

**Teachers' evaluating teaching methods at the Teaching Persian Language to Non-Persians center at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad**

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**Abstract**

Teachers' knowledge of teaching methods and techniques is of utmost importance since they have to be aware of teaching techniques and evaluation of the program procedure. The purpose of the present research is to analyze the Iranian teachers' degree of familiarity and knowledge regarding new teaching methods and techniques. The participants in the present study included all teachers at the Teaching Persian Language to Non-Persians (TPLNP) center at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Data collection was made through class observations for all 22 classes at TPLNP and interviews were held with 27 teachers. All observed classes included teaching the four main skills including listening, reading, speaking and writing. The classroom observation results showed that the most common teaching methods used at the TPLNP center in descending order were as follow: Communicative, Audiolingualism, Direct, Total Physical Response, Desuggestopedia, and Grammar-Translation Method. Through applying Pearson Product Moment Correlation to the collected data, a positive relationship was found between the selected teaching method and the educational background of the teacher; a negative relationship was also found between the teaching method and teacher's teaching experience; and no significant relationship was found between the teaching method and both the age and field of study of the teacher.

**Keywords:**teaching Persian language to non-Persians, teaching methodology, teaching technique, four-skill classes, Persian language teachers.

**1. Introduction**

There are various methods of teaching, each of which is more suitable for a particular situation and skill; Therefore, the teacher should choose the most appropriate method according to the educational objectives, subject of the lesson, characteristics of the learners, available facilities, atmosphere of the class, number of learners, duration of the class and etc. Different teaching methods lead to the use of different types of classroom activities (techniques) (Richards & Schmidt, 2002: 29-30). New language teaching techniques include knowing, wanting, and learning (Rohmawati, Kusumarasdyati, 2013: 2), classroom activities, lectures, plays, debates (Hackathorn et. Al., 2010: 43-44), and scribe and runner game. (British Council, 2004).

It is also important to study the quality of teaching, in the field of teaching Persian to non-Persian speakers, since its results provide appropriate information for analyzing educational issues, basic decisions and strategic planning to the officials and staff of Persian language teaching centers. On the other side, teachers, being aware of the quality of their performance during teaching, will be able to improve their teaching methods and, as a result, improve the quality of their teaching (Shabani Varki and Hossein Gholizadeh, 2006: 1).

With the teaching method used to teach Persian to non-Persian speakers, the teacher can provide opportunities for Persian learners to improve their communication skills. Meanwhile, the role of Persian language training centers in bringing Persian learners to their goals and meeting their language needs is of great importance. Obviously, the strength of each Persian language training center is the new methods of teaching and observing the improvement of the quality level of the learning process of Persian students of that center.

Considering the variety of new teaching methods that will be discussed below, the present study addresses the extent to which the teachers of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad are aware of the new teaching methods in Persian and use them to improve the quality of learning Persian's students. More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are the instructors of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, familiar with different teaching methods?
2. What teaching methods do the instructors of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad use the most?
3. Is there any relationship between the chosen teaching method and the teacher's education?
4. Is there any relationship between the chosen teaching method and the teacher's experience (teaching experience)?
5. Is there any relationship between the elective teaching method and the teacher's field of study?
6. Is there any relationship between the chosen teaching method and the age of the teacher?

To conduct this research, the authors have studied the sources and research on various methods of teaching Persian language and specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the familiarity of teachers of four-skill classes of Persian language teaching center with non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad with various methods of teaching Persian language and appropriateness. The choice of teaching method is defined by the educational needs of Persian learners and follows the up-to-date methods and techniques used by the instructors of this center, so that a useful step can be taken to improve the quality of learning Persian learners. The research was conducted in the field and its design is qualitative and analytical.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Teaching methods**

In general, teaching methods based on theories of learning psychology, are divided into two groups: traditional methods and modern methods (Seif, 2008). The instructor plays an important role in teaching and learning, as he/she tailors his/her curriculum to the needs of the learner. The main goal of teaching at any level is the result of a significant change in learner learning (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011). Most traditional methods are teacher-oriented without language learners being active and causing them to be passive and thus acquire knowledge and concepts only from the teacher. This method is associated with the minimum approach of activity and pragmatism and is more related to the theoretical-visionary approach. (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011). Learner-oriented approaches are more effective because they incorporate the concept of exploratory learning (Brindley, 2015). Most educators today seek a learner-oriented approach to fostering interest, analytical research, critical thinking, and learning pleasure among learners (Hesson & shad, 2007).

