an English-speaking environment outside of class in a virtual context, it broadened into many other equally serious and revealing concepts such as the differences in acceptance toward the introduction of technology, mainly a CALL system among the different age groups, and reasons for the rejection of such technological implementations especially among those above the age of 20 years. It also further enhanced the concept of 'Peer Review and development of self-confidence' among all those who seriously took part in this study.

H. D Brown 'People derive their sense of self-esteem from the accumulation of experiences with themselves and with others and from assessments of the external world around them (p.155).

Furthermore this venture pointed out the chief reasons for the reduced acceptance of CALL on a wider scale and offers some suggestions for current and future developers of educational technology to keep in mind when introducing new and exciting material into third world countries like Iran.

As stated by Garrett (1991), "the use of the computer does not constitute a method". More importantly it is a "medium in which a variety of methods, approaches, and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented" (p.75). In order to implement these various methods and approaches a teacher needs to have adequate support and knowledge from her administrators, staff and students alike. They should be familiar at least to an extent about the latest terms in use around the world. Terms such as: Blogs, Wikis, Social Networking; Podcasting; Web2.0- a more democratic approach to the use of the Web; Distance Learning; Virtual Worlds; Interactive Whiteboards to name a few. These terms although taken for granted by most in the West and developed Countries, are still quite unheard of or not considered applicable to the methods currently being used in Iran.

Equally important is the lack of effective areas for further practice among speakers of English as a foreign language in Iran which has clearly curtailed the ability to broaden and strengthen listening, speaking and writing abilities of an otherwise intelligent and very enthusiastic population of English language learners.

Jack C. Richards, Willey A. Renandya: (2002) "12. Communicative Competence: Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, instruction needs to point toward all of its components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychometric. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy to authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning to heretofore unrehearsed contexts in the real world (p.13).

These words clearly support my own intentions for providing a climate, although only virtual, for authentic discussion among second language students in Iran.

3. Discussion and Results

An initial yet simple website was set up. The initial concept and 'Forum' received a shot in the arm from all fronts, but soon the limitations were raising their ugly heads. These chiefly included the lack of enthusiasm among the majority of the teaching staff at PARS in the consistent implementation of drawing the students' attention to the availability and positive effects of using the Forum.

Nevertheless not all was lost as this undertaking continued with the assistance of a couple of dedicated Teachers and the silent support of the employer, who decided to give this concept some time. Many novel ideas such as initiating a Spring Contest among the teachers and awarding them worthwhile prizes were conducted. This, however, only served in getting the teachers to be entertained and did not achieve the desired results of drawing the students into the discussion forums. Following this and after understanding that time was of the essence to understand the chief factors affecting our students I started accumulating data on the following aspects, peer review and building self-confidence, improvement in overall writing skills among the students in the study group and namely the reasons for the failure of 'CALL' although on a restricted sample study group.

3.1 Peer-Review and confidence building among the study group:

The project took on a turn for the positive in offering an in depth study into the attitude of peer review among the students. Although only subtle at first it definitely confirmed the effectiveness of such an environment on peer review and overall building of self-confidence. Mittan (1989) "The theoretical basis which lies behind peer review is the social nature of language, language use and language learning."

The concept of using CALL with an aim to accomplish these results surfaced midway through the study on providing an effective virtual English environment for English language learners in Iran. Mittan (1989) and others have mentioned many advantages to the benefits of Peer review. In addition to their expert views this study not only confirmed their findings and opinions, but also provided an insight into the effective use of CALL in achieving the same if not better overall results. It also provided a psychological perspective on the positive acceptance of

correction among the different age groups. Interestingly, even though it was only minimal, it may offer a rich area for further research. However, the limitation of this study lay in the fact that it centered on the actions of a single gender and involved students chiefly from one area of Tehran who were perhaps from the same schools and high schools, neighborhoods etc. so it is quite possible that they already share a strong relationship.

Just as mentioned by Mittan (1989) at first peer reviewers on this study took on an active role of being motivators and interrogators in all aspects of the discussion that were being conducted at any given time. Secondly the overall experience provided a subtle yet effective understanding of the writers' importance to meet the needs of their fellow learners. Thirdly the concept of reviewing another students' written point of view, reduced nervousness in a majority of students toward understanding the target language, furthermore it gave the slow learners ample opportunity to come up with the correct responses without the fear of making a mistake. So undoubtedly the introduction of CALL, especially with respect to chatting, within the education system especially in the teaching of a language can aid in the development of self-confidence. This became evident when the students performed with increased vigor and confidence in the follow-up discussions conducted in the class by me in the days that followed.

Needless to say the fourth result was an increased understanding and familiarity between the teacher and student and among all students who had formed another level of relationship on the Forum. This provided a strong perspective toward planning the lessons, especially the topics for free discussion, targeting the chief grammatical weaknesses of the students by the teacher concerned. Fifth, this method helped the students on the forum to evaluate their own importance for meeting their peer's needs, on the Forum and in the classroom.

As the concept of a forum rests chiefly on the fact of continuing a 'thread', failure of even one student to continue this thread by asking a question or responding to the opinion of the previous student's point of view leaves a gaping hole in that sub topic. Filling this gap becomes the chief priority of the education provider in charge of this Forum. Sixth, although peer review decreases the overall time spent by the teachers on reading of the posts or assignments submitted by the students in the class or on the forum in many countries, this does not necessarily hold true in countries like Iran, and this cannot be taken for granted if you wish to continue providing education in respect with the stringent rules laid down by the government and the department of Education.