In new methods "provide advice for organizing learning environments that lead students to solve problems and gain understanding," which is called a learner-oriented category or model. Bodo believes that in a learner-oriented approach, the student does not work to pass the exam, but to satisfy a deep need, and in fact study to learn. In this way, the most creative students, practice their own abilities, and less creative students will discover new ways of learning. In his book "Effective Creativity", Edward de Bono introduces one of the learner-oriented teaching methods as the collaborative teaching method, from the family of social teaching models. Social patterns emphasize the relationship between the individual and society. They combine ideas about learning and society. The focus of these models is on improving students' ability to connect with others, engage in leisure activities, and work in the community more effectively. Participation and collaboration is the key to social models, and the presentation of the curriculum is deeply hidden within the social interaction of the participants. In these patterns, the formation of learning associations is recommended. Classroom management is for the growth of participation and cooperation between students and learning can be done only through cooperation, interaction, and participation in group activities (Hassani and Jahandideh, 2015: 141).

### **2.2. Different teaching methods (traditional and modern)**

In this section, different teaching methods (both traditional and modern) are introduced and the salient features of each method are examined.

#### **2.2.1. Grammar-translation method**

In grammar-translation method, the main focus is on learning grammar, memorizing words, using verbs, translating text, and doing writing exercises. The salient features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 6):

1. This method has no scientific basis.
2. Teaching is in the mother tongue.
3. Vocabulary is mostly taught and presented outside the context.
4. Grammatical structures are provided with long explanations.
5. The class is more teacher-oriented.
6. Grammar and vocabulary are presented in the form of deductive (first referring to grammatical rules, then examples).

### **2. 2. 2. Direct method**

The direct method is originally based on the theory that learning a second language should be similar to learning the first language through continuous use of the language, avoiding the use of translations between the first and second languages, and paying little or no attention to grammatical rules. The salient features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 11):

1. The main purpose is to communicate with the help of the target language.
2. The command is presented as a complete or inductive component.
3. In this method, instead of translating and explaining the words, the teacher shows them in a practical way.
4. In this method, the desired categories for teaching are selected based on the situation and subject.
5. In this method, there is a two-way communication (teacher-language learner) (language learner-teacher).

### **2. 2. 3. Audio-Lingual method**

The audio-lingual method is based on the principles of linguistics and psychology (habit formation and conditioning). The salient features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 58):

1. In this method of repetition and imitation, memorizing phrases and responding quickly, and overlearning are important.
2. In this method, grammatical patterns are presented using repetitive exercises (drill).
3. Grammar is presented in details to general.
4. Learners' correct answers are quickly reinforced in a positive way.
5. In this method, substitution is used.
6. In this method, there is a three-way communication (teacher-language learner) (language learner-teacher) (language learner-language learner).

### **2. 2. 4. Desuggestopedia**

In the Desuggestopedia method, all the abilities of the language learners should be used, and this is possible by removing the negative emotions from the language learners. The salient features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 317):

1. In this method, an independent personality is created in the second language for language learners.
2. Language learners have the necessary trust in the teacher.
3. The teacher does not immediately point out the mistakes of the learners.
4. In this method, learners are not given homework.
5. Grammar is presented in details to general.
6. In this method, the reading skill stages have two stages: the receiving stage, and the activation stage.

### **2. 2. 5. Total physical response method**

The total physical response method is used in language learning, especially in teaching children a second language, and focuses on the aspect of language comprehension. Language learning begins with language comprehension and gradually develops. Once children have a general understanding of the principles of language, they begin to speak on their own; Like learning a first language, in which the child listens to those around him for months before he begins to speak, and extracts meaning from linguistic inputs from the environment. In this method, action verbs play the most important role (such as come, go, etc.). The salient features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 277):

1. Learning language in practical way.
2. In this method, the main goal is oral production.
3. In this method, meaningful context and presentation of grammar rules and sentence construction are used.
4. In this method, first the learners should be strengthened in terms of listening and then speaking.
5. In this method, the communication is three-way but their order is in priority (teacher-language learner) (language learner-language learner) (language learner-teacher).
6. Grammar is presented in details to general.