Another article written by Dr. R. Abu Rass (2001) on *'Peer Review as an effective strategy for teaching writing'* provides more advantages on this concept in the classrooms in Israel. In her paper she states that this concept 'enhances the students' self-confidence and encourages the learners to learn with less anxiety and pressure p. 165.' The present case study has provided confirmation of this although only in a small way, bearing in mind the number of students and gender singularity of this study. However, it is still no less a promising start for future research.

Dr. R Abu Rass (2001) also mentioned another interesting point namely 'others might be overconfident and think that they will not learn anything from their fellow students p.166.' although applicable in a classroom study, it may not be clear in a virtual environment or post Institutional time as is the case of this study. Therefore the opinion of this study in this regard remains unconfirmed at present.

3.2 CALL- Computer Assisted Language Learning in Iran
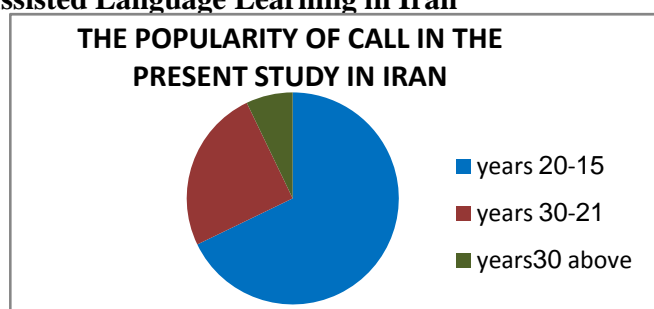
Fig.1 Graph representing around 200 active students and teachers in the summer of 2011 on the PARS Language School Forum (*www.pars-language.com/forum*)

The graph above supports the general view of this study in the effectiveness of the CALL concept. CALL or Computer Assisted Language Learning system although a familiar concept in the developed or technologically savvy world, is relatively unheard of in many parts of Iran let alone the capital city Tehran. It is predominantly at its infancy in this developing country.

During this study and with its inception in the year 2010, we have faced and are still facing many obstacles due to the absence of access to knowledgeable technical personnel not only in the application of technology, but also in English language. Support in other areas not excluding the financial side has also slowed down and curtailed the broadening of this scope of study. Other factors that have raised their ugly heads are lack of continued enthusiasm among my colleagues and absence of consistency in keeping the students informed of the availability of this system for their own benefit. However, be it far from giving up, the study has taken on its own force and in the summer of 2011 it has shot up in popularity among the teenage population as

evidenced by the graph above. Reeves Thomas (1998) stated '...although the research evidence is sparse, the cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and return-on-investment of media and technology may be of great benefit under certain conditions, especially in developing countries.'

The observation made by Reeves (1998) holds true in many aspects of this study, but without support of any kind it would be difficult to achieve the desired results.

The graph is a fair (±5) representation of the study being held among a population of around 200 active female students from the Intermediate to the Upper Intermediate levels studying English as a Second Language at the PARS English Language School in Tehran, Iran. The number of inactive members during the 3 month study totaled around 30. CALL, although accepted initially in great numbers by the older students, turned around completely after a very brief period. At present the largest number of members actively and eagerly participating fall in the group between 15-20 years. In June 2011 the number of posts on the Forum had just reached a total of 3000, but at the time this paper was written and presented the number of posts have more than doubled reaching a total of 8000(+). These results were achieved in a very short period of around 3 months and with only three teachers; Mrs. Hossainy, Ms. Shojaei and I being actively involved.

Felix (2008) claims that there is "enough data in CALL to suggest positive effects on spelling, reading and writing", p.141-161, however, she holds strong views with regards to the stability of technology and its effectiveness on developing speaking skills. Furthermore she clearly places doubt on the abilities of the older students to comfortably maneuver around computer applications with as much expertise as the younger generations. She goes on to emphasize the need for rigorous and continuous training in computer literacy among students and teachers alike to make this a success although it might appear time consuming. In order to achieve meaningful results she recommends "time-series analysis in which the same group of students is involved in experimental and control treatment for a certain amount of time and then switched - more than once if possible", p.141-161. The present study confirmed her findings to a large extent, especially in the aspects concerning the older student group and the lack of computer literacy (in English) among a large section of the study population both the teachers and students alike. I also strongly support her view that this study needs to be given more time and only upon effectively removing the drawbacks with the collective support from all communities involved can we make a sound analysis as to whether CALL is 'to be or not to be in Iran'.

3.3 The Drawbacks

Many factors were stated and observed for the failure of CALL to draw a consistent positive result among the study group.

a. The age factor influenced the overall knowledge about computers: The teenage group was better equipped to handle the complex and sometimes overwhelming content on web pages from registration to application on the Forum.

b. The knowledge of current facts: The teenagers also know more interesting facts in English language with regard to music, sport, films, latest gadgets, etc. This in turn helped the students to communicate more freely on the Forum.

c. The teenagers had more time: Generally the teenagers did not complain about the lack of time to get on the Forum as an excuse, which was broadly shared among the middle and adult group. This is a factor worth keeping in mind as the young adults and the older adults do in all certainty have more responsibilities.

d. When the summer and school breaks end: This factor is quite prominent in a country like Iran where teenage students have a heavy workload and are therefore not permitted by their parents to get online to take part in extra curricular activities like a discussion forum. So a sudden drop in overall participation can be expected during the regular school week after the three-month summer holiday ends.

3.4. Some of the external factors that affected the study

1. Inaccessibility to computers with a high-speed Internet connection.

2. Technical problems with computers and lack of a timely and effective remedy of the problem.

3. Problem with the functioning of the website and Forum, which led to the discontinuation of many students on the study.

4. Another notable factor is the addiction to social networking sites like Facebook which consumes the time and energy of the bulk of the students and teachers alike those on and off the study. An easy access to communicate in their own language and a strong feeling commonly shared by all that this network allows them to say or do what they want, is a big tempting factor. To explain in no simple terms the students and teachers feel that they are living in a different country where they have the freedom to speak. Although this is a God given right for all human beings, the aspect where the communication and

interaction allows them to use their own language greatly interferes with projects like 'CALL' in such countries.

4. An Overview

In spite of the positive effects in the development of peer review; building of self-confidence; improvement in writing skills and overall relationship between students and teachers in and out of the classroom, the drawbacks stated above loom large and unless dealt with could result in the loss of an effective future tool in the teaching of English as a Second language to native Farsi speakers.

So in order to remedy this situation we need to keep in mind the above drawbacks. It is evident that the CALL project needs reviewing of its basic principles to suit the disabilities of the different age groups; restrictions due to other serious studies involved in the group of students studying English as a Second Language; lack of information and time constraints on the young and older age groups. In addition the external factors that affect the overall success of such concepts in the developing world could be taken into consideration.

4.1 Perspectives of an active Teacher and a student on the forum

Sima Shojaei a young teacher at the Pars Language School said, "First of all the forum experience was something new, challenging and fun. Students need good models and motivation. Motivation can be short-term or long-term. Teachers giving bonus marks for their activities, although it may look like an obligation, can be very rewarding and can show them how to express their ideas without being judged. The biggest obstacle in Iran is lack of English knowledge to read the instructions, something that is meaningless for those claiming to be proficient English speakers. A lab sounded like a good idea but quite unpractical for the reluctant teachers. The problem is the teachers need to realize how helpful this kind of communication can be for their students, but they don't want to."

Rezvaneh a student attending the First Certificate Exam course level at Pars Language School said, "There is something so special about the forum and that's the friendly atmosphere made by teachers and students which anyone feels at first sight. There are many ways to teach a language, but not all of them are practical. Our forum has created the best way ever! No one gets bored and you will never notice how much you learn. Teaching and learning are the tasks done by both students and teachers. Writing has always been one of the hardships in this course, but when you

start writing in forum you can focus better and you will be supported by your friends and teachers who can correct you in exciting ways which you can enjoy it."

5. **Recommendations**

1. Access to more language labs involving the use of computers in the ESL framework can enhance the overall requirement of all teachers and students alike. In other words digital labs can be introduced which is a network of multimedia computers plus appropriate software which provides the same basic functions as its predecessor, the analogue (tape-based) language lab. Digital labs can be software-only labs or hybrid labs. The software labs are considered simpler to handle and more cost effective as well.

2. Providing a continuous feedback and training workshop for education providers in current technology and its effective use in an ESL classroom.

3. Simple yet comprehensive pamphlets introducing new topics, relevant pictures, including the implementation of the same on Forums, etc. for the different age groups and ethnic groups.

4. Drawing a clear difference between educational material and worldly facts that would be accepted in any country without hurting their beliefs yet keeping it light hearted and interesting to attract the crowds.

5. Wholehearted support of all those involved not excluding the parents of young learners can be the winning hand to effectively implement 'CALL' in the future.

6. Conclusion

Stockwell, G. (2008) 'The reality is that learning to use CALL in the absence of guidance or instrumentation is exceptionally difficult without foundation knowledge of the types of tools that exist and how they may be used. Introduction of CALL into a learning environment in a way that is satisfactory to both the teacher and the students is unlikely, and success hinges on actively examining and re-examining the environment, becoming familiar with the widening range of tools and resources, and through seeking the help and advice of others" (p 111).

Finally as has been gathered from the project it is poignant to note the true benefits that CALL can have on English Language Teaching and Acquisition alike in a developing country

like Iran. However, only with the enthusiastic support of a well integrated framework inclusive of upgraded materials in all areas to include and identify the potential areas where CALL can fulfill its true purpose. In addition unless the concept of language education takes into consideration that technology is an integral and unavoidable part, and just as importantly considers the cultural, gender perspective, locale, and age differences of those being taught, any future development in the implementation of technology in the improvement of English Language teaching will remain a foregone dream.