## **2. 2. 6. Communicative method**

In the communicative method, the goal is to focus on the ability to communicate, and this method also refers to grammatical competence; This means that sentences can be produced in a language based on it (in other words, how sentences are made). The features of this method are (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 303):

1. The use of language is communicative (question and answer understood).
2. In this method, the intellect and emotions (whole person) of the learner are considered.
3. The role of the teacher is as a consultant.
4. In this method, equivalence in the first language is used to convey the concept.
5. In this method, cooperation is used instead of competition.
6. In this way, language learners become independent.
7. In this method, the teacher deals with the problems of each language learner in full.
8. In this way, learners can summarize any text.

## **3. Research background**

So far, many researches have been conducted in the field in the field of teaching methods, among which the following can be mentioned.

Johnson & Johnson (Johnson & Johnson, 2002) point out the positive consequences of participatory education based on their research that in this type of education, all students work harder and harder for success, make more progress, remember what they have learned for a longer period of time. They make more use of the above cognitive functions, such as reasoning, and have not only external motivation but also more internal motivation. Islam & Mares (2003) and Seif (2008), referring to the results of direct education research, state that direct education methods are dependent on behavioral psychology and have generally been successful in students' academic achievement in reading skills. Direct teaching methods that emphasize cognitive strategies are also useful in improving the reading and comprehension of students with learning disabilities. In general, direct teaching and teaching methods can be effective for teaching well-defined basic information and skills, especially to students with limited background knowledge. In defense of this teaching method, it is said that classroom and laboratory research have confirmed direct education in various ways, especially if teachers feel effective about the needs of students and flexible their education according to their characteristics, the success of students is certain. (Seif, 1387).

Knowledge transfer requires teachers who use appropriate teaching methods and can best communicate between upstream goals (extra systematic) and classroom goals (intra systemic). Poor language performance of learners is often due to the use of ineffective teaching methods that will not affect the learning of language learners (Adunola, 2011).

Teaching can be defined as a systematic process of transferring knowledge, views (attitudes) and skills in accordance with the principles and rules of the profession (Ayeni, 2011). In the traditional era, many educators chose the teacher-oriented teaching method over the learner-oriented teaching method; But today there are questions about the impact of teaching methods on long-term language learning of learners (Hightower et al., 2011).

Adgoke (Adgoke as cited in Ogide, 2017) acknowledges that in our tertiary institutions, instructors often use the lecture method, which is a kind of teacher-oriented teaching method, meaning that learners are inactive and learning is superficial.

Asikhia (2010) found that teachers' qualifications and environmental factors of learners will not affect students' poor performance, but teachers' teaching methods will affect poor language performance.

## **4. Research methodology**

### **4. 1. Research participants**

The participants of the present study were teachers who had previously taught in the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Among all the teachers who teach Persian to non-Persian speakers at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, 28 teachers have taught four skill classes so far. One of these instructors was not active at the center at the time of the study, so the total number of study participants was 27 (4 males and 23 females). Of these participants, 22 received both class observations and interviews, and only 5 were interviewed, as these 5 instructors had a history of teaching four-skill classes, but while conducting research, taught other classes than four-skill classes (Such as dialogue, writing, etc.).

According to demographic information, teachers aged 24 to 26 years 4%, 27 to 29 years 13%, 30 to 32 years 31%, 33 to 35 years 27%, 36 to 38 years 13%, and 39 to 41 years 12 % Of the population of teachers of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers are assigned to Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Also, 31% of them have one to three years of teaching experience, 31% have four to six years of teaching experience, 4% have seven to nine years of teaching experience, 22% have ten to twelve years

of teaching experience, and 12% have thirteen to fifteen years of teaching experience. 50% of these instructors are postgraduate graduates, 40% are doctoral graduates, and 10% are doctoral students. 50% of them have studied or are studying Persian literature, 36% in Azfa, and 14% in general linguistics.

Out of 22 teachers (in the classroom observation section), their minimum and maximum ages are 26 and 39, respectively, the average obtained is 33 and the deviation from the standard is 3.6.