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Title

Linguistic Imperialism and EFLLearning in Iran:
a Survey among High School Students in Tehran

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Abstract

The present research is an attempt to provide new perspectives for the effect of the theory of English linguistic imperialism on the learning English among EFL learners at high school level. The primary focus of the study is to investigate the effect of hegemony of English language on EFL learners' attitudes to learning English. And in the second place, it is also a probe into whether imported English textbooks affected the life style of EFL learners. Accordingly, 187 high school students were asked to fill out a likert- type questionnaire consisting of 13 items. In order to determine whether hegemony of English play roles in learning English, the researchers used the single- sample research. And they also chose 30 participants among the EFL learners who were studying the series of the Interchange textbooks (Intro Interchange, Interchange one and Interchange two). For this case, the investigators asked EFL learners to fill out a questionnaire consisting of 14 items which was administrated at the beginning and end of a four - month term. In order to determine the effect of

imported English textbooks on cultural change of EFL learners, the investigators used one group pre-test and post-test design. Based on the results of this study, it could be concluded that (a) the hegemony of English has an amicable influence on the EFL learners' attitudes towards leaning English, and (b) the imported English textbooks have no considerable effect on the EFL learners' cultural change.

Keywords: Hegemony, Linguistic imperialism, Culture, Hidden agenda

1. Introduction

Before Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979, because of the exceptional relations between Iranian government and the West, especially the US and UK, teaching English language received special attention. But after the revolution, the ELT received a wave of changes which resulted in de-culturalization of school EFL textbooks. Nowadays, the world is more interrelated and interdependent; the borderlines between Countries are not any more regarded as an obstacle in the communication between every single individual with totally different beliefs, thoughts, values and cultures. Modiano (2007) emphasizes that English is now a prerequisite for participation in a vast number of activities and the global village is being constructed in English. Even so, English linguistic imperialism is a notion which needs a meticulous consideration especially in the ELT profession.

Brown (2002) asserts that in the century spanning the mid-1880s to the mid-1980$_S$, the language teaching profession was in search for designating a unique ideal method. However, the historical accounts of the profession are laden with a succession of methods. Pennycook (1994) states that ELT methods are the quasi-political or mercenary agendas of their proponents. Phillipson (1992) also refers to them as vehicles of linguistic imperialism. Richards (2002) maintains that the theory of linguistic imperialism argues that education and English language in particular, are not politically neutral activities. Mastery of English, it is claimed, enhances the power and control of a privileged few.

One of the controversial features of ELT and EFL learning that has absorbed a good deal of attention in the new millennium is the hegemonic aspect of English language. Widdowson (1998) states that the [English] language in and of itself does not imply hegemonic control. He suggests that if the language has the imperialistic control, we could never be able to challenge such control, because it is beyond our domain of power. Therefore, it is not language in its own

right that exercises hegemonic control, but rather its users who might use it as a hegemonic tool. According to Trepanier (1991) hegemony means more than mere supremacy of one element over another. There was a certain acceptance factor built into the notion. For example, Gribbs (1995) describes how the Mexican medical journal shifted to English. At first abstracts published in English, then all articles translated in English, finally American editor hired to edit articles, and then medical journal accepted articles only in English. Graddol (1997) also forecasts that this language shift is common elsewhere. It is evident that it is not just in scientific publishing, but, in book publication as a whole, English is used increasingly. In the academic papers which publish each year, more than 50 percent of the millions of academic papers are written in English and the percentage is increasing each year (Swales, 1987).

Therefore, English is now the unquestionable language of science and technology, and scientific Journals in many Countries are published in English. In specific disciplines, English appears to be the universal language of communication. For example, Nunan (2003) states that 98 percent of German physicists now claim English as their defacto working language. They are closely followed by chemists (83%), biologists (81%), and psychologists (81%). And 28 percent of the world books are published in English compared to 13.3 percent in Chinese. Graddol (1997) specified twelve international "domains" of English which are listed as:

1. English is the working language of international organizations and conferences. Crystal (1997) reports that about 85% of the international organizations now use English as one of their working languages, 49% use French and fewer than 10% use Arabic, Spanish or German. English is also a major language of financial institution.

2. English is now the "the international currency of science and technology.

3. English is the language of international banking, economic affairs and trade.

4. It is the language of advertising for global brands

5. It is the language of audio-visual/cultural-products (e.g. film, TV, popular music).

6. It is the language of international tourism.

7. It is the language of tertiary education

8. It is the language of international safety (e.g. "airspeak", "seaspeak")

9. It is the language of international law.

10. It is a "relay language" in interpretation and translation.

11. It is the language of technology transfer.

12. It is the language of Internet communication.

In the conventional ELT paradigm it has often been said that teaching English cannot be separated from teaching the culture of its native speakers (Hideo Horibe, 2008). Accordingly, many English language teachers have put emphasis on the existence of crucial relationship between language and English speaker's culture and the importance of incorporating that culture into language teaching. Crawford-Lange (1984) categorically states that "to study language without studying the culture of native speakers of the language is a lifeless endeavor". However, many people regard the global spread of English and its widespread use as a lingua franca, and in many non- English-speaking countries English is taught and learned as an international language rather than as the Anglo- American language. According to Smith (1987) none- native speakers do not have to use English the same way native speakers do. If such a concept is accepted, simple and direct connections between English and its native- speaker cultures can no longer be presupposed (Hideo Horibe, 2008). Thus, the acculturation of English means that English is no longer bound to Anglo- American culture; but it does not mean that English is taught in a cultural vacuum. Rather according to Kachru (1992) English represents a repertoire of cultures, not a monolithic culture.

Thus, this study is going to investigate the answers for the following research questions:

1. Does the hegemony of English language affect the attitude of students at high school level towards learning English?

2. Do imported English Textbooks have any effect on EFL learners' cultural change at high school level?

2. Review of the Related Literature

There is a consensus among experts that in historical consideration, the imperialistic and hegemonic function of English is not deniable. Therefore, three periods of English linguistic imperialism has been identified; the first period is the imposition of English by colonizers, and then, the emergence of local privileged people who are skillful in the colonizer's language and act as political, social or business links. The third contemporary stage is the hegemonic domination of English as the dominant language through media and ELT. Kilickaya (2007) states that language teachers, who generally accept whatever is given by the pedagogy of the mainstream and authorities in the inner circle, are unaware of the political aspects of the

profession and the hidden agenda of the materials, activities and the strategies they are using. As Phillipson (1992) points out that we surely can no longer believe that English is a neutral tool with no cultural baggage or that it has nothing to do with political, economic or military power. Jack C. Richards (2002) also maintains that 30 years ago the assumption was that teaching English was a politically neutral activity. He adds that this picture has changed somewhat today. Now English is the language of globalization, international communication, commerce and trade, the media and pop culture. English language is no longer viewed as the property of the English-speaking world but is an international language. The cultural values of Britain and the US are often seen as irrelevant to language teaching, except in situations where the learner has a pragmatic need for such information. (Richards, 2002)

Thus, along with the economic globalization, English as an international language (EIL) is a phenomenon that can affect the exclusive ownership of the language by some countries. In other words, "English is no longer the language of its originator. It has become a property of the world" (Shaw, 1981). Widdowson (1994) states that English is an international language, which means that no nation can have custody over it. In this sense, EIL is a tool of facilitating communication among culturally and linguistically different peoples all over the world, rather than being a tool in the hands of the Centre Countries (see Appendix 1).

Modiano (2007) states that while linguistic imperialism is certainly real, one possible way for the language instructors to come to the terms with the cultural imposition of English learning is to utilize ELT practices which define EIL. Modiano(1999) also suggests that teaching of EIL should be based on a descriptive rather than a prescriptive model which put it in sharp contrast to the British [American] English near- native speaker proficiency model practiced in many part of the world [including in Iran].

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Two hundred and seventeen participants who took part in this study were volunteers both from high schools and an English language institute located in the city of Tehran. The students, in this study, were all male EFL learners. For the purpose of the first question, one hundred and eighty seven students were chosen purposefully from high schools in which students had gone through special procedures before admission into the schools. These schools had taken into account,

among others, the religious background of the student's family. Furthermore, teaching English language in those high schools at the expense of preparing students for the university entrance examination was de-emphasized and limited only to government-sponsored local English textbooks. For the purpose of the second question of the study, the investigators chose 30 EFL learners from an English language Institute located on the middle-class part of the city. The range of participants' age was from 15 to18 years old. They also were novice EFL learners. All participants in this study were at high school level.

3.2. Design and Statistical Analysis

The investigators applied a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in this study. They used the single- sample research in order to verify the effect of hegemony of English on the attitudes of EFL learners towards learning English. This was conducted through t-test for single-sample research. Further, for the second question, a pre- test and a post-test were used to explore the possible effects of imported English textbooks might have on the cultural change of participants. Hence, as recommended by Shavelson (1981) the variables could be categorized as pre-experimental research. The design for the second question was one group pre-test and post-test design. Shavelson also states that in one- group pre-test and post-test design, a group of subjects receives a pre-test (O_1), then the treatment(X), and then the post-test (O_2):

	Measure	Treatment	Measure
Group (1)	O_1	X	O_2

3.3. Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study are described as follows: Two closed- ended questionnaires were administrated to the two separate participants. The questionnaires were scored on the 5 options likert scale. The first corresponded to strongly disagree and the fifth to strongly agree. Because of the uniqueness of this study, the investigators had to design the questionnaires themselves based on the intention of the study. The first set of questionnaire was administrated to 187 students in order to investigate the participants' attitudes towards English language learning (see Appendix 2). Another set of questionnaire administrated to 30 EFL learners at the beginning and end of a four-month term to investigate the effect of imported English textbooks on the participants' small C culture (life style). The investigators conducted two pilot studies with 30 participants to verify their reliabilities and validities. The reliabilities of the

questionnaires in both questions were computed through Cronbach's Alpha. As indicated in the following table, the reliabilities of the two questionnaires were quite acceptable.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of the Two Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1		Questionnaire 2	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.851	13	0.874	14

3.4. Procedure

The 217 learners at high school level were chosen purposefully for this study. The questionnaire about attitudes of learners towards English language learning was administrated once to the 187 students under supervision of the high schools authorities. The 30 aforementioned participants (217) were chosen from the novice EFL learners at the Iran Zaban Institute, who were studying the series of the Interchange textbooks (Intro Interchange, Interchange one and two). The investigators administrated a pre-test and post- test to EFL learners, under the study conditions, respectively at the beginning and end of a four - month term. Furthermore, it was taken for granted in the abovementioned procedures to ask for permission and to ensure the subjects that, above all, anonymity was preserved. The investigators in advance explained the purposes of the questionnaires and the significance of the study to the teachers, high schools and language institute authorities in order to attract their interest and to afford their valuable support accordingly.

4. Results and Discussions

This study was an attempt to investigate a relationship between hegemony of English and the attitudes of EFL learners towards learning English. It also investigated the effect of imported English textbooks on the EFL learners' cultural change (life style). The following two questions were put forward.