#### **4. 1. 1. Methods of implementation**

The tools used in this study are: a checklist of prominent features of various teaching methods that have been prepared and compiled in the order of traditional models to date, observation of the class to study the teaching methods of teachers of four skills classes, and finally interviews with class teachers. Four skills to know how familiar they are with a variety of new teaching methods and techniques.

The fieldwork began with a random observation of all the classes in which the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing were taught (teaching 22 teachers). Then, a comparison was made between the teaching methods used in the classroom by the instructors of the four skill classes and the checklist prepared from the obvious features of the various teaching methods. Since some characteristics are common to several types of teaching methods, the researcher, while teaching the teacher, by observing one characteristic, marked it in all types of teaching methods in the checklist. At the end of the class observation, the marks of each teaching method were counted and based on the total number of marks that each method had obtained, the teaching methods used in the class were prioritized. Also, after completing the class observation of each four-skill class, the instructor in that class was asked oral questions about a variety of new teaching methods and techniques, and the instructors wrote their answers in writing. The other 5 teachers were interviewed for ten minutes after the end of the class they were teaching. Before conducting the interview, all the questions were reviewed by two language teaching specialists and the necessary changes were made in them.

#### **5. Presentation and data analysis**

The analysis of classroom observation in this study was done in such a way that the teaching methods implemented in the classroom were compared with a checklist prepared from the salient features of different teaching methods (from traditional to up-to-date models, respectively). The teaching methods in the checklist, from traditional to up-to-date models, are grammatical-translational, direct, auditory-spoken, de-indoctrination, communication, and physical methods, based on the research and studies of Richards & Rodgers (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Richards & Renandya (2002). New methods or techniques that may not be on the checklist were also noted. The questions asked to the instructors of the four skill classes in the interview were more about their knowledge of new methods and techniques, their attention to the learning needs of Persian learners, their attention to the participation of Persian learners in the teaching process, how the use of teaching aids in the teaching process. Was teaching, and so on.

##### **5. 1. Analysis of classroom observation data of teaching methods of four-skill class teachers at all levels**

According to the results of analyzing the data of classroom observations, it can be acknowledged that the most widely used teaching methods used in four-skill classes in descending order are: 1) communicative, 2) audio-lingual, 3) direct, 4) total physical response, 5) Desuggestopedia, And 6) grammar-translation method.

Also, in accordance with each of the class levels, it can be concluded that the most widely used teaching methods, which are the priority of teaching four-skill class teachers, are: 1) 72% communicative, 2) 18% audio-lingual, and 3) 10% direct.

Among the three introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, 45% of classroom observations are related to introductory level classes and the remaining 55% are related to both intermediate and advanced level classes. At the introductory level, the most teaching method used is the communication teaching method and 50% of the 72% communication teaching method is related to this level.

#### **6. Interpretation of data**

##### **6. 1. Analysis of statistical results of Pearson correlation method**

In order to examine the statistical output results of the correlation between the selected teaching method with each of the variables of education level, experience level, field of study, and age of teachers, the obtained data were entered into SPSS software (version 23) and the results of relationship or no relationship between methods. The dominant (elective) teaching with each of the mentioned variables has been calculated through coding in this software. To determine the existence or non-existence of a relationship between the teaching method and each of the mentioned variables, we used Pearson correlation method, the results of which can be seen in Tables 1 to 5, respectively.

Table 1. The result of Pearson correlation between teaching method and teacher education

		Teaching Method	Educational Background
Teaching Method	Pearson Correlation	1	.422*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.40
	N	22	22
Educational Background	Pearson Correlation	.422*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.40	
	N	22	22

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

According to the obtained number of 0.442 from Table 1, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between elective teaching methods and teacher education and this relationship is positive.

Table 2. The result of Pearson correlation between teaching method and teacher experience

		Experience in years	Teaching Method
Experience in years	Pearson Correlation	1	-.450*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.035
	N	22	22
Teaching Method	Pearson Correlation	-.450*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	22	22

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

According to the obtained number of -0.450 from Table 2, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the chosen teaching method and the teacher's experience, and this relationship is of the negative type, which shows the inverse relationship between the variables.

Table 3. The result of Pearson correlation between teaching method and teacher's field of study

		Teaching Method	Field of Study
Teaching Method	Pearson Correlation	1	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.689
	N	22	22
Field of Study	Pearson Correlation	-.090	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.689	
	N	22	22

According to the obtained number -0.090 from Table 3, it can be said that there is no significant relationship between the selected teaching method and the teacher's field of study.