4.1. Research Question1

Does the hegemony of English language affect the attitude of students at high school level towards learning English? A t- test for single- sample research was run to answer this question; a single sample of subjects such as a mean was calculated (see the following table). Then a null

hypothesis of no difference between the sample mean and the hypothesized population mean was tested.

Table 2. Sample mean of population

A single sample mean		
Possible lowest score	Possible highest score	Possible Normal Mean
13	65	39

We can see that 178 (95.2%) of our respondents answered the items. The other 9 (4 .8%) of the sample, was "Missing", not answering the statements. The total sample size was 187 (100%).

Table 3. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	178	95.2
	Excluded[a]	9	4.8
	Total	187	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.798	13

Cronbach's Alpha, in this study, is estimated at 0.80 or more precisely 0.798. This indicates that internal consistency and inter-correlations among items are high. Therefore, we can assume that the items of the questionnaire have measured the same construct. A rule of thumb is that 0.80 and above is considered good.

Table 5. Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 1	43.56	51.514	.456	.785
Question 2	43.96	50.868	.367	.790
Question 3	44.80	47.933	.432	.785
Question 4	44.12	52.448	.251	.799
Question 5	43.76	48.489	.512	.777
Question 6	45.38	50.079	.329	.794
Question 7	44.49	46.127	.545	.773
Question 8	45.23	48.777	.534	.776
Question 9	43.67	54.200	.213	.799
Question 10	44.37	48.404	.381	.791
Question 11	44.01	47.977	.587	.772
Question 12	45.03	45.485	.564	.771
Question 13	44.16	49.885	.433	.784

The last column, labeled "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted", is a very important column, because it shows how the alpha for the scale would change if the item was deleted from the scale. In this study, removing any of the items would cause alpha to go down, i.e. the scale would become less reliable. Because none of the values is almost greater than the current alpha of the whole scale 0.80, the investigator did not need to drop any items. The first two columns (Scale Mean if Item Deleted and Scale Variance if Item Deleted) aren't useful. The third column is the correlation between a particular item and the sum of the rest of the items. This tells us how well a particular item "goes with" the rest of the items. In the output above, the best item appears to be question 11 with an item-total correlation of r = .587. The item with the lowest item-total correlation is question 9 (r = .213).

Table 6. Frequency of students' scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	27.00	1	.5	.6	.6
	28.00	1	.5	.6	1.1
	30.00	1	.5	.6	1.7

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
31.00	1	.5	.6	2.2
32.00	2	1.1	1.1	3.4
33.00	3	1.6	1.7	5.1
34.00	1	.5	.6	5.6
35.00	1	.5	.6	6.2
36.00	2	1.1	1.1	7.3
37.00	5	2.7	2.8	10.1
38.00	2	1.1	1.1	11.2
39.00	3	1.6	1.7	12.9
40.00	2	1.1	1.1	14.0
41.00	5	2.7	2.8	16.9
42.00	4	2.1	2.2	19.1
43.00	8	4.3	4.5	23.6
44.00	9	4.8	5.1	28.7
45.00	10	5.3	5.6	34.3
46.00	12	6.4	6.7	41.0
47.00	12	6.4	6.7	47.8
48.00	8	4.3	4.5	52.2
49.00	7	3.7	3.9	56.2
50.00	6	3.2	3.4	59.6
51.00	11	5.9	6.2	65.7
52.00	14	7.5	7.9	73.6
53.00	8	4.3	4.5	78.1
54.00	8	4.3	4.5	82.6
55.00	4	2.1	2.2	84.8
56.00	5	2.7	2.8	87.6
57.00	3	1.6	1.7	89.3
58.00	5	2.7	2.8	92.1
59.00	3	1.6	1.7	93.8
60.00	2	1.1	1.1	94.9
61.00	3	1.6	1.7	96.6
62.00	1	.5	.6	97.2
63.00	2	1.1	1.1	98.3
64.00	1	.5	.6	98.9
65.00	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	178	95.2	100.0	
Missing System	9	4.8		
Total	187	100.0		

The rate of scores or the students' answers to the 13- item questionnaire gradually increases from 27 to the maximum 65. It indicates that the orientation of scores is towards agreement and strongly agreement.

Table 7. One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sum	178	48.0449	7.55082	.56596

Table 8. T-test for one -Sample research

	Test Value = 39					
				Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
sum	15.982	177	.000	9.04494	7.9280	10.1618

* P< .05 =It shows significant difference

Table 4.8 provides enough criteria for the rejection of the first hypothetical answer of the research question1 (i.e. hegemony of English does not affect the attitudes of the EFL learners towards learning English) because the P-value which is 0 is less than .05. Also the t-value observed is 15.98 which is higher than the t- critical in degree of freedom (177) at the 0.05 level of significance which is (1.67). In other words, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the possible mean score (39) and the mean score (48). Thus, the claim that hegemony of English does not affect the attitudes of EFL learners towards learning English language is rejected.