Table 4. The result of Pearson correlation between teaching method and teacher age

		Age	Teaching Method
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.301
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.174
	N	22	22
Teaching Method	Pearson Correlation	.301	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.174	
	N	22	22

According to the obtained number of 0.301 from Table 4, it can be said that there is no significant relationship between the selected teaching method and the age of the teacher.

## 7. Conclusion

In order to answer the research questions, the general results of the research on the teaching method of teachers of four-skill classes of Persian language teaching center to non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, are as follows:

1. There is a moderately positive relationship between elective teaching method and the level of education of four-skill class teachers; That is, with the increase in the level of education of teachers, their desire to choose a teaching method with a communication-interactive approach has been more. In a more comprehensive sense, as

the level of education of teachers increases, they have reached the necessary, sufficient and comprehensive skills and choose the teaching method with a communication-interactive approach with full awareness and intelligence.

2. There is a moderate negative relationship between elective teaching method and teaching experience of four-skill class teachers; This means that with the increase of teachers' teaching experience, their tendency to choose traditional teaching methods was more. In a more comprehensive and complete sense, the longer teachers' teaching experience increases, the more they tend to choose and apply the teacher-oriented method, and the teacher plays a key role in the classroom.

3. There was no significant relationship between the elective teaching method and the field of study of the instructors of the four skill classes. It seems that there is no relationship between elective teaching method and teachers' field of study, because 50% of the center's field of study is Persian literature and Persian language courses for non-Persian speakers and general linguistics have lower percentages. It can also be acknowledged that because the field of study has been most teachers of Persian literature and language teaching units do not have a place in this field, due to lack of knowledge, skills and competence in choosing the appropriate teaching method for their field of study did not have a significant relationship.

1. There was no significant relationship between the elective teaching method and the age of the instructors of the four skill classes. Since these instructors are in the age range of 24 to 41 years and instructors are 30 to 35 years old, 58% of the total population of instructors of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Center to non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, there seems to be no relationship between teaching methods. The choice of age of teachers should be due to the fact that most people in the population are teachers of the same age.

2. All the instructors of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad were familiar with various teaching methods and techniques, so that 40% of them participated in the teaching method workshops of the Persian Language Training Center for non-Persian speakers at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Shahid Beheshti University is familiar with these methods. 21% of the instructors of the four skills classes, since their field of study is teaching Persian to non-Persian speakers, are familiar with various teaching methods. Teaching is familiar with these games and techniques, and 14% of the instructors of the four skills classes were familiar with the new teaching methods by participating in international courses teaching the teaching method and using the experiences of other teachers. Only 11% of the instructors of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Teaching Center to non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad had become acquainted with these methods and techniques by researching and studying new teaching methods and techniques. For this reason, there was not much innovation in the teaching method of the four-skilled instructors of this center. Because most of these instructors were familiar with the various teaching methods by participating in the teaching method training workshops held by the same center, and it seems that they only used the instructions of these workshops in their teaching.

3. The most widely used teaching method used by the teachers of the four-skill classes of the Persian Language Teaching Center for non-Persian speakers of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad has been the communication-interactive method and approach. This means that the class was mostly Persian-learner-oriented and Persian-learners played a major and improving role in the classroom and all class activities were organized based on the learner's Persian ideas and goals.

According to the above issues, it can be concluded that in order to create deep learning of Persian, in addition to using the communication teaching method used by most of the instructors of the four-skill classes of Persian to non-Persian language center, instructors can create different conditions and situations. Which exists in the daily and natural life of Persian learners, to play an important role in the deep learning of Persian learners. Instructors can deepen students' learning by searching for new and diverse games and techniques and using them, and see the impact of using these games and techniques in their classroom. Finally, considering the choice of teaching method with four variables of age, level of education, field of study, and level of experience, and having a significant relationship between each of these variables, it can be generally concluded that the teacher can choose the best teaching method according to the situation. The class, as well as other factors such as educational goals, interests, culture and identifying the learning style of Persian learners, the facilities available in the educational system, select and use it in the classroom. Therefore, this can have a significant effect on improving the quality of learning of Persian learners.

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