4.2. Research Question 2

Do imported English Textbooks have any effect on EFL learners' cultural change at high school level? In this study, the researchers also investigated the effect of imported English textbooks on the possible cultural change of English language learners at high school levels. The descriptive statistics of outcome of the pre-test is in the table 4.9 accordingly, twenty nine of thirty EFL learners participated in the study. The mean score of the pre-test result is 46.21, and the minimum and maximum score are respectively, 35 and 61. And the mean score of the post-test result is 47.79, and the minimum and maximum score are respectively, 35 and 60.
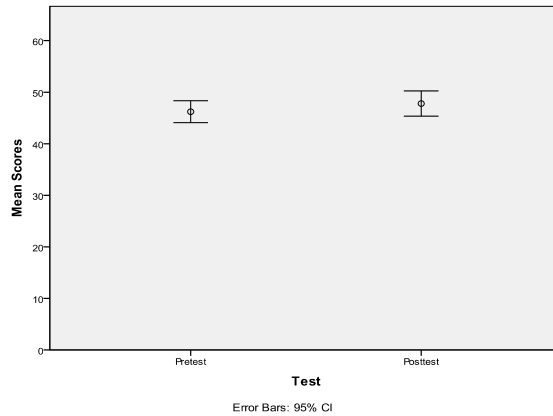
Error Bars: 95% CI

Graph 1

Even though the error bars do not overlap as shown in Graph 1 the difference is not statistically significant. And in better words, the difference between the two means is not statistically significant (P [0.259] >0.05).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of pre-test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Sum of Pretest	29	26	35	61	46.21	1.036	5.577	31.099
Valid N (listwise)	29							

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of post-test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Sum of Posttest	29	25	35	60	47.79	1.188	6.400	40.956
Valid N (listwise)	29							

Table 11. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean			Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1.586	7.409	1.376	-4.404	1.232	-1.153	28	.259

P> .05 = It shows no significant difference

Table 11 and Graph 1 provide enough criteria for not rejecting the hypothetical answer to the research question (i.e. the imported English textbooks do not have effect on the cultural change of the EFL learners) because the P-value which is .25 is more than .05. It is worth mentioning that the level of significance is an unlikely sample result in probability terms (α= 0.05 or α = 0.01). Because the level of significance of the study is more than α= 0.05, the abovementioned possible answer was not rejected. Also the t-value observed is 1.53 which is less than the t- critical in degree of freedom (28) at the 0.05 level of significance which is 2.048. And, it can be claimed that there is not a significant difference between the mean score of the pre-test (46.21) and the mean score of post- test (47.79). Thus the hypothetical answer to the research is not rejected.

4.3. Discussion on the result of the first research question

As the analysis regarding the first question of the study demonstrated, the hegemony of English has amicably influenced learning English among the students at high school level. It is the surprising outcome that on the part of the students the tendency towards learning English is great at high schools in which no emphasis placed upon teaching and learning English at the expense of mathematics, physics, chemistry and etc. The review of items is completely elaborated in Appendix 3.

4.4. Discussion on the result of the second research question

The analysis regarding the second question of the study demonstrated that the imported English textbooks in itself have not significant effect, at least in short - term of English learning, on the cultural change of the EFL learners. And this result shows that the EFL learners did not pay attention to the US and British cultures, which typically were regarded as the inseparable ingredients of the imported English textbooks such as, Interchange series. Whereas, Jack C. Richards (2002), the erudite English textbooks developer especially of Interchange series, believes that the cultural values of Britain and the US are often seen as irrelevant to language teaching, except in situations where the learner has a pragmatic need for such information. The language teacher need no longer be an expert on British and American culture and a literature specialist as well.

5. Conclusion

This report as a qualitative and quantitative study, investigated the effect of hegemony of English on the EFL learners' attitudes towards English learning. And it also reported the effect of imported English textbooks on the EFL cultural change.

According to the findings of this study the desirability of learning English among high school students who are studying in schools in which teaching English language de- emphasized, is high. It indicates that they believe that English language will bring untold blessings to those who succeeded in learning it. It is also believed that learning English will lead to their educational and economic empowerment. According to Trepanier (1991) hegemony means more than mere supremacy of one element over another. There was a certain acceptance factor built into the notion. This attitude towards English language amicably has influenced the desirability of learning English among EFL learners, especially at high school level. Students and their parents' point of views in this study are close to that of some prominent scholars like Crystal (1999) and Widdowson (1998), who believe that imperialism is not at the heart of ELT enterprise. Accordingly, today English language is regarded as a practical tool rather than cultural enrichment. Another important finding of this study is that learning English language is not necessarily linked to American or British cultural values. English language is a world commodity. Today, because the main focus is on English as an international language (EIL), the imported English textbooks are no longer platforms for English speakers' ambition to promulgate their own cultures.

Referring to the outcomes of the present study, the investigators propose some pedagogical suggestions to further the- state -of –the- art objectives of English language teaching for the Iranian EFL learners, particularly at high school level.

1. While English language teachers are taking in to account the existing preferences for native norms, it is also suggested that teachers encourage EFL learners' tolerance towards non-native varieties of English.

2. No longer is English learning linked to US or British cultural values, it is linked to national values. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Iranian English teachers take into account in their instruction the socio-cultural background of their EFL learners.

3. An overwhelming majority of students declared that they want to learn English to communicate with non- native English speakers. Therefore, it is suggested that Iranian English

teachers in their instruction include exercises in the understanding of not only L1 speakers but L2 speakers of English, too.

4. Although today English teaching is no longer regarded as a politically neutral activity, many high school students in the present study think that English language has no hegemonic aspirations. Therefore, it is also advisable that English teachers raise awareness of their EFL learners at high school level regarding the global status of English, its varieties and its implications to power relations in the world.

5. Because non- native English speakers greatly outnumbered the native speakers, native-speaker- like fluency became inappropriate target for EFL learners. Instead, today comprehensibility target is one of the main focuses of the teaching English language. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers in their instruction include exercises in developing the comprehensibility target of English language.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Kachru's Three Circles of English Speakers (x 1,000,000)

The inner circle represents the native speakers of English, the outer circle represents the speakers and users of English as a second language and the expanding circle represents the users of English as a foreign language.

EXPANDING

OUTER

INNER
320-380

150-300

100-1000
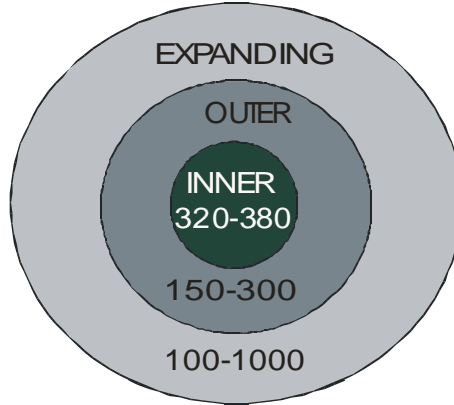
(Zughoul, 2003)

Appendix 2

F= frequency   p= percent   SD=Strongly Disagree   D=Disagree   U=Undecided   A=Agree   SD=Strongly Agree.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
1. I wish I could speak English like people whose mother tongue is English.	0	0	7	3.7	8	4.3	59	31.6	113	60.4

Majority of students express their hope to be able to speak English like native English speakers. The 172 or 92 percent of students wish to have native- like English pronunciation and to have preference for native- speaker norms. The abovementioned percentage and subjects are the total numbers of people filled out agree and strongly agree cell.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
2. I like English because it is an international language.	1	.5	16	8.6	26	13.9	65	34.8	78	41.7

An overwhelming majority of students (143 or 76.5 %) like English language because it is an international language.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
3. People who understand and speak English like English speaking people are successful.	22	11.8	29	15.5	49	26.2	52	27.8	33	17.6

Interestingly, many of the students (45.4 % or 85 students) think that there are a positive correlation between success and English language. And they correlate the prosperity in life with speaking English fluently.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
4. I learn English to communicate with millions of non-English people.	4	2.1	10	5.3	42	22.5	70	37.4	60	32.1

Majority of students (130 or 68.5 %) want to learn English to communicate with people other than native English speakers. They believe that English language is an internationally recognized means of communication with peoples of the world.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
5. I hate English because it broadens the English-speaking countries' control over the world.	108	57.8	43	23	19	10.2	9	4.8	7	3.7

Ironically, high school students do not regard English language as an imperialist or hegemonic language. A substantial majority of students (80.8 percent or 151 students) oppose the statement No. 5, and they do not regard English language as an imperialist language.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
6. English is important to me since I learn how the people whose mother tongue is English live.	37	19.8	51	27.3	47	25.1	41	21.9	11	5.9

52 students (27.8 percent) maintain that English learning is important because they learn how English native speakers live.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
7. I am interested in having British and American friends.	20	10.7	20	10.7	31	16.6	68	36.4	47	25.1

Another surprising outcome of the study is that 61.5 percent or 115 students express their desire to have British or American friends.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
8. British and American people are social and friendly.	25	13.4	29	15.5	99	52.9	24	12.8	9	4.8

An overwhelming majority of students do not believe that British and American people are social and friendly. In other words, only 33 students (17.6 percent) think otherwise.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
9. My father and mother believe that it is important for me to learn English.	1	.5	4	2.1	9	4.8	83	44.4	89	47.6

The overwhelming majority of parents want their sons to study English. The above-mentioned data indicate that 92 percent or 172 parents want their sons to learn English language. It further indicates that the desirability of English language among ordinary people is high.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
10. It is more enjoyable for me to watch an original (English) language movie than its translation.	20	10.7	17	9.1	33	17.6	55	29.4	62	33.2

A majority of students, 117or 62.6 percent, believe that watching movies in original language (English language) is more interesting than watching them in Persian language.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
11. I wish I could speak English like people whose mother tongue is English	4	2.1	14	7.5	26	13.9	73	39.0	70	37.4

76.4 percent of participants (143 students) wish to have native –like pronunciation. Interestingly, this result is somehow compatible with Timmis' study on whether students should conform to native- speaker norms of English. Timmis (2002) found out that 67 percent of students answered positively to the statement that 'I can pronounce English just like English native speakers now. Sometimes people think I am native speaker'.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
12. I like to learn all my lessons in English because one day I want to live in an English-speaking country.	25	3.4	48	25.7	47	52.1	34	18.2	33	17.6

The fact that 67 students or 35.8 percent express their hope to live in one of the English speaking countries is an alarming outcome. As a result, students express their willingness to study all their lessons in English in order to be able to live in English speaking countries.

ITEM	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p
13. Acquiring English develops my cultural knowledge	8	4.3	11	5.9	36	19.3	78	41.7	52	27.8

The overwhelming majority of students think that there are a positive correlation between learning English language and expansion of their cultural knowledge. To be more specific, many students (130 or 69.5 percent) believe that learning English would increase their cultural knowledge